

Message Six

The Kingdom Reward and the Universal Headship

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 3:10-17; 10:1-13; 11:2-3, 10; 15:22-28

I. The Christian life is a race that we must run successfully to obtain the prize, the kingdom reward—9:24; Heb. 12:1:

- A. Paul began to run the heavenly race after the Lord took possession of him, and he continually ran that he might finish it—1 Cor. 9:24-27; Phil. 3:12-14; Acts 20:24.
- B. At the end Paul triumphantly proclaimed, “I have finished the course,” and for this he received from the Lord a reward—the crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:6-8:
 - 1. The incorruptible crown, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord will award to His overcoming saints who win the race, is a reward in addition to salvation; in contrast to the salvation which is of grace and by faith (Eph. 2:5, 8-9), this prize is of righteousness through works (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).
 - 2. Whether we will be rewarded by Him depends upon how we run the race; in view of this prize the apostle charged the Corinthian believers to run the race that they might obtain the reward—1 Cor. 9:24.
 - 3. The uttermost enjoyment of Christ in the millennial kingdom will be a reward to the victorious runners of the New Testament race—Phil. 3:14.
- C. Paul was very much on the alert to run his course by subduing his body to serve his holy purpose, that he might not be disapproved and rejected at the judgment seat of Christ and be found unworthy of the reward of the kingdom—1 Cor. 9:24-27; Matt. 7:21-23; 25:11-12:
 - 1. We need to subdue our body and make it a conquered captive to serve us as a slave for fulfilling our holy purpose.
 - 2. This is equivalent to putting to death our earthly members (Col. 3:5) and putting to death the practices of the body (Rom. 8:13), not allowing our body to be used for the indulgence of lust or doing anything on our own except what is holy to God—1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31.
- D. We need to be encouraged and warned by the type of the children of Israel, whose journey toward the good land typifies the Christian race toward our good land, the all-inclusive Christ—vv. 1-13:
 - 1. Although we have been redeemed through Christ, delivered out of Satan’s bondage, and brought into the revelation of God’s economy, we may yet fail to reach the goal of God’s calling, that is, to enter into the possession of our good land, Christ (Phil. 3:12-14), and enjoy His riches for the kingdom of God that we may be His expression in the present age and participate in the fullest enjoyment of Christ in the kingdom age (Matt. 25:21, 23).
 - 2. We need to run with endurance the race which is set before us, looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith—Heb. 12:1-2a.
- E. In order to receive the kingdom reward, we must take heed how we build the church, that is, with what materials we build the church—1 Cor. 3:10-17:

1. If we build with gold (God's nature), silver (Christ's redemptive work), and precious stones (the Spirit's transforming work), we will receive a reward—vv. 12, 14.
2. If we build with wood (human nature), grass (man in the flesh), and stubble (lifelessness), we will be saved, yet so as through fire—v. 15.
3. To build with the worthless materials of wood, grass, and stubble is to corrupt, ruin, defile, mar, and destroy the temple of God—v. 17.
4. All those who have corrupted, ruined, defiled, and marred the church of God by their heretical doctrines, divisive teachings, worldly ways, and natural efforts in building will suffer God's punishment; since the temple of God, the church, is holy, the materials, the ways, and the efforts by which we build it also must be holy.
5. As God's fellow workers, working together with Him (John 5:17; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1), we must be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1-2; 7:25; 9:17; 1 Pet. 4:10; cf. Num. 18:1):
 - a. The initiation of God's work must be out of God and not out of us—Rom. 11:36.
 - b. The advance of God's work must be by God's power and not by our power—Acts 1:8; Zech. 4:6.
 - c. The result of God's work must be for God's glory and not for our glory—John 7:18; Eph. 3:21.

II. We need to honor the headship of Christ and of God in the divine government—"I want you to know that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ"—1 Cor. 11:3; cf. 15:22-28:

- A. Here the headship of Christ over every man is related to individuals; Christ is the Head of the Body, the church (Eph. 5:23), corporately, and of the believers individually.
- B. Trying to assume headship without first coming under God's headship was the cause of the fall of the angels; we want to testify to the rebellious angels that we accept Christ as our Head—Isa. 14:12-15; 1 Cor. 11:2-3, 10.
- C. God's goal is to appoint Christ as the Head so that every man would submit to Him; we must be a people under God's headship, reflecting through our own submission to Christ His own submission to God—Eph. 1:10; 1 Cor. 11:10.
- D. Christ, the Son of God, as the Head of mankind in His humanity, is under the headship of God the Father for the government of God's kingdom:
 1. After God the Father has subjected all things under the feet of Christ as a resurrected man in glory (Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:7-8), and after Christ as such a resurrected man has put all enemies under His feet to execute God the Father's subjection of all things to Him, He as the Son of God, along with His delivering of the kingdom back to God the Father, will also subject Himself in His divinity to God, who has subjected all things to Him, the Son in His humanity—1 Cor. 15:24-28.
 2. This indicates the Son's absolute subjection and subordination to the Father, which exalts the Father that God the Father may be all in all.