

Heaven-32 (The Absolute Goodness of God and the EP on Suffering: The great evil of Prosperity Gospel)

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

T/G/B

Eschatology
Thanatology
Ecclesiology
Israelology
Dispensationalism
Doxology
Hodology
Soteriology
Hamartiology
Natural Law
Anthropology
Angelology
Pneumatology
Christology
Paterology
Trinitarianism
Cosmology
Theology Proper
Bibliology
Natural Theology

Psalm 73:24 notes the two periods of the believer's life: Heb. 11:16; Col. 3:1-5; 2 Tim 3:12.

Preparation: The focus of the SL must be 1 Jn 1:7, not 1:9 and darkness of sin, cf., Rom 6:10, 11.

The 3 parts to Bible class.

1. Spiritual foundations: My goal here is understanding the concurrent spiritual life & confession.
2. Realist foundations: My goal here is understanding reality, language, reality, & anti-intellectualism
3. Developed doctrine: My goal here is a deeper understanding of doctrine/Heaven.

Spiritual foundations: concurrent fellowship.

1. Concurrentism: walking in the light as He is in the light for reciprocal *acts* of fellowship.
 - a. The idea is captured in 1 John 1:7 and corresponds to every verse in the Bible on the SL.
 - b. The fellowship is personal (2nd person) and consists of concurrent acts rather than states.
 - c. This 2nd person relationship includes at least three progressive elements, all of which include attitude of pleasing God, 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Heb 11:5;
 1. *Walking with God*: 2nd person conscious awareness of God being with you in all of the details of life moment by moment
 2. *Walking before God*: from awareness of God to awareness of our lives before Him, see Gen. 17:1, "I am the Almighty God, Walk before Me and be perfect."
 3. *Walking after God*: from awareness of God and awareness of our lives before Him to longing after Him. He seek Him, not the idols of life, see Psa. 42:1, "my soul pants for Thee."
2. While both the concurrentist and conduitist recognize the importance of confession of sin, their views of the believer's relationship with God, sin, and forgiveness are radically different. Ultimately, these differences stem from a different ontology regarding human nature, the sin nature, the nature of fellowship, and the nature of God. The conduitist view stems from modern naturalistic metaphysics (Reidian, Cartesian, Baconian) that is superimposed on the Bible.
3. Overview of passages that illustrate the biblical nature of fellowship, sin, restoration, and God's purposes in punishing the believer with regard to sin, Heb. 12:4-11; 2 Sam 12:1-13; Psalm 32, 51.

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-37

3: Epistemology 32
- Existence 50
- History 50

2: Metaphysics 32
- Trans. 50

1: Reality
- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

Outline

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ What is philosophy of language?
- ✓ Theories of meaning
- ✓ Plato (428-348 BC)
- ✓ Aristotle (384-322 BC)

Ferdinand de Saussure
(1857-1913)

Gottlob Frege (1848-1925)

Bertrand Russell (1872-
1970)

Ludwig Wittgenstein
(1889-1951).

Martin Heidegger (1889-
1976).

W. V. O. Quine (1908-
2000).

Noam Chomsky (1928-)

Realist view of meaning.

Foundation of meaning.

Communication of
meaning.

Elements of language.

Function of language

Meaningful God-talk.

Analytic Philosophy

Conclusion.

Analogy.

Metaphysical analogy.

