

Promise of a Hundredfold Reward

A man was complaining about God. He explained that he had been listening to a preacher on the television. The preacher promised his viewers that if they gave money to his ministry, God would then reward them one hundredfold. If he gave ten dollars, then God would give him one thousand dollars. If he gave one thousand dollars, God would give him one hundred thousand dollars. The man believed the preacher and then gave him some money. Apparently, he gave a great amount of money. Then he waited for God to reward him, but the reward never came. After awhile he became angry because he did not have a lot of money. He had given away a lot of his money and the promised reward never occurred. As a result, he became bitter against God. He believed that God had lied. Eventually, I tried to tell him that the preacher had lied and not God. But then he opened his Bible and read Mark 10:28-31. Sure enough the words said that God would give him one hundred times as much. But he had missed some important details. He missed the details because the preacher had deceived him. Then when he read the passage, it did appear that he was going to receive the promised reward. The same words are recorded in Matthew 19:27-30 and in Luke 18:28-30. Our study is about this promise. False teaching about this promise can be heard on both television and radio, and read in books. Let's discover what the Bible actually says and teaches.

We Have Left Everything. The gospels tell us that after Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, the disciples asked, "Who then can be saved?" We have already discovered that they asked that question because they believed

that wealthy people were favored by God. Many Christians think the same thing today, partially because of our desire for money. The truth is that both wealth and poverty are given by God (1 Samuel 2:8). Wealth is not always a sign

of blessing. In some cases it can be a test of character. The disciples thought that wealth was a sign of God's favor. As a result, Matthew 19:27 reveals that Peter was concerned.

Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You." Matthew 19:27 (NASB)

The gospel of Mark tells us the same thing. The disciples had left everything. The actual Greek states they had left "all."

That is, Peter said they had left *all that was their own*. They had left all of their own possessions. Now I am sure that you may be thinking that they did not actually leave everything. They would not have left their wives, children, and jobs. Then

we must read Luke 18:28. There Luke adds that Peter also said they had "left our own homes and followed You."

Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes and



[followed You.” Luke 18:28 \(NASB\)](#)

Now you may wonder if there is some important information in the Greek that can help us understand if they actually “left their own homes,” we discover an amazing word in the Greek was not translated accurately. The Greek word that is translated as “our own homes” comes from one Greek word, *idios*. The word is sometimes translated as “one’s property, family, dwelling, country, etc.”¹ The word can refer to your horse, car, house, wife, children, business, television, furniture, hobbies, and games. Peter’s message was that they had left much more than we would have expected or dreamed.

Earlier the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have revealed that Jesus called Peter and some of the disciples to follow Him. In John 1:35-42 we are told that Jesus was walking by two disciples. We are told that one disciple was named Andrew. Verse 35 tells us that John the Baptist and two of his disciples are standing together. Then verse 36-37 states that John,

[... looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. John 1:36-37 \(NASB\)](#)

These men did not realize that when they stepped out to follow Jesus they would eventually leave everything they called their own and follow Him the rest of their lives. We discover in verses 38-42 that they believed in Jesus, and later Peter believed in Jesus.

Next, Philip and then Nathaniel believed in Jesus and started following Jesus after He called, “Follow Me!” (John 1:43-51). John in chapters two through four teaches us they continued following Him until they returned to Galilee. But then Jesus left for Jerusalem and these men did not follow Him.

If we carefully piece the timeline together, we discover in Matthew and Mark that Jesus finds them on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). Peter and Andrew were casting their nets into the sea, and James

and John were mending their nets. Jesus repeated His call, “Follow Me!” Only this time He added that He would make them fishers of men, and not fish.

[And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. Matthew 4:19-20 \(NASB\)](#)

Then Jesus called James and John, and we are told,

[Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. Matthew 4:22 \(NASB\)](#)

They had left their businesses. But that did not last very long. Eventually, they returned to their businesses, homes, and family (Matthew 4:23-25).

If we carefully piece the timeline together again, we discover in Luke 5:1-12 that Jesus found them washing their nets this time. The first time they were fishing and mending nets. Also, there is now a crowd. This time Jesus commands Peter to cast his net into the deep water. But Peter objected and explained that they had been fishing all night and had not caught anything. But Peter finally did as Jesus commanded. When the disciples did, they caught so many fish that the nets began to break apart. Peter then signaled to James and John to help by bringing their boat alongside. Then both boats began to sink because of this monstrous dream catch of fish. Finally, Peter fell at Jesus’ feet and worshiped Him. Verse 11 adds this incredible statement,

[When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him. Luke 5:11 \(NASB\)](#)

So, Peter was correct. They had left everything for Christ.

