

# Sketches of Glory

*Anticipating Our Future Hope*

## Introduction

### 1. You're not "going to heaven"... at least, not permanently

- "Heaven" according to the Bible (see Appendix 1: David Field on "heaven")

- What will *actually* happen when you die?

- Some Biblical descriptions of the future hope of the redeemed

#### (1) The New Heavens and New Earth (?)

Isaiah 65:17; 66:22

2 Peter 3:13

Revelation 21:2

#### (2) The New Creation (?)

Galatians 6:15

2 Corinthians 5:17

#### (3) The resurrection (☺)

Romans 6:5

1 Corinthians 15:42-49

Philippians 3:8-11

#### (4) Glory (☺☺)

**Glory** will be revealed to us (Romans 8:18; 1 Peter 5:1), we'll be raised in glory (1 Corinthians 15:43), and given an unfading crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4). Glory has been prepared for us (2 Corinthians 4:17), and we for it (Romans 9:23).

**The glory of God** is what we hope for (Romans 5:2), where we will appear (Colossians 3:4), before which we will be presented (Jude 24), and what we will obtain (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

**The glory of Christ** will appear (Titus 2:13), Christ in you is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27), and we'll be transformed to be like the body of Christ's glory (Philippians 3:21).

## **2. Getting our theological bearings**

### **Three biblical images**

- The resurrection body of Jesus (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-20)
  
- The last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 44b-45)
  
- A seed (1 Corinthians 15:35-44a)

### **Some theological implications**

- Physical bodies
  
- Transformed bodies
  
- Physical continuity
  
- Personal continuity
  
- Judgment according to works, and degrees of “reward” (see Appendix 2)
  
- Never-ending, but not time-less
  
- Protology shapes eschatology

### 3. Some questions to talk about

**Relationship with God.** What kind of intimacy with God will we have in glory? How will this intimacy be experienced?

**Daily life.** Will we just (!) spend all our time praising and worshipping God? Or will there be other activities to occupy us? If so, what?

**The (newly) created world.** What will be the physical properties of the glorified world? Will they be the same as those of the universe in which we now live? Will the sun still exist? Will the other stars and the planets be in the same locations?

**Progress, growth, and development.** Will the activities of daily life entail progress and development in the “culture” of the glorified state? In what way(s) will this progress be manifested? Will we experience growth personally – in happiness, knowledge, wisdom, maturity, holiness, and so on? How is the possibility of progress compatible with the idea of immediate perfection in glory?

**Personal differences.** Will there be any differences in the capacities of different people in glory? Different abilities, gifts, vocations, offices, etc? If so, how are these differences compatible with the perfection of everyone in glory? And will a person’s glorified gifts and abilities be in any way related to the gifts and abilities they have now?

**Knowledge.** What will we know in glory? Will our knowledge be entirely true? Will it be exhaustive? Will our knowledge continue to increase with time? Will we know everything about each other? If so, will this include the details of one another’s previous sins?

**Memory and regret.** Will we be able to remember in glory everything that has happened to us in the present age? Including our sins? If so, will these memories entail regret? If so, how will this regret be compatible with the perfection of glory?

**Degrees of reward in glory.** Will different people experience different degrees of blessing in glory? If so, on what grounds? And how will such differences be compatible with the complete and perfect joy of everyone in glory?

**Physical continuity.** Will the glorified world be composed of the same atoms that currently comprise the world in which we now live? If I planted a tree a week before resurrection day, would it still be there in the glorified earth a month later?

**Cultural continuity.** Will the cultural accomplishments of our world persist in glory? What about the cultural accomplishments of unbelievers? If Bach’s *Cantatas*, then what about Mozart’s *Requiem*?

**The beatific vision.** Will we see God in glory? If so, how, since God is invisible? How will this vision of God be related to our vision of other things (e.g. seeing Christ, seeing one another, seeing the rest of the created world)?

**Relationships.** Will we still know each other in glory? What kinds of relationships will we have? How will our relationships in glory be affected by the relationships we have now? What will happen to our relationships with other Christians whom we currently do not get on with very well?

**Marriage.** Will we be married in glory? If so, what about the Sadducees' question: "In the resurrection... whose wife will she be?" (Matthew 22:28)? If marriage persists, then what about sexual intimacy? And childbearing?

**Our physical bodies.** What degree of continuity will our (physically resurrected, glorified) bodies have with the bodies we have now? What will happen to the effects of illness, injury, old age, and so on that we presently experience?