Philosophy of Language-37 Aristotle

Aristotle on CT: *To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true*

1. Aristotle's key passage: *De Interpretatione* 1, 16a3-8: *Spoken words then are symbols of affections (pathema) of the soul and written words are symbols of spoken words. And just as written letters are not the same for all humans neither are spoken words. But what these primarily are signs of, the affections (pathema) of the soul, are the same for all, as also are those things (pragmata) of which our passions are likenesses.*
 - a. Only Aristotle (& his followers) provide a realist epistemology for correspondence truth.
 - b. "Things/pragmata": the actually existing objects that a word, sentence, or a belief refers to or describes.
 - c. "Affections/pathema": the mental state that is a result of some action on the mind.
 - d. "Things/pragmata" have a definite character and the *pathema* as its likeness shares this character. Meaning is a function of reference.
2. The rejection of Aristotelean epistemology and metaphysics by evangelicalism in 1700s was the single greatest factor in dooming evangelicalism to subjectivity and anti-intellectualism.
 - a. In place of Aristotelianism, Americans, in the 1700s, embraced Reidian Common Sense.
 - b. Common Sense (CS) is nothing more than a mixture of the opinion of the masses coupled with spontaneous feelings. In a word, CS is "instinct," "inner sense," "irrational." This is a non-starter for science and should be for Bible study, the SL, and ethics.
3. Consider the characteristics of revivalists' anti-intellectualism that the Bible movement has inherited and its impact on view of God, creation, man, the Bible, and the spiritual life.
 - a. No clue regarding the *meaning* of Truth (correspondence, coherence, pragmatic).
 - b. No clue regarding metaphysics or ontology. Consider what is taught about the OSN.
 - c. No clue regarding epistemology. Consider how it effects one's level of credulity.
 - d. No clue about language and reality. Consider the Cratylean approach to word studies.
 - e. No clue about classical logic, the laws of reality (I, C, EM, SR). Consider the irrationality.
 - f. No clue about church history: from great Christian thinkers to anti-intellectualism.
 - g. No clue about unbiblical cultural influences on views of Bible, God, creation, man, & SL.
 - h. No clue about endemic philosophical presuppositions (Cartesian, Baconian, Reidian).

Warnings:
Matt 6:19-34
Rev. 14:13
2 Cor 5:10
Rev. 19:8



Eternal Heaven/Earth
Rev. 21-22

What is the purpose of life?

1. We all live in the kosmos, at least geographically.
2. It is impossible for any believer to escape the cultural captivity of the kosmos apart from TT.
3. What is the message of the OT regarding this earthly life? Heb. 11.
4. What is the message of Jesus throughout the gospels regarding this earthly life?
5. What is the message of Acts & the epistles regarding this life?
6. What is the message of Revelation on this life?
7. Historians are still asking the question: who won the battle between Christianity & America?

Temporary Heaven
John 17:24; Philip 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 1-19



Temporary Hell
Luke 16:19-31



Christ and the unbeliever:

Mark 8:36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"

Matthew 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. ¹⁴ "For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."

No innocent person ever goes to Hell. Moreover, there is nothing evil about Hell. People go there because of rejection of God's grace.

Eternal Hell
Rev. 20:11-15; Matt 10:28-30



Heaven 32: The 100% Absolute Goodness of God and Suffering: The great evil of the health & wealth prosperity “Gospel”

1. The perniciousness of the modern health, wealth, and prosperity “gospel” group/cult (PM).
 - a. The influence: How the PM’s radical distortion of the Bible, God, and the nature of the spiritual life has worked its way into the mainline Christian Bible movement.
 - b. The theme: The bottom line of the PM is that God’s *chief* focus is to bless believers with material abundance and good health if they would only lay claim to His promises. In this mindset, it really is all about this life. It is about control of every area of your life (social, physical, marital, emotional) through faith so one can have a life free from pain and suffering.

- c. The programs: While the various evangelical groups many have disparate formulas for their vision of prosperity, different As, Bs, and Cs, they are alike in that it is all about getting God to work for the believer on a pragmatic basis. It is not difficult to see why a pragmatic view of truth resonates in these movements.

- d. The critical flaws: To begin with there is lack of orientation to the next life as the main issue. This leads to little to no place for eternal rewards, for suffering, or proper orientation for preparation for the next life. This sets believers up for animosity towards God, fear of death, and making one's treasures the things of this world (= idolatry) instead of God. This whole thing backfires, sooner or later. There are no 150 year old faith healers.

- e. The prosperity “gospel” has poisoned the church and undermined believers ability to deal with evil, suffering, and death. Moreover, it has created a slavery to the fear of death that Christ has rescued every believer. The PM prevents the believer from developing the eternal perspective:

Hebrews 2:14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; ¹⁵ and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

3. Consider God's *promises* regarding suffering and the very nature of suffering. In contrast to the lie that God promises to deliver believers from problems, suffering, illness, and death, God actually promises these things for mature and growing believers. It really is about the eternal perspective. This is an area that no believer with a pragmatic view of reality can appreciate. This doctrine is not only critical, it separates the men from the boys, those who really have a life with God and those who really do not have a true relationship with God.

