

BETTER PREPARE NOW

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There are lots of Christians and Church people around? We're among them!

But — one big difference.

Many believe “once saved always saved” ... so just wait till one day you go to heaven.

Others believe we need to make some attempt to live right — then go to heaven.

It is not at all clear what you do when you get to heaven. It is assumed that millions of dead saints are now in heaven — today. What are they doing up there today?

Hopefully we realise that we didn't just accept Jesus as our Saviour ... and are just now waiting to die and go to heaven? And that's our job done

God has something more in mind for us.

Revelation 1:4-6

4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

5 and from **Jesus Christ**, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him **who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood**,

6 **and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father**, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We're Kings and Priests! Something rather special. An important status to have. Is that how we see ourselves?

Revelation 20:1-6

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. **Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.**

5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.**

6 **Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.**

If we believe this is our future ... if it's "real" — would it not influence how we live now?

1 Peter 2:4-5

4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,

5 **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We are a Holy Priesthood. Very different to the average person today.

1 Peter 2:9-10

9 **But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people**, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;

10 **who once were not a people but are now the people of God**, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

A Royal Priesthood.

1 Peter 2:9 (WEYMOUTH)

9 But you are a chosen race, **a priesthood of kingly lineage**,

This is no surprise — since we're sons and daughters of a King.

Revelation 3:11-13

11 Behold, I am coming quickly! **Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.** (*Crowns belong to victors*)

12 **He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God,** and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' '

Don't lose your crown! (The crown that was meant for you. Don't lose out to someone else)

We can be a pillar — key people in God's ruling city.

Revelation 3:20-22

20 **Behold, I stand at the door and knock.** (*Indicating that Christ is outside this group ... knocking to come in*) If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

21 **To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne,** as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' ' "

If we let Jesus in — we get to sit on Jesus' throne! To share His authority — and honour.

It seems a very different future than just "going to heaven".

Reigning and ruling with Jesus as Kings and Priests. And not just over the nations of that day.

1 Corinthians 6:1-3

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

2 **Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?** And if the world will be judged by you, **are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?**

3 **Do you not know that we shall judge angels?** How much more, things that pertain to this life?

We will even judge angels!

There is not much evidence that we just go to heaven and float on clouds all day?

Romans 8:16-18

16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

We are heirs and joint heirs. Royal Family.

Romans 8:28-30

28 **And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 **Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

Glorified.

There's much more ahead of us than we'll ever experience in this life.

Compare millions of years with 70 or 80 or 90 years.

Compare eternal glory to our current routines. A fantastic future.

But — shouldn't such an incredible future have some influence on how we live here and now?

Do we see that our lives today are ... are least in part ... preparation for the future lives that we will live ... of what is to come?

That should make us different to many of those around us. Our values. Our priorities.

Luke 19:11-27

11 Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.

12 **Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.**

13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, **'Do business till I come.'**

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

15 **"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.**

16 **Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.'**

17 And he said to him, **Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'**

18 **And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.'**

19 Likewise he said to him, **'You also be over five cities.'**

20 **"Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief.**

21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' **(Rather insulting)**

22 And he said to him, Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew **(did you?)** that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. **(A thief?)**

23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

24 **"And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'**

25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')

26 'For I say to you, that **to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.**

27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.' "

GET BUSY NOW! QUALIFY TO RULE LATER!

Only a parable — but it implies we rule later (consistent).

But — **now** is the time to be preparing! **THESE ARE THE DAYS THAT WE NEED TO BE DOING!**

Ecclesiastes 9:10

10 **Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might**; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.

The time for action is now! We don't want to leave it "too late"?

We know we have a great future ... even if some details are sketchy and may not always seem "real" to us.

Ephesians 5:13-17

13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

14 Therefore He says:

**"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."**

15 **See then that you walk circumspectly**, not as fools but as wise,

16 **redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Don't sleep! Be busy! Redeem the time!

Ephesians 5:16 (NIV)

16 **making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.**

Ephesians 5:16 (NET)

16 **taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil.**

Ephesians 5:16 (CJB)

16 **Use your time well, for these are evil days.**

The clock is ticking. Even if you're still young today ... your days are limited.

A couple of sayings out there:

“Time is more valuable than money. You can always get more money. You cannot get more time”.

“The bad news is time flies. The good news is ... you’re the pilot”.

In many ways ... these are our days of preparation. It would be a shame to waste them.

Matthew 25:14-17

14 **“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.**

15 **And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability;** and immediately he went on a journey.

16 **Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.**

17 **And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.**

They took action — traded. Redeemed the time.

Matthew 25:18

18 **But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord’s money.**

This person took no action.

Matthew 25:19-23

19 **After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.**

20 **“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents,** saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’

21 **His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.** Enter into the joy of your lord.’

22 **He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’**

23 His lord said to him, **Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.** Enter into the joy of your lord.'

They were rewarded — rulership.

Matthew 25:30

30 **And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.** There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

All that time ... and he did nothing. Did he work while the master was away? The Lord called him a wicked and lazy servant. He wasn't busy! Didn't use the opportunities.

The time to be busy is when the Master is away. Don't wait for His return!

As future kings ... we should be training "in the Word" ... renewing our minds.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

14 "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,'

15 **you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you;** you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.

16 But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, You shall not return that way again.'

17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

18 "Also it shall be, **when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites.**

19 **And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes,**

20 **that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom,** he and his children in the midst of Israel.

The king needed to write a copy of Torah — and read it — every single day of his life!

That's a good use of time for a king — or a person with kingly ambitions.

We've only got so much time ... so it can be a time to prioritise — one hour watching Downton Abbey ... or an hour reading God's Word?

Of course ... we need time for rest and relaxation — not “on the go” all of the time.

But ... be watchful ... a life of “goofing off” isn't conducive to being a king. And what we read we should put into action. BEING “DOERS”!

Luke 13:6-9

6 He also spoke this parable: **“A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.**

7 **Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?’**

8 **But he answered and said to him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilise it.**

9 **And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.’ ”**

God expects to get some “fruit”. And ... there is a time element. Our “growing” season is now! Using our time wisely.

Revelation 19:4-9

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!”

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

7 **Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”**

8 **And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

9 Then he said to me, **"Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"** And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

The wife has made herself ready. When? Now!

It's easy to be distracted — we have competing priorities — some very important — we need time for rest and leisure.

But ... we also need to be fully aware that this life is all we've got for preparation.

REDEEM THE TIME! CARPE DIEM!