**Our physical capacities.** What physical feats will we be capable of accomplishing in our glorified bodies? What about our senses – sight, smell, hearing, and so on? Will we develop new physical capacities which we currently lack, or which we currently experience only minimally? Will we still get hungry and tired? Will we need to sleep?

**Ageing.** How old will we be when we are resurrected? How will this be related to the age at which we die? Given that we will still experience the passage of time, will we still experience ageing? What about the infirmity that normally comes with old age?

**Pets.** Will my dog be in glory? Will I recognize her? Will she recognize me? Will she be able to have puppies?

**Plant death, animal death, and smoked ribs.** Does "everlasting life" apply to plants and animals as well as people? Bearing this in mind, what will we eat? Will we eat meat? If so, what does this tell us about the purpose of animal life and the significance of animal death? If not, will we be deprived in glory of many blessings we now enjoy (smoked ribs, bacon sandwiches, etc)?

**Earthquakes, car crashes, and cancer.** Will there be "natural evils" in glory? If so, how will they not bring about suffering? But if not, what does this imply about the difference(s) between the present world and the glorified world?

**Hell, sin, evil, and the lost.** How is the continued existence of the lost in hell consistent with the goodness of God, the perfection of glory, and the joy of the redeemed? Will the knowledge that some are lost not mar the joy of those who are saved?

**A few other questions that intrigue me.** How would you like to go and live on Mars for a few hundred years? Would it be theoretically possible to construct a bridge across the Pacific, or a ladder to the moon? How good do you think you could make a single malt whisky if you had ten thousand years to perfect the distillation process? Given fifty thousand years of practice, how good do you think a human being could get at chess? And how fast could a jet-ski *really* go?

## 4. Jonathan Edwards on “glory”

### A brief introduction to Jonathan Edwards

- Astonishing theological creativity
- The “Miscellanies”
- A note on Edwards’s terminology

### Extracts from Edwards’s *Miscellanies*

- Will there be degrees of blessedness and reward in glory?

*Miscellany 5*: “There is no more reason why it should damp [i.e. diminish] the happiness of some in glory that others are happier.” Rather, “there is undoubted reason why it should be an addition to their happiness. ... For most certainly there is a pure, ardent, and inconceivably vehement, mutual love between the glorified saints, and this love is in proportion to the perfection and amiableness of the object loved. Therefore ... it must necessarily cause delight when they see their happiness proportional to their amiableness, and so to their love to them. It will not damp [i.e. diminish] any to see them loved more than themselves, for they shall have as much love as they desire, and as great manifestations of love as they can bear, and they themselves will love those that are superior in holiness as much as others, and will delight to see others love them as much as themselves.”

*Miscellany 431*: “The exaltation of some in glory above others, will be so far from diminishing anything of the perfect happiness and joy of the rest that are inferior, that they will be the happier for it. Such will be the union of all of them, that they will be partakers of each other’s glory and happiness. 1 Cor. 12:26, ‘If one of the members are honored, all the members rejoice with it.’”

*Miscellany 430*: “As there will be various members of different degrees in the body of Christ in glory, so it seems to me probable that there will be members of various kinds and different offices, as it is in the church on earth. ... Everyone will have their distinguishing gift, one after this manner, and another after that: the perfection of the saints in glory nothing hindering. ... And it is most probable, if it be so, that they shall excel most in the same grace, and the same kind of works, by which they were most distinguished on earth. God rewarding their graces and works by giving of them grace more abundantly of the same kind, as Christ has promised that “to him that hath shall be given.” This difference will be for the beauty and the profit of the whole: they will profit one another by their distinguishing graces.”

- Will we experience growth and development in glory? If so, in what way(s)?

*Miscellany 105*: “The glorified spirits shall **grow in holiness and happiness** in eternity,” for “their number of ideas shall increase to eternity.”

“They will without doubt retain innumerable multitudes of ideas of what passed in the first seventy years, so also they shall retain to eternity their ideas of what was done in the ages of the world, with relation to the church of God, and God’s wondrous providence with respect to the world of men. And can we then think that a whole million million ages of those great and most glorious things that pass in glory shall ever be erased out of their minds? But if they retain but one idea for one such vast period, their ideas shall be

millions of times more in number than when they first entered into glory, as is evident, because by supposition the number of such ages will be millions of times more in number.

“Therefore, **their knowledge will increase to eternity, and if their knowledge, then their holiness.** For as they increase in the **knowledge** of God, and of the works of God, the more they will see of his **excellency**, and the more they see of his excellency ... the more will they **love** him, and the more they love God, **the more delight and happiness will they have in him.**”

- What will we do in glory? Praising God? Singing songs? Scientific experiments? Space travel?