- ❖ **Philippians 1:29** For to you it has been granted (ἐχαρίσθη) for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,
- ❖ **John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

- ❖ **2 Timothy 3:12** And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
- ❖ **Revelation 12:11** "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death.

- ❖ **Matthew 10:17** "But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to *the* courts, and scourge you in their synagogues; ¹⁸ and you shall even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

- ❖ **Matthew 10:21** "And brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. ²² "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

- ❖ **Matthew 10:38** "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

- ❖ **1 Peter 4:12** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.
- ❖ **Acts 14:22** encouraging them to continue in the faith, and *saying*, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

- ❖ **John 15:18** "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you.
- ❖ **John 15:20** "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.
- ❖ **2 Timothy 4:20** Erastus remained at Corinth, but Trophimus I left sick at Miletus.

❖ **Philippians 2:25-30** But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; ²⁶ because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. ²⁷ For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸ Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly in order that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*. ²⁹ Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; ³⁰ because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me

- ❖ **1 Timothy 5:23** No longer drink water *exclusively*, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.
- ❖ **2 Timothy 1:8** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God,

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 15:31** I protest, brethren, by the boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.
- ❖ **Galatians 2:20** "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

❖ **2 Corinthians 12:7** And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself! ⁸ Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

❖ **Colossians 1:9** For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

❖ **Luke 7:4-10** And when they had come to Jesus, they earnestly entreated Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; ⁵ for he loves our nation, and it was he who built us our synagogue." ⁶ Now Jesus *started* on His way with them; and when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself further, for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof; ⁷ for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to You, but *just* say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it." ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude that was following Him, "I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith." ¹⁰ And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

- ❖ **Luke 9:23** And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

4. Consider history.

- a. The OT: What about Abel, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and nearly all of the prophets? They suffered precisely because they were righteous men of faith.
- b. The NT: Jesus is the prime example. John the Baptist was the greatest of men (Luke 7:28)—yet, he was imprisoned, murdered, and his head was placed on a platter (Mt 14:6-12). Stephen was stoned. Herod beheaded James. Nero beheaded Paul. Peter and Andrew were crucified,. Matthew died a martyr. A lance killed Thomas. Pharisees threw James from the temple, then stoned him and dashed his brains with a club. First Peter is an entire book devoted to Christian suffering injustices for the sake of Jesus Christ with no foreseeable resolution to this suffering in this life.

5. Blessings are promised and experienced, but suffering is never eliminated. In fact, the normal life of a person who follows the Lord involves both blessing and suffering. Over and over we are told of blessedness in and through the suffering (Matt. 5:1-12; 1 Pet. 1:1-9)

6. We do a disservice to ourselves and to others when we turn the avoidance of suffering and death into an idol. This is especially egregious when we suppress and distort the Word of God on the purpose of suffering in this life, namely to get us ready for the next life.

7. Divine peace and perspective in facing and enduring crisis, *not immunity from crisis*, testify to God's 100% goodness, 100% of the time, and His matchless grace, power, and glory. We are told to thank God for everything!
8. The goodness of God is behind our afflictions. For God to withhold afflictions would be for Him to withhold 100% goodness.
 - ❖ Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Thy statutes.

9. God uses suffering for the good of refining us, for character building.

Isaiah 48:10 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

Hebrews 5:8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;

10. God uses suffering for the good of punishing evil, Acts 5:1-11.

1 Corinthians 11:17 But in giving this instruction, I do not praise you, because you come together not for the better but for the worse. . . 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.

Acts 5:1-11.

11. God uses suffering for the good of displaying His work:

John 9:1 And as He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" ³ Jesus answered, "*It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.

12. God uses suffering for the good of motivating believers to trust Him,

1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves in order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;

13. God uses suffering for the good of cultivating humility, 2 Cor. 12:7-10.
14. God uses suffering for the good of exposing idols in our lives, Mat. 6:24; 1 Cor. 10:7-14; Col. 3:5.
15. God uses suffering for the good of reminding us that we are not in control.
16. God uses suffering for the good of breaking our independence and arrogance so we will trust Christ. Suffering shows us who we are so we can see what we need.

