

STARS IN OUR CROWN?

By Denver Cheddie

There is a belief going around that for every person we win to Christ, we will receive a star in our crown in the next life. I have searched in vain for any such teaching in the Bible. This is a belief that has been propagated by tradition – one preacher hears it from another and starts preaching it and so on, and no one ever stops to check it. Having said this, it is by no means a deadly false doctrine that will cause many to burn in hell, but it is unbiblical. Not only is the specific teaching not found in scripture, the principle behind it is also contradictory to the teaching of scripture.

Dan. 12:3. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

This is the closest the Bible comes to teaching it. This passage states that the righteous, who win souls, will shine as stars in the next life. It does not say anything about stars in their crowns. They are the ones shining as stars.

Luke 17:7-10.

7 But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? 8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Jesus gives this parable which unmistakably teaches that we could never do more than we are called to do. We can never go beyond the call. We can do

less, but never more. Every good thing we do was ordained by God. We can do God no favors therefore we cannot receive extra reward, but for the most a full reward (2 John 8).

Luke 19:11-26.

11 ¶ And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us. 15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, *thou* wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? 24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

In this parable, Jesus teaches that his people receives rewards in heaven based on their faithfulness (vs. 17), while the enemies of God are punished. Our reward in heaven is based not on the amount of work we do, but our faithfulness in doing what we are called to do. According to this parable the reward is the extent of one's rule. We will reign with Christ (Rev. 20:6) even over angels (1 Cor. 6:3). How much rule we obtain is dependant on our faithfulness in this life. Now that is worth sacrificing our lives for, not some stupid stars in our crown.

Another question is who exactly receives credit when someone is won to Christ? 1 Cor. 3:5-9 state that we all have a part to play. Some plant, others water, but God gives the increase. It is God who gets the credit of saving

people. We play various roles in the process. Some pray, some preach, some teach new converts, some support financially, some equip others to win souls. Who gets the reward? All do depending on each individual's faithfulness.

This "stars in our crown" doctrine encourages competition in the body of Christ rather than co-operation. It gives the impression that some will be in a lowly position in heaven while others live in royalty. This is far from correct since in the next life, envy and pride will be no more. Thus it is unbiblical.

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