*Miscellany 137:* “The saints in glory will doubtless eternally exercise themselves in contemplation. ... Their sight shall reach further and further, and **new things shall plainly present to their minds, without the mixture of any error.** ... The object of their thoughts shall be **the glory of God, which they shall contemplate in the creation in general, in the wonderful make of it,** particularly of the highest heavens and in the wonders of God’s providence. It shall most clearly and delightfully be manifested in the church of saints and angels, which they shall discover more and more by their conversation, assisting one another to discoveries in other things, and most of all mediate ways in the man Christ Jesus. **They shall employ themselves in singing God’s praise,** or expressing their thoughts to God and Christ, and also to one another, and **in going from one part of ... the universe to another, to behold the glories of God shining in the various parts of it.**”

- Music and mind-reading?

*Miscellany 188:* “The best, most beautiful, and most perfect way that we have of expressing a sweet concord of mind to each other is by music. When I would form in my mind ideas of a society in the highest degree happy, I think of them as expressing their love, their joy, and the inward concord, and harmony, and spiritual beauty of their souls, by sweetly singing to each other. But if in glory minds will have an immediate view of one another’s dispositions without any such intermediate expression, how much sweeter will it be! But to me it is probable that **the glorified saints, after they have again received their bodies, will have ways of expressing the concord of their minds by some other emanations than sounds, of which we cannot conceive,** that will be vastly more proportionate, harmonious, and delightful than the nature of sounds is capable of. And the music they will make will be in a measure capable of modulations in an infinitely more nice, exact, and fine proportion than our gross airs, and with organs as much more adapted to such proportions.”

- How far will we be able to see? What will we be able to hear?

*Miscellany 263:* “If the saints after the resurrection shall see by light, and speak and hear by sounds, it is probable that the medium will be infinitely finer, and more adapted to a distant and exact representation, so that a small vibration in sound, though the undulations may proportionally decrease according to the distance from their rise or fountain, yet may be conveyed infinitely farther with exactness before they begin to be confused and lost through the sluggishness of the medium, or through the bulk, the roughness, or tenaciousness of the particles, and the conveyance may likewise be with far greater swiftness. The organs also will be immensely more exquisitely perceptive, so that perhaps a vibration a thousand times less than can now be perceived by the ear, may be distinctly and easily perceived by them. And yet the organs may be far more able to bear a very strong vibration than ours in this state, and through niceness of the organ they shall be able to distinguish in the greatest multitude of sounds according to their distance and direction, more exactly by the ear than we do visible objects by the eye. And we know not how far they may clearly hear one another’s discourses. So the eye may be so much more sensible, and the medium of vision (the rays) so much more exquisite, that **for ought we know they may distinctly see the beauty of one another’s countenances and smiles, and hold a delightful and most intimate conversation at a thousand miles distance.**”

- The shining face of Christ

*Miscellany 263:* “The light of the glory shall be the brightness of glorified bodies, and especially in the countenance, but chiefly that of the man Christ Jesus, and the glory of God. ... The light of the face of Christ will ... be an infinitely more excellent and delightful sort of refulgence than the light of this world. The brightness of the saints shall far excel that, but the splendor of the Sun of righteousness shall be immensely more sweet and glorious, except that the light of the bodies of the saints shall be some way or other a communication of the light of Christ, and then the difference will be rather in degree than in kind of brightness, as the light which is reflected from a lily is the same light, but less bright than that of the sun.”

- Growth in joy, and hope for the future

*Miscellany 371:* “**Part of their happiness will consist in hope of what is to come.** They will have as much happiness as they will desire in their existing state, because they will choose to have the addition at that time, and in that order, which God has designed. ... Their having of perfect happiness does not exclude all increase, nor does it exclude all hope.”

“Part of that happiness, part of that sweet rest and contenting joy, consists in the sight of what is future. They do not desire that that addition should be now, they know that it will be most beautiful, most for God’s glory, most for their own happiness, and most for the glory of the church, and every way most desirable, that it should be in God’s order.”

- Preparing for the future

*Miscellany 371:* “But the more properly perfect and consummate state of God’s people of the church will be after the resurrection, and the whole is now only growing and preparing for that state. **All things that are now done in the world, are but preparations for it.**”

- Will we remember our sins? Will we feel sorrow for sin? How will this coexist with perfect happiness?