17. God uses suffering for the good of building Christlikeness,

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

18. God uses suffering for the good of motivating us to live in His holiness. God is far more interested in holiness than health.

Hebrews 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, that we may share His holiness. ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

19. God uses suffering for the good of bringing us into an intimacy with Him that would be otherwise impossible.
20. While it seems counterintuitive to thank God for the good of sufferings, the fact is that the Bible commands it and countless people have been transcendentally blessed by it.

Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

21. God is 100% sovereign, 100% good, 100% of the time—even in the most terrible situations. There really are no other options given the nature of reality and the special revelation of Scripture: God is either in absolute control or we live in a world that is governed by chance, people, and demons.
 - a. Overview of the metaphysics of God's absolute sovereign control. God is the existential cause behind all causes.
 - b. Special revelation: Acts 17:27; Col. 1:17; Eph. 1:11; Matt. 10:29; Jn 21:18.

- c. Regarding the problem of evil, we are told that God is already restraining an enormous amount of evil and suffering: *2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.*
- Why is it that when chaos breaks out, it is considered the exception rather than the rule)? Fatal car and airplane accidents are statistically rare.
 - Why haven't tyrants already destroyed this planet? Even on the terrible day when the New York's Twin Towers collapsed 15,000 came out alive.
 - What has kept infectious diseases and natural disasters from killing 99% of the world's population rather than less than 1%.
 - If God permitted people to follow their every evil inclination all the time, life on this planet would cease to exist.
 - Severe suffering is unacceptable to us precisely because we are unaccustomed to it.

- d. The goodness of God and sinful man. Fallen human beings could not survive in a perfectly just world where God punished evil immediately.
- What if every time a person sinned he was judged? Say that the instant a person became selfish, arrogant, idolatrous, gluttonous, lustful, ungrateful, a gossip, or a liar. What if God judged Him with a bolt of lightning to his brain that instant?
 - Do you believe that the world would be a better place if people were immediately judged for their sins?
 - Do you really want nothing but totally effective, instantaneous justice only to be followed by people being sent to Hell? What about Moses, David, Saul of Tarsus?

- e. We are not positioned to know how much suffering is required to accomplish God's best eternal purposes, nor how much lack of suffering might hinder His purposes.

- f. The argument that a good and all-powerful God should not permit pointless suffering assumes—without proving—that “pointless suffering” exists. There is no way any finite person can see any suffering as pointless. Only God is in the position to determine what is and isn't pointless. Some of the most meaningful accomplishments of our lives come in the context of our most difficult, seemingly pointless, suffering.

- g. Too many Christians get distracted by assigning their difficulties to Satan or to people or to self. You can have victory by knowing that God works through everything that comes our way. God can make everything good, from bad human genetics under the Fall, an unreasonable boss, or a surgeon's mishap to a horrible accident involving a small child. All we need to know is that it is all under God's control. And He always desires to fulfill His good purpose in all things, He is 100% good, 100% of the time

h. Satan loves to get believers to think that God is not perfectly good or absolutely in control. He knows that if we are not absolutely convinced that God is absolute Good, it will create a host of evil within our souls, beginning with lack of love for Him. Separation from understanding God's goodness creates distance and even rage against God for doing so little for us according to what we think is good. Then, we will choose to write our own scripts of life.

22. God's goodness includes a number of His attributes:

- a. His mercy, which is His goodness toward those in distress;
- b. His grace, which is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment;
- c. His patience, which is His goodness toward those who continue to sin over a period of time.

d. God's goodness is linked to His love

Psalm 23:6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

e. God's goodness is linked to His holiness

Psalm 65:4 How blessed is the one whom Thou dost choose, and bring near to Thee, To dwell in Thy courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, Thy holy temple.

f. God manifests His goodness to all people,

Psalm 145:9 The LORD is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.

Acts 14:17 and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.“

Matthew 5:45 in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

- g. God's goodness is absolute, there is absolutely no evil in Him. All evil is essentially defined by its absence of God (even opposition to God). He will never accommodate evil in any way.

