

## Does the Bible teach rewards for believers?

Yes, it does? However, there are some evangelical groups that deny this, such as certain Strict Baptists. The reason they deny it is a misunderstanding about merit. In their desire to avoid teaching any form of human merit in salvation, they deny that the work of a believer can attract a reward. They are correct in denying human merit in conversion but wrong in denying rewards.

It is always important to be utterly Biblical in our understanding, and the Bible teaches that Christians receive rewards in many places. This must be carefully understood since the Bible nowhere claims that these rewards are the result of natural merit but are the result of divine grace. Since salvation is all of grace there is no place for human merit, everything in salvation is a gift from God. But God is so great in mercy that he not only provides a free salvation (Eph 2:8), and not only gives us the power and motivation to do his will every day (1 Cor 15:10; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29), but he also chooses to give us rewards for obeying his will (i.e. works in the new man). Some texts explaining this are:

... that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. Matt 6:3-4

And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. Matt 10:42

And each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour. 1 Cor 3:8

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Gal 6:9-10

Let no one cheat you of your reward. Col 2:18 [This cannot refer to eternal life.]

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Col 3:23-24

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. 2 Jn 1:8

And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according to his work. Rev 22:12 [Spoken to encourage waiting saints.]

Strict Baptists try to get round such texts by saying that the reward is eternal life, and it is true that this is sometimes spoken of as the reward of faith. But in many texts the reward is said to be for our work, or even wages (albeit performed by grace). If these are about eternal life then they are teaching salvation by human merit – the very thing Strict Baptists want to avoid.

The simple truth is that, though there was no necessity, God chose to give rewards to faithful saints – even though their work of faith was performed by his will and strength. So great is our God.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version

© Thomas Nelson 1982

**Paul Fahy Copyright © 2015**

Understanding Ministries

## Does the Bible teach rewards for believers?

Yes, it does? However, there are some evangelical groups that deny this, such as certain Strict Baptists. The reason they deny it is a misunderstanding about merit. In their desire to avoid teaching any form of human merit in salvation, they deny that the work of a believer can attract a reward. They are correct in denying human merit in conversion but wrong in denying rewards.

It is always important to be utterly Biblical in our understanding, and the Bible teaches that Christians receive rewards in many places. This must be carefully understood since the Bible nowhere claims that these rewards are the result of natural merit but are the result of divine grace. Since salvation is all of grace there is no place for human merit, everything in salvation is a gift from God. But God is so great in mercy that he not only provides a free salvation (Eph 2:8), and not only gives us the power and motivation to do his will every day (1 Cor 15:10; Phil 2:13; Col 1:29), but he also chooses to give us rewards for obeying his will (i.e. works in the new man). Some texts explaining this are:

... that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. Matt 6:3-4

And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. Matt 10:42

And each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour. 1 Cor 3:8

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Gal 6:9-10

Let no one cheat you of your reward. Col 2:18 [This cannot refer to eternal life.]

And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. Col 3:23-24

Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. 2 Jn 1:8

And behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every one according to his work. Rev 22:12 [Spoken to encourage waiting saints.]

Strict Baptists try to get round such texts by saying that the reward is eternal life, and it is true that this is sometimes spoken of as the reward of faith. But in many texts the reward is said to be for our work, or even wages (albeit performed by grace). If these are about eternal life then they are teaching salvation by human merit – the very thing Strict Baptists want to avoid.

The simple truth is that, though there was no necessity, God chose to give rewards to faithful saints – even though their work of faith was performed by his will and strength. So great is our God.

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version

© Thomas Nelson 1982

**Paul Fahy Copyright © 2015**

Understanding Ministries