

9



A Hundredfold Reward on a Restored Earth

Review

Chapter 8 presented the biblical case for postrestorationism. I demonstrated that since Christ ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father, God's plans for the future will unfold while Christ remains seated on his throne in heaven. Jesus taught that after his ascension, "**from now on** the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God" (Luke 22:69). From his throne in heaven, Christ has all the divine authority and power necessary to execute and complete God's plan of redemption.

To understand God's endgame, it is critical to understand the following forms of Christ sitting on his throne in heaven:

- He sits on his throne in heaven and ***waits on the Father*** to say when it is time for him to rule the world.
- He sits on his throne in heaven ***to govern this world*** during his messianic kingdom when Satan is removed.
- He sits on his throne in heaven ***to judge mankind*** when he comes again, rewarding his people with eternal life and punishing unbelievers with eternal condemnation.
- He sits on his throne in heaven ***to create the eternal new heavens and new earth*** as our eternal home.

Christ's Struggles in This World

While Christ was on this earth, he was filled with the joy and peace of the Holy Spirit without measure. But he did not live what we would consider an abundant life. He experienced considerable unhappiness in this fallen world. He agonized over the physical condition of the multitudes that came to him to be healed. He was often exasperated by the disciples' slowness of understanding. He was sad when his hometown rejected him. He was deeply disturbed by the people's hard hearts. He was indignant when the temple was turned into a center of commerce and profit. He was infuriated by the unwarranted hostility he received from the Pharisees and religious leaders. He was appalled at their hypocrisy and their refusal to show compassion for the people. He lamented the failure of the Jews to recognize the coming of their own Messiah. His public ministry was often exhausting, and he thought foxes and birds had better homes and places of rest than he did. His death was not pleasant either.

As his followers, we should expect to experience some of the same anguish that he experienced. Many of us live comfortable lives and are too content with this materialistic world. We have become insensitive to the evil around us, unlike Lot who was considered righteous because he was distressed by the sexual depravity around him in Sodom (2 Peter 2:7).

The disciples experienced great deprivation as they followed Christ even though they, too, were filled with inner joy and peace from the indwelling Holy Spirit. They faced significant opposition from unrighteous Roman and Jewish rulers. Their houses and land were sometimes confiscated. They were abandoned by family members. They were jailed, and most of them were martyred. The first century was not paradise on earth. The apostle Paul experienced both internal and external suffering because he sacrificially followed Christ:

Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one . . . with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers,

danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. (2 Cor. 11:23–27)

For someone who experienced an abundant internal life of the Spirit, Paul lived a pretty miserable physical and emotional life.

Throughout history, some saints may have lived pleasant, albeit short, lives. But all have lived with some level of misery, sickness, and death. Some lived miserably as a result of their faith:

Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. (Heb. 11:35–38)

Christ promised, however, that during his millennial reign he will make it up to his followers when they inherit the restored Edenic earth for a thousand years before they are taken to heaven, where they will experience a new kind of eternal paradise.

Amillennialists like to note that the Bible only references a millennial reign of Christ in the complex and symbolic book of Revelation. But God knows that we can link the millennium described in Revelation to other scriptures to make sense of John's vision. When developing a theology of the future, theologians must be able to synthesize these scriptures into a coherent eschatology.

Hundredfold Reward for Following Christ

Christ made an important reference to his earthly kingdom that can easily be linked to his 1,000-year reign described by John. This passage has been referenced in preceding chapters, but in this chapter it will be explored in greater detail. Christ was approached by a rich man who wanted to know how he could inherit eternal life. Christ

asked him to sacrificially follow him by giving up his riches, which had become his idol. But the rich man walked away sad because his heart had become too attached to the temporal things of this world. He was living what he had thought was the good life and did not want to give it up to follow Christ.

Afterward, the disciples asked Christ a question regarding what they would inherit, since they *were* willing to leave everything to follow him. Christ's extraordinary answer is packed with meaning:

Then Peter said in reply, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world [the restored earth], when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne [to rule the world], you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold [when the earth is renewed] and [in addition] will inherit eternal life [in the heavenly kingdom in the age to come]." (Matt. 19:27–29)

Mark recorded the same conversation:

"I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel [those willing to experience deprivation following Christ] will fail to receive a hundred times as much *in this present age* (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—and with them, persecutions) and *in the age to come*, eternal life." (Mark 10:29–30 NIV; cf. Luke 18:29–30)

The reference to "persecutions" in Mark's account is parenthetical. For followers of Christ, persecution often comes with the territory. That is because Satan remains the ruler of this present evil age. And sinful rulers under his influence continue to govern the world. In their day, Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod, and the high priest ruled their world.