Yes, Peter had a business (Mark 1:16-20), a house (Mark 1:29), a wife (1 Corinthians 9:5), and a mother-in-law (Mark 1:30). He may have had children, but we are never told about any. We can understand that he kept returning to his business, home, wife, mother-in-law, and children, if he had any. But eventually Peter and the other men understood that Jesus wanted them to leave everything and follow Jesus. So,

1. Joseph Henry Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 297.

they did. Now here in Luke 18:28, Peter said,

Behold, we have left our own homes and followed You.
Luke 18:28 (NASB)

Peter told the literal truth. They had sacrificed everything for Christ. How were they supported? Mark 15:41 and Luke 8:1-3 reveals people gave money to support Jesus and the disciples. We must remember that Jesus said,

The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. Matthew 8:20 (NASB)

Rewards For The Disciples.

Matthew 19:28 records Jesus' reply to the disciples. It says,

And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration

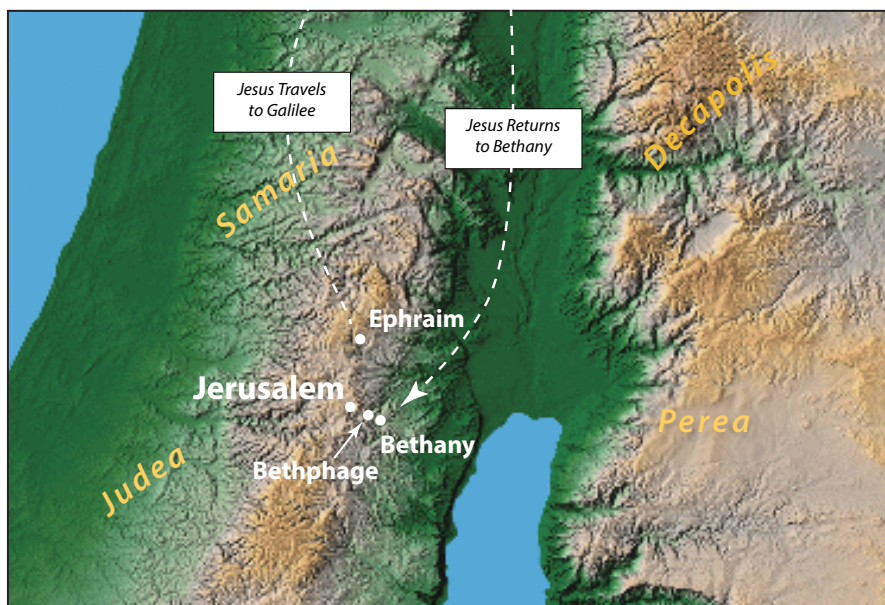
when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:28 (NASB)

The Greek grammar tells us that the "you" in this verse is plural. This helps us understand that Jesus spoke directly to the twelve disciples. Jesus promised them that "when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne," then they will "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Imagine reigning in the kingdom with Christ! The disciples will be joint rulers in the kingdom. They will have a significant role in the kingdom. What an incredible reward for giving up everything in this life and following Christ!

But maybe the most impressive statement that Jesus made to the disciples regarding rewards for them occurred later in the Upper Room on the night in which Jesus was betrayed by Judas. Luke 22:28-30 records Jesus' statement to the disciples,

You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Luke 22:28-30 (NASB)

The Greek word, *diameno*, that is translated as "have stood,"



actually has the sense of "having remained with" or "associating with." That is, because the disciples had remained with Christ in spite of all the trials, He will grant them the permission to eat with Him in the kingdom. Now that is a position of honor. Then Jesus

repeated His earlier promise. They will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The rewards for the faithful disciples are great.

Later in 1 Corinthians 6:2, we are told that all of the saints will judge the world,

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? 1 Corinthians 6:2 (NASB)

If we take all of these verses together, this may mean the twelve disciples will judge Israel, and the rest of all of the saints will judge everyone else in the kingdom.

Then in 1 Corinthians 6:3, the Holy Spirit tells us that we will also judge the angels.

Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry In Perea - Winter of A.D. 33

	Ten Lepers Healed	Second Coming Prophesied	Parables On Prayer	Jesus On Divorce	Children In The Kingdom	Riches and The Kingdom	Owner & Laborers	3rd Prophecy Death & Resurrection	Pride of Disciples	Blind Man Healed
Matthew				19:1-12	19:13-15	19:16-30	20:1-16	20:17-19	20:20-28	20:29-34
Mark				10:1-12	10:13-16	10:17-31		10:32-34	10:35-45	10:46-52
Luke	17:11-19	17:20-37	18:1-14		18:15-17	18:18-30		18:31-34		18:35-43
John										

Do you not know that we will judge angels? 1 Corinthians 6:3 (NASB)

Most likely this means the saints will judge the evil angels or demons. 2 Timothy 2:12 summarizes the glory that Christ will give to His elect, to His saints. The verse says,

If we endure, we will also reign with Him;
If we deny Him, He also will deny us. 2 Timothy 2:12 (NASB)

The responsibility that will be given to the saints will be a reign over every unbeliever. What a fitting reward for the unbelievers who have rebuked, ridiculed, insulted, or persecuted a believer.

Now it is important to notice the Holy Spirit does not tell us how the saints will judge the world during the kingdom. That is, will the saints judge in the world in civil and criminal matters or in some other capacity? All that we are told is the saints will judge the world. Also, we are not told how we will judge the evil angels. We also only know that Jesus said the

twelve disciples will judge the nation of Israel.

Rewards For Every Believer. Then Jesus gave a promise to everyone, not just the disciples.

Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. Mark 10:29-30 (NASB)

The gospels of Matthew and Luke provide a briefer quote with less information. That is, what the gospel of Mark has recorded is sufficient for us to understand Jesus’ next comment. Apparently, Jesus reworded His comment, which is typical for a good teacher. Good teachers repeat a principle in different ways in order to convey important truths. Both Matthew and Luke report an alternate statement. They record “many times as much” and not “hundred times as

much.” But their quotes do not change the meaning of Jesus’ statement since His statement is figurative and not literal. Why? We will soon explain.

The man that was mentioned in the introduction of this study did not understand Jesus’ comment. When he read verses 29-30, he did not read it with “seeing eyes.” Instead, he let the preacher’s interpretation affect how he read these two verses. He missed the obvious! Consequently, he believed that if he gave up ten dollars, God would then give him one hundred times ten dollars or one thousand dollars. It is sad that he did not understand Jesus was speaking figuratively and became discouraged and disappointed. It is also horrible that he received nothing in return for his donation because the man was a poor man who I knew personally.

Reasons Why The Promise Was Figurative. Those who claim that Jesus promised a one hundredfold return to those who donate money have missed some very important facts.

First, notice that Jesus had just taught the disciples that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for the wealthy to gain eternal life. Since Jesus said that, why would He promise the disciples that they could gain wealth? That could create a stumbling block for the disciples! Why would Jesus have created a potential stumbling block for His disciples?

Second, if this promise was factually true why did Paul not just give money to the church in Jerusalem so that he could become extremely wealthy and fund his ministry rather than depending upon the churches to provide for him? Philippians 4:10-14 tells us Paul depended upon the gifts of the Philippians to help him in his ministry. This reveals the apostles recognized that Jesus’ statement about the one hundredfold return was figurative. It was not literal.

If the disciples were alive today, they could give \$100, and thus gain a one hundredfold return, or \$10,000. Then they could give that \$10,000 and receive one million dollars. Then they could give the one million dollars and receive \$100 million in return! In just six months any Christian could become a billionaire. If this claim is fact, why don’t the preachers who encourage people to give like this give their own money away? Then they would not need anyone else’s money. Again, this reveals the apostles recognized that Jesus’ statement about

the one hundredfold return was a figurative statement.

Third, we are told that Peter had already given up everything (v. 28). It then appears that Jesus tried to encourage him and the other disciples when He told them that if they left their homes, their immediate family (parents, brothers and sisters), their children, and their farms, *then they would receive a blessing*. In the gospel of Luke, we are told Jesus had also included the man’s wife (Luke 18:29-30). This is an important fact. Jesus said that in order to receive blessings, the person must be willing to give up everything. How many people are willing to give up everything in order to get a one hundredfold return?