Habakkuk 1:13 You are too just to tolerate evil; you are unable to condone wrongdoing.

Matthew 19:17 And He said to him, "Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

James 1:17 Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.

23. We humans define goodness from our finite and fallen perspective. Then, far too often, we tend to criticize God for failing to be good in our eyes.
- a. Man's standards compared to God's are much lower and debased, though this does not keep man from saying 'If I were all powerful I would stop A, B, or C.'
 - b. Imagine your child saying 'if I were you I would never discipline me or give me a shot or make me take that awful tasting medicine. Just let me run free in the neighbor and do whatever I want.' As a loving parent you never base your standards on your child, but on your knowledge and integrity and love. A loving parent makes their children eat veggies, clean their rooms, get their shots, and stay at home at nights. This is different from parents who let their kids do anything, including hanging out at the mall, and sleeping over with their sleazy buddies.
 - c. Illustration of a father who is seen slapping his son as he speeds down the road. What appears harsh could be great acts of love.

24. The existence of evil does not contradict God's goodness since God can use evil to bring about a greater good.

25. A good God will eliminate evil as far as He can without losing a greater good or bringing about a greater evil. God could eliminate some evil, but the result would be a greater evil. He could have killed Adam and Eve after they sinned, but then there would be no human race.

26. God's goodness on this earth is but a small sampling of the goodness of God that we will see in the ultimate Heaven when He will remove all evil, Rev 21:3-5. Then, we will see it all, the beauty of it all. We will be united with Beauty as we are united with God and His restored creation.

27. The eternal perspective and accountability at the JSJC.

- a. The point of the JSJC is accountability. Yes, both the believer and unbeliever are held accountable. The exception is that the believer is never accountable for his personal sins, Rom. 8:1. This is the single greatest blessing! Moreover, the JSJC is only for the bride of Christ.
- b. The central issue in all evaluations is love for the Lord and things of the God. Love really is the root, hinge, and central factor in all rewards. It is love for the Lord that motivates all activity worthy to be honored, 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Cor. 13; Mat 25:46; John 13:34-35; 1 Jn. 4:7-16.

- c. We will be evaluated by how our lives and ministry followed the Word of God, Jn 14:15. The Scriptures, with their commands and principles, will form the objective standard used by the Lord. He will not reward us based on traditions. It is all about His revealed Word. The study and application of God's Word is a key to our rewarding. How seriously do we take the Master's instructions? There are going to be a lot of surprises, especially in the ranks of liberal churches.

- d. We will be evaluated based on the extent to which we have been faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to us, 1 Cor. 4:2; Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27. Believers must always remember that they are held accountable for what has been given to them. Not what has been given to another.

- e. We will be evaluated on the basis of our motives, 1 Cor. 4:5. The Lord is not interested only in what we do but also why we do it (or do not do it). Those who live and serve with a desire to please and honor Christ will receive great reward. Those who live and serve motivated by self-promotion, financial gain, or some other illicit goal will not receive rewards.

- f. Negatively speaking, there will be loss of reward and a sense of shame for those who lived self-centered lives instead of Christ-centered lives, 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Jn 2:28.

- g. Positively speaking, rewards will consist of many blessings and privileges such as
- Serving Christ in greater ways in the Kingdom (Mat. 25:19-23; Lk 19:16-19),
 - Enjoying special joy and fellowship (Mat 25:21, 23; 1 Pt 4:12-13).
 - Being recipients of divine commendation, Matt 25:21
 - Receiving a variety of crowns, 1 Cor. 9:25; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pt 5:4.
 - Receiving rewards simply for remaining faithful under trials, Js 1:2, 3, 12; Rev. 2:10; 3:11.

- It will be the bride's exalted privilege to reign WITH the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There is a sense in which the bride is a co-sharer of the reign whereas others are only subjects of the King.
- It will be the bride's exalted privilege to spend eternity in Christ's palaces and on His throne. We will be companions and partners with Christ for all of eternity. He is preparing us for that now.
- The challenge for the Bride now is remain pure to Christ alone, 2 Cor. 11:2. We should never be tempted to live for the world as if it were our true lover and standard of value (1 Jn 2:15; Js 4:4; Rom. 12:2; Matt. 6:24).