But in the future, when Christ is ruling the world in this Genesis age, the earth will experience an age of righteous humanity. The disciples will inherit a hundredfold reward of houses, lands, and extended

human families. And they will assist Christ in ruling over Israel. Then, in the age to come, they will inherit eternal life. This occurs when Christ comes again to usher in the Father's eternal kingdom. Paul taught:

But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits [the first man to be resurrected into an eternal body], then at his coming those who belong to Christ [the saints are raptured into eternal bodies like his]. Then comes the end [of this Adamic age], when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father [in the eternal age to come]. (1 Cor. 15:23–24)

Jesus taught that when he is ruling the world in this Adamic age, the disciples will experience the “new world.” This word is translated from the Greek word *palingenesia*. It means the rebirth of this Genesis creation or the “regeneration” of the earth, as translated by the American Standard Version. One could describe God's curse on the Genesis earth as a form of *degeneration* such that the current natural world is in a fallen, degenerate state. This explains why there are earthquakes, floods, droughts, famines, diseases, and other natural calamities.

Conversely, in the future when Christ rules the world, he will remove the curse of degeneration. Then, through a process of regeneration, he will restore this creation to its pre-fallen state of paradise. The curse will be removed, and the natural world will be restored to its Edenic condition.

Christ performed many miracles while he was on this earth, such as healing the blind, the deaf, and the paralyzed. These miracles required a regeneration of major body parts to their original functions. He also regenerated the natural body of Lazarus, even though it had experienced significant decay after four days. And from a few fish and loaves of bread, he generated enough food to feed a crowd of five thousand people. These regenerative powers over nature and the human body that Christ demonstrated while he was on this earth should give us a sense of what he was referring to when he spoke about the future regeneration of this Genesis creation.

Notice that Christ characterized the hundredfold reward as an Adamic existence with “houses” as human habitats, with “lands” for food production, and with human companionships that are derived from marriage, such as “father or mother or children.” In this Genesis

age, the human experience as men and women is structured around marriage and procreation. In fact, Jesus was probably alluding to Isaiah 65, which describes the messianic kingdom as a human paradise. Read the following verses carefully with Christ's promise in mind:

“They shall build houses and inhabit them [“houses”]; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit [“lands”]. . . . They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity [“father or mother or children”]. . . . The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox [when the earth is regenerated to its Edenic condition], . . . They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,” says the LORD [peace and prosperity on earth when the Messiah is ruling the world]. (65:21–25)

Christ was clearly referencing his messianic kingdom as described by Isaiah when he informed the disciples that they would inherit a hundredfold reward on this earth as restored human beings.

Christ's promises can be summarized as follows. When the Son of Man sits “on his glorious throne” in heaven and rules the world, the Genesis creation will be renewed, restored, or regenerated to its Edenic condition. The disciples will inherit a life that is a hundred times better than the rich man's life, with houses, lands, and extended human families. They will also assist Christ by ruling over Israel. After experiencing this restoration, when he comes again they will inherit eternal life in the age to come.

But the disciples lived out their lives in the first century on a cursed earth with Satan still ruling the world. Since they all died in the first century before Christ's reign began, how is Christ going to fulfill his promise to them of a wonderful life on a restored earth before he returns to take them to heaven? With Revelation as a guide, we can begin to understand Christ's endgame and how he will fulfill these promises.

The Two Resurrections

The book of Revelation may at times seem obscure, but it is important because it is a continuation of Christ's teachings. As John revealed in the very first verse: “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him [the apostle John] to show to his servants the things that must

soon take place” (Rev. 1:1). A critical part of this revelation of God’s endgame are the two resurrections described in chapter 20. John taught that the way the disciples and all the departed ransomed people of God will inherit the regenerated earth will be through the first resurrection:

They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. . . . This is the first resurrection. . . . they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years [on the regenerated earth when Christ sits on his throne to rule the world]. (Rev. 20:4–6)

John did not specify what kind of bodies the resurrected saints will have. Will they be natural bodies or immortal bodies? In the previous chapter, I made the case that the first resurrection can be linked to the resurrection that Ezekiel portrayed in his vision of the valley of dry bones coming to life. Ezekiel described the departed Jewish saints as being resurrected into reconstituted human bodies of flesh and blood that would experience marriage and reproduction when they entered the restored promised land in the messianic kingdom. It is a vivid portrayal of the resurrection of natural, Adamic bodies.

In the millennium, the saints throughout the ages will come back to life free of any infirmities and handicaps they may have had. Isaiah foresaw this restoration of our health during the messianic kingdom:

And no inhabitant will say, “I am sick”; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity. . . . Say to those who have an anxious heart, . . . “He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. (Isa. 33:24; 35:4–6)

With this in mind, Christ’s promise of a hundredfold reward begins to make sense. When Christ rules the world during the millennium, our departed Adamic bodies will be regenerated into natural bodies at the first resurrection so that we can inherit the regenerated natural earth. We will marry and live abundant lives on a restored earth during a time of peace and prosperity. To fulfill the promise of eternal life, Christ will return after the millennium on the last day of this Genesis

age at the final resurrection to resurrect and transform our natural bodies into immortal bodies so that we can inherit eternal life in the Father's kingdom in the age to come.

The rich man who wanted eternal life did not understand what he was walking away from. He traded his brief, wealthy life in a frail human body on a cursed earth for what could have been a life of abundance on a restored Genesis earth as a healthy human being for a thousand years. And then