Fourth, if someone did give up everything, Jesus said they would receive one hundred times as many homes, mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, children, and farms, and we need to add wives. This reveals that we cannot understand Jesus’ promise to be a literal statement. He did not mean that we would actually receive a one hundredfold return of the exact things that had been left behind. Why? The answer is found when we answer the question, “How could a man receive one hundred times as many mothers and fathers?” We can imagine a man receiving one hundred children and wives. Some men might like one hundred wives! But how can anyone have one hundred mothers and fathers? Biological science teaches us that a person can only be born to one mother and father. It is not possible for a person to have one hundred parents. This immediately reveals that this promise is figurative, not literal.

Fifth, Jesus’ promise also reveals that He was not promising believers a life of wealth and comfort. Notice that Jesus also said the person will receive persecution. Most people would love receiving the one hundredfold blessings and eternal life, but they would not enjoy the persecution! This helps us understand that Jesus was not promising every believer they would receive money. Jesus was not promising wealth and a life of comfort.

Yes, Jesus said in Mark 10:30 that they would receive a one hundredfold return in this present life and also have eternal life, but once again the apostles did not follow this advice. The early church was poor and so they collected money (1 Corinthians 16:1). They did not give money to receive one hundredfold return. They understood Jesus’ promise was

figurative.

So, what did Jesus mean by a one hundredfold return in this life and also the gain of eternal life? The correct interpretation of Jesus' promise is that any person who has lost everything for Christ will receive many great spiritual blessings in this life and gain eternal life. We forget that spiritual blessings are far more valuable than earthly blessings. Remember Jesus' promise in Matthew 5:10-11 which states,

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. Matthew 5:10-11 (NASB)

A great illustration is found in Hebrews 10:32-36. It was written to some Christians who had been persecuted. Listen to the encouragement given to them by the Holy Spirit,

But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. Hebrews 10:32-36 (NASB)

This helps us understand what Jesus meant by leaving everything and willingly suffer persecution for Him and the gospel. Some believers will intentionally leave everything for Christ and others will be forced to leave everything. Obviously, some people who claim to be Christians will refuse to suffer. But true Christians will choose to suffer rather than cling to luxury and comfort.

Conclusion. Hebrews 11:25-26 also reminds us that Moses choose Christ over the passing pleasures that Egypt offered. The passage says,

... rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. Hebrews 11:25 (NASB)

Why would Jesus encourage us to seek wealth when it will wage war against the very spiritual life of some believers and potentially motivate them to stumble? Jesus warns us in Matthew 6:24 that we cannot serve God and wealth. Moses understood that.

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Matthew 6:24 (NASB)

1 Timothy 6:9-10, 17 also warns believers about money. The truth is it is the rare believer who is not greatly tempted to stumble due to money.

This helps us understand that the correct interpretation of Jesus' promise is *not* that someone will receive one thousand dollars if they give ten dollars to the church or to some pastor. Jesus wants us to understand that if we sacrifice ourselves for Him in this life, He will greatly reward us in this life and in the life of to come. His promise of persecution also reveals that our reward in heaven will be great.

Finally, Mark 10:31 reports that Jesus concluded His teaching with,

But many who are first will be last, and the last, first. Mark 10:31 (NASB)

What did Jesus mean by this statement? It would appear from the other times that Jesus used the phrase (Matthew 19:30; 20:16; Luke 13:20) that He used the expression to mean different things, depending upon the situation. Jesus told us in

Matthew 15:15-20 that what comes out of our mouths actually comes from our hearts. We cannot hide the real person. Eventually, our heart gives us away! We must remember 1 Samuel 16:7 which says,

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7 (NASB)

This helps us to understand what appears to be Jesus’ statement. Man thinks that presidents, governors, mayors, business leaders, ministry leaders, pastors, and other officials are first and the rest of us are last. But it appears in contrast that since the disciples stated they gave up everything, they viewed themselves to be last in place. Jesus wants to encourage them that they will be first in the kingdom. That is what He has already said in Matthew 19:28. They will be rulers over the twelve tribes of Israel. We must also remember there will be degrees of suffering in hell (Luke 10:13-15; 12:47) and degrees of reward (Daniel 12:2-3; 1 Corinthians 3:14-15; 2 John 8).

Therefore, we can understand Jesus’ statement that many who are thought of as in first place will be last. Many wealthy and popular elites in the world will come in last in the kingdom and in hell. Also, those who are last or despised in this world will be first in the kingdom and in heaven. This would have been a great encouragement to the disciples who had given up everything for Christ. It is also an encouragement for every saint who has ever died for God. This also reveals God’s justice. He rewards us according to our love and devotion for Him. He is not blind. He rewards us according to His justice! Are you motivated to serve Christ and if need be to die for Him?