*Miscellany 432:* “Though the saints in glory will **see their exceeding folly and vileness in much of their behavior here in this world**, and will see a thousand times as much of the evil and folly of sin as they do now, yet **they will not experience any proper sorrow or grief for it.** For this reason: because they will perfectly see at the same time how that it is turned to the best to the glory of God ... And particularly they will have so much the more admiring and joyful sense of God’s grace in pardoning them, that the remembrance of their sins will rather be an indirect occasion of joy. ... **A sense of the great evil of sin is good.**”

- Will we meet our friends?

*Miscellany 639:* On the basis of 1 Thess 4:13-14, “it follows that **the special affection which the saints have in this world to other saints, who are their friends, will in some respect remain in another world.**”

Those who have “dwelt together in this world and” showed “kindness to each other’s souls” will “love one another with a love of gratitude for it” in glory.

Indeed, “God and Christ will reward them and favor them the more for such love and all the fruits of it, to all eternity,” and they will “love one another the more for it.”

“This should move us to lay religion and virtue on the foundation of all our friendship, and **to strive that the love we have to our friends be a virtuous love**, duly subordinated to divine love, for, so far as it is so, it will last forever. Death does not put an end to such friendship, nor can it put an end to such friends’ enjoyment of each other.”

- The happiness of glory

*Miscellany 741:* “We have all reason to conclude that no degree of intimacy will be too much for the manhood of Christ, seeing that the divine Logos has been pleased to assume him into his very person. And therefore we may conclude that no degree of intimacy will be too great for others to be admitted to, of whom Christ is the head or chief, according to their capacity.”

“But **nothing so much confirms these things as the death and sufferings of Christ.** ‘He that hath not withheld his own Son, but hath freely delivered him up for us all in death, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? [Rom 8:32]”

“He whose arms were expanded to suffer, to be nailed to the cross, will doubtless be opened as wide to embrace those for whom he suffered. ... **God and Christ, who have begrudged nothing as too great to be done, too good to be given, as the means of the saints’ enjoyment of happiness, will not begrudge anything in the enjoyment itself.**”

*Miscellany 576:* “If nothing be too much to be given to man, and to be done for man in the means of procuring his happiness, nothing will be too much to be given to him as the end, no degree of happiness is too great for him to enjoy.”

“When I think how great this happiness is, sometimes it is ready to seem almost incredible. But the death and sufferings of Christ make everything credible that belongs to this blessedness. For if God would so contrive to show his love in the manner and means of procuring our happiness, nothing can be incredible in the degree of happiness itself. If all that God does about it be of a piece, he will also set infinite wisdom on work to make their happiness and glory great in the degree of it. If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Nothing could have been such a confirmation of their blessedness as this.”

- Union with Christ is the means to the enjoyment of all things

*Miscellany 1072:* “The saints in glory will enjoy God as their portion, and possess all things in the most excellent manner possible, in that **they will have all in Christ their head. Christ their head is as it were their organ of enjoyment, but the capacity of enjoyment that this organ has, is of infinitely greater extent than the capacity of any of Christ’s members taken separately or by themselves.** ... Were not the saints united to Christ, they could never enjoy God the Father in so excellent a manner as now they will in glory.



- A final thought on union with Christ

*Miscellany* ff: “By virtue of the believer’s union with Christ, he doth really possess all things. That we know plainly from Scripture. But it may be asked, how [doth] he possess all things? What is he the better for it? How is a true Christian so much richer than other men? To answer this, I’ll tell you what I mean by ‘possessing all things.’ I mean that God three in one, all that he is, and all that he has, and all that he does, all that he has made or done – the whole universe, bodies and spirits, earth and heaven, angels, men and devils, sun moon, [and] stars, land and sea, fish and fowls, all the silver and gold, kings and potentates as well as mean men – are as much the Christian’s as the money in his pocket, the clothes he wears, or the house he dwells in, or the victuals he eats; yea, more properly his, more advantageously, more his than if he [could] command all those things mentioned to be just in all respects as he pleased at any time, by virtue of the union with Christ; because Christ, who certainly doth thus possess all things, is entirely his: so that he possesses it all, more than a wife the share of the best and dearest husband, more than the hand possesses what the head doth; it is all his.

