

Jesus is Coming with a Reward

Matthew 16:27; 1 Corinthians 15:50–55

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Jesus coming again. One day He will return. When He comes He will bring with Him a reward. We are looking at several passages this month that help us understand what it means for to come again.

He will appear suddenly and now one knows when. At that moment He will gather all of His followers. We will all be rejoicing, giving thanks because our reward has arrived.

1 Corinthians 15:50–55 (NLT) What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!

When Jesus returns every believer will receive an eternal spiritual body. Your corrupted body is not allowed in heaven. Right now you and I are living in bodies that are corrupted. Our DNA and our chromosomes aren't perfect. That's the reason some people are prone to arthritis, diabetes, poor eyesight, spinal problems. Our corrupted bodies are prone to cancer, heart problems, blood pressure problems, digestive issues.

Not only do we have corrupted bodies, we have corrupted minds. Some people lean towards lying, stealing, gossiping, and even murder. There are people easily drawn to money, possessions, and all forms greedy notions. A corrupted mind is easily depressed, it can be bipolar, schizophrenic, and even captured by addictions.

I know this doesn't sound scientific or medical. But, we know all these things exist. People in the same family inherit some of these traits through generations. While siblings can have different sinful traits. We go back to the first two brothers. One had the trait of violence will the other didn't.

Since heaven is perfect your corrupted body won't be in heaven. There will be no diabetes, blindness, blood pressure problems in heaven. No heart attacks or strokes happen in heaven. There is no cancer, arthritis, or spinal problems in heaven. Your minds will be healed with no desire to kill, steal or lie. You won't think about what others have or what you don't have.

As a Christian, when Jesus returns you will be perfect in your new spiritual body. Your transformation as a Christian will be complete. You will have finally arrived as the person, the soul, God created you to be. Hints and pieces of you were created perfectly by God before you were born. You were made in the image of God. But sin, it's power, corrupted everything in your body and mind.

Your spirit and soul are just the way God wants you. You were clothed in flesh that became corrupted. We ask why did God create a baby with a faulty heart? God didn't but Satan corrupted you and your body.

When Jesus returns your new body, which is spiritual, will be perfect. Your soul and spirit will be in perfect relationship with God. Jesus has cleansed you of all the work of sin. But, in a corrupted world where Satan is still active the Holy Spirit is continually working to make you into a new creation.

When Jesus returns you will receive that uncorrupted spiritual body. You will receive that uncorrupted spiritual mind. There will be no sin, no evil thoughts in your head. There will be no distractions, no depression, no mental illnesses. You will be wholly and completely new. You will be holy and set apart from every form of sin.

1 Corinthians 15:52 (NLT) 52 It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.

We're too concerned about ourselves in the present situation while our hope lies in Jesus' return. When Jesus returns all of our past and present needs will be irrelevant. Imagine no longer being concerned about what happened yesterday, last year, or when you were a child. Too many of us are captured by the pain of the past. We get overwhelmed by our past mistakes. We get turned around and around by the things we did when we were young. We play the what if game too often.

We penalize ourselves for past events that were out of our control. I've heard people say God could never forgive me for what I've done. They know they've sinned, but the sin keeps them from believing in the grace, mercy and love of God. We all know people who have gone to the grave carrying bitterness in their hearts for an offense long forgotten. They wouldn't forgive the wrong that was done to them. You've met the individual who only looks at the past and holds on to it like its golden. But they've mistaken yesterday for today and tomorrow.

Then there are those of us who get so focused on this moment that they can't see anything else. They are wrapped in their personal happiness. Pleasure and distraction from the world's problems direct their actions. We're so focused on making our way through life that we fail to see the blessings of the moment. Every thing is bad and only getting worse. We quickly turn to the negative. We may actually enjoy complaining about all our problems.

We're busy with busyness, or gossip, or worry, or trouble. If there isn't a problem we make up one. If life is going well, we focus on what could go wrong. If we get bored we start talking somebody's problems like it's our business. If we don't have anything to do we create work.

Very simply the second coming of Christ will result in every Christian being in heaven where none of those things are a concern. We could right now focus our lives on Jesus. When Jesus returns we will see all those who have gone on before us. Every believer who has died will see every believer who is alive when Jesus comes.

We will know all the people who were believers and they will know us. Our new spiritual bodies will be like our corrupted bodies but not corrupted. I will see and know my parents, grandparents, and all the other family members I have out lived. You will see those people in your family. We will see old friends from our church life. We will see co-workers who trusted in Jesus. We will see childhood friends who believed in Jesus.

Recently, a friend of mine was misled by a thought shared at funeral. Using this passage the speaker at the funeral said their loved one was waiting for Jesus to return to be raised from the dead. The speaker went on to say that their loved one wasn't in heaven or hell, but in the grave. Well, that's not true.