“The universe is [his], only he has not the trouble of managing it; but Christ, to whom it is no trouble, manages it for him a thousand times as much to his advantage as he could himself, if he had the managing of all. Every atom in the universe is managed by Christ so as to be most to the advantage of the Christian, every particle of air or every ray of the sun; *so that he in the other world, when he comes to see it, shall sit and enjoy all this vast inheritance with surprising, amazing joy.*”

## Appendix 1: David Field on “heaven”

*It's a pleasure to include this short article from my good friend and former fellow-Elder David Field, which clarifies exactly how the word “heaven” is used in Scripture – and how it is not used.*

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One of the most deep-seated and unhelpful ways in which Christian use of particular vocabulary is at variance with that of the Bible is in the widespread idea that the future blessed state of the righteous should be called “heaven”. As in, “What will heaven be like?” “Will my dog be in heaven?” “Won't heaven be wonderful?” and so on. This is badly, badly out of step with the way that the Bible uses the terminology of “heaven”.

There are two main words which are translated “heaven” in our English Bibles – one Hebrew and one Greek. They are both used in a variety of ways but most especially they refer to two realities. First, the words translated “heaven” refer to the skies, the heavens. Second, these words refer to what might be called the “dwelling place of God” or “God's space”. God, of course, neither needs a dwelling place nor can be confined to one. But at the beginning of all things he created a space in which he particularly revealed himself and which should be thought of as the “divine dimension of created reality” (even though, of course, God is present in every space throughout creation).

So, heaven (1) as sky and heaven (2) as the created space in which God is particularly revealed and which the infinite, unconfined, and essentially incorporeal God chooses to make and call his dwelling-place.

Scriptures which use the word translated in English as “heaven” in sense (2) teach that this place, where there is some sort of created, physical revelation of the glory of God, is to be identified with God's temple (Psalm 11.4; Psalm 103.19; Habakkuk 2.20; Zechariah 2.13) and God's throne (Isaiah 66.1, Psalm 115.3, Ezekiel 1, Revelation 4-5). This heaven is the “source” of God's blessings and judgments - God hears from heaven, blesses from heaven, his wrath is revealed from heaven and so on (2 Chron 7.14, Gen 19.24, Romans 1.18). It is in this heaven that the “real” tabernacle / temple is to be found (Hebrews 8.5, 9.23) and where Christ did his real atoning work (Hebrews 9.12, 14, 24). It is therefore to this heaven that we “go” when we pray and when we worship (Heb 6.19-20, 9.12, 24, 10.19-22, Revelation 4.1).

“Heaven” in this sense intersected with earth (a “bit” of this heaven came to earth) in the Holy of Holies, and in the Spirit theophanies (Gen 3, Ex 19-24, Ex 40, 1 Kings 8, Haggai 2, Acts 2, 4.31) and, this “heaven” was found on earth in the person of Christ (John 1).

This can be thought of as the home of the angels, the spiritual realm, the scene of some of the activities of the spiritual powers (Job 1-2, Luke 2.12, Matthew 18.10, Col 1.15-20, Ephesians 1.10, 6.12). It is where prophets received God's word (1 Kings 22.19-23, Jer 23) and the place from which Christ saw Satan fall and from which Satan was hurled (Luke 10.18; Rev 12.7-13). Stephen saw into heaven as he was dying because he saw Christ (Acts 7).

The Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven (John 6.38) and is the man from heaven (1 Cor 15.45-49). He has gone back into heaven (Acts 1) and it is where he dwells in his glorified body (Ephesians 1.20, 2.6). He has been granted authority over heaven as well as earth (Matthew 28.18, 1 Peter 3.22) and is thus our Master in heaven (Col 4.1). When he returns, he will come from heaven (1 Thess 1.10). The Holy Spirit, too, came from heaven (Acts 2.2, 33; 1 Peter 1.12, John 1.32).

When a sinner repents there is joy in heaven (Luke 15.7) and the names of disciples are written in heaven (Luke 10.20). Believers are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3) and have a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3.1). They pray to their Father in heaven (Matthew 6) and are to lay up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6.20). Their inheritance (which is not heaven) is kept in heaven for them (1 Peter 1.4).

*But for all this, the word translated “heaven” in our English Bibles is not used for the future hope of the righteous. It is a present reality, God’s dimension. It is where the spirits of believers go to be with Christ until resurrection day. It is where our future is being prepared and guaranteed. But it is not that future. We shall not spend eternity in “heaven” but in the new heavens and the new earth.*

Of the more than **250 times** that the Greek word translated as “heaven” is used in the New Testament it is arguable that not once does it unambiguously refer to the future hope of the righteous. In fact, there are only three or four occasions where it is even a strong possibility that this is what is being referred to.<sup>1</sup> This is staggering, given the way in which the word is normally used amongst English-speaking Christians.