Bones are in the grave, but not the soul and the spirit of the person. God is the God of the living and not of the dead. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, along with Moses, David, and the prophets have new

spiritual bodies in heaven. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Andrew, James, and Paul have new spiritual bodies in heaven. My dad, my mom, your loved ones who have died are in heaven with new spiritual bodies because they believed in Jesus as their Savior and Lord. When Jesus returns they will be seen by us all those who are living at that moment.

1 Corinthians 15:53 (NLT) For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

1 Peter 1:3 (NLT)

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation.

All who believe are changed now and forever because Jesus defeated sin and death. It's too hard to comprehend forever, but think about never being sick. Think about never having a headache. Think about never feeling lonely. Think about being filled with joy, hope, and peace. Your new, spiritual, resurrected body will be free of every disease. You won't ever feel pain again. You won't every be afraid. You won't every be alone.

When Jesus returns the new body He gives you will be made immortal. There have always been fables and myths of people seeking to live forever. They want immortality to pursue their own desires. All these stories end with life ending.

The story of Jesus is no myth. It isn't a fable. Jesus is the only one to promise life after death. He is the only one to guarantee the resurrection from the dead. He is the only one who will reign forever and ever. Every person, young and old, from every place on earth, from every ethnicity who believes Jesus rose from the dead will live in heaven. They will have a resurrected, transformed, immortal body.

Our hope for eternity is because Jesus made death irrelevant. It's not blind faith that I will have a new body and be in heaven forever. My faith is found in the hope that heaven is real. My faith is found in the hope that death has been defeated. My faith is found in the hope that Jesus is alive.

When Jesus went to the cross He became our sin. When Jesus died He put the penalty of sin to death. When Jesus rose from the dead, death became meaningless. Death no longer holds the power of fear or punishment. Jesus rose from the dead.

Death no longer is an ending. Jesus rose from the dead. Death is not merely a body lying in a grave, because Jesus rose from the dead. He has a new spiritual body. I will have a new spiritual body. You will have a new spiritual body. Death for every follower of Jesus is only a transition from this life of pain and hardship to heaven and a new resurrected body.

You will be like the risen Savior and Lord, Jesus. Your body will be like His body. Whatever scars and wounds, diseases and afflictions you entertained in this life, will no longer be in relevant when Jesus returns.

1 Corinthians 15:54–55 (NLT) Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”

Jesus defeated death giving us eternal hope, why wouldn't we want others to follow Jesus?

The day Jesus arrives every sinner will face something worse than death. Death will be the victor for sinners. Death will swallow sinners. Death will sting sinners. They will mourn, weep, and wail at the sight of the Son of Man. Their hearts will be broken, crushed, abandoned. Their souls and spirits will be judge, and they will suffer everything many times worse than life on earth.

They will enter hell for eternity because they did not choose to follow Jesus. The one thing that would keep every sinner out of hell is trusting Jesus. The one person who could rescue them is Jesus. Every sinner who refused to believe Jesus lived, died and rose from the dead will be dead. They will enter hell and be forever separated from God. That is real death – never being in a right relationship with Jesus.

I don't want this for other people. I don't want my neighbors, friends, or family to be in hell. I don't want strangers in my own community to be in hell. Last night was an outreach event on Main St. A band was playing songs written by the Beatles. I grew up with the Beatles, I know their songs. I'm completely surprised by the cross generations of people who know and listen to the Beatles.

So, I set up a table by the Gazebo on Main St. I put out Bibles, devotional books, children's story books about Jesus and little bracelets on the table. I greeted people as they walked by. I gave away a few Bibles and some of the other material. If there were a thousand people at the concert, I gave away four Bibles, five children's story books and all the devotional material. That's not even nine people. I spent most of my time praying for people – moms and dads with their kids, couples and individuals.

They didn't know I was praying for them. I can't count the number of people who were lifted up to the Lord.

To choose Jesus is to be forgiven, loved, empowered, and have eternal life. When Jesus forgives you of your sins, you are forgiven of your past, your present and your future. You are made clean of the sin and it's power to corrupt you. In the eyes of God it is as if you had never sinned. Jesus has taken away your sin and it's punishment. Jesus has given to you the hope of life in heaven with a new spiritual body.

When Jesus forgives your sins you know in your soul and in your spirit true love. You know that love is more than a feeling. The love of God washes over you and through you. The love of God changes how you view yourself, others, and God.

The love of God empowers you. When Jesus forgives your sins you are empowered. You have power over temptations and sin. You have power to separate yourself from sinful activities. You have the power to love other people. You are empowered to help others. You are empowered to love others.

When Jesus forgives your sins you have eternal life. Jesus makes you into a new creation, and begins to reveal to you what being heaven will be like. You begin to experience the height and depth, the width and the length of God's love for you.

Jesus doesn't want you in hell. When He returns He wants you to be rejoicing. At His arrival He wants to give you a new, resurrected, spiritual body. He wants to welcome you into eternal life.

What do you want? Do you want to continue to live in your corrupted body for eternity? Do you want to have a new spiritual body and live in heaven forever? Today, choose to turn away from your sin and turn to Jesus.