This sloppy and misleading use of an important biblical word would matter even if it could not be shown that negative consequences flow from it. It would matter because we should be careful with the words that God has given us and because failure to be careful in this way is itself a spiritual issue. But in fact, it is clear that negative consequences do flow from this large gap between the way that the Bible uses a word and the way that we use the English “equivalent”. Those consequences are the unearthly, immaterial, unphysical, floaty, vague, boring, disembodied associations which many, many Christians have with the idea of “heaven” – and the assumption that these represent the everlasting future of the righteous.

*In fact, the hope of the righteous is emphatically embodied – it is to be like Christ! AND there is a perfectly good, biblical word which is very often used in the New Testament with a future reference and which (if “new heavens and new earth” is somehow felt to take too long to say!) would serve far, far better than “heaven” as a shorthand for the eternal hope of the righteous, the other side of judgment day. That word is “glory”. (Romans 2.7, 10; 5.2; 8.17, 21; 1Cor 15.40-43; Phil 3.21; Col 1.27, 3.4; 2 Thess 1.10, 12; Titus 2.13; 1 Peter 5.1, 4, 10; Rev 21.11, 23-24).*

Our greatest hope is the Lord Jesus Christ – beholding, reflecting, enjoying and sharing the glory of God in Christ by the Spirit in transformed bodies in a renewed cosmos as part of a perfect humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> Note from SJ: Personally I think David is being (typically!) a little over-generous here. I don’t think that there’s even a *slight* possibility that any of the biblical occurrences of the “heaven” (Gk. *ouranos*; Heb. *shamayim*) refers to the everlasting abode of the redeemed.

## Appendix 2: Biblical texts relating to “rewards” and/or judgment according to works

The Bible teaches that on the last day we will be judged according to our works. Strangely, however, this is an unfamiliar doctrine to many. Perhaps it is sometimes underplayed because of fears that it might undermine the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. But such fears are ungrounded.

For one thing, the doctrine of future judgment concerns what will happen on the last day; it does not concern our standing before God at the present time. In the present, we are accounted righteous by God (justified) solely through faith, on account of our (Spirit-wrought) faith-union with Christ. Our works are the “evidence” on the grounds of which God will confirm this verdict at the last judgment; they are not relevant to our present justification at all.

Moreover, it’s important to remember that even those works which God adduces as evidence on the last day are not “good” in themselves, but only because of the triune God’s work in us to purify, forgive, transform, and empower us. Our works are acceptable to God only because our sinful hearts and lives have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, because the Spirit of God inhabits, motivates, initiates and empowers us to do everything that we do in Christ’s service; and because we have been adopted (by *grace!*) as sons of our heavenly Father, who looks upon us not as the hell-deserving sinners that we truly are *in ourselves* but as his beloved children *in Christ*.

As the great Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck put it, “God crowns his own work, not only in conferring eternal life on everyone who believes but also in distributing different degrees of glory to those who, motivated by their faith, have produced good works.” (*Reformed Dogmatics*, 4:729)

With this in mind, perhaps it might be helpful to take a brief look at some of the Biblical texts that most clearly speak of (1) “rewards” given by God to the redeemed; or (2) judgment on the last day according to works. (NB. Some of these texts speak about “rewards” not on the last day, but rather on other occasions of divine judgment (e.g. Moses in Heb 11:26; the church in Thyatira in Rev 2:23). But this in fact strengthens the overall point: God’s consistent pattern throughout history is to judge people according to their works.

**Matthew 16:27** For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

**Matthew 19:29-30** <sup>29</sup>And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. <sup>30</sup>But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

**Matthew 25:14-29** <sup>14</sup>For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. <sup>19</sup>Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.’ <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup>And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.’ <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>24</sup>He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup>But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to everyone who has will

more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

**Luke 19:12-19** <sup>12</sup>He said therefore, “A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. <sup>13</sup>Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ <sup>14</sup>But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ <sup>15</sup>When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. <sup>16</sup>The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ <sup>17</sup>And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ <sup>18</sup>And the second came, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made five minas.’ <sup>19</sup>And he said to him, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’

**Luke 6:38** Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

**Luke 17:10** So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’

**Romans 2:6** He will render to each one according to his works:

**1 Corinthians 3:8** He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

**2 Corinthians 9:6** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

**Galatians 6:8-9** <sup>8</sup>For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. <sup>9</sup>And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

**Hebrews 11:26** He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

**Revelation 2:23** And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.

**Revelation 20:12** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

**Revelation 22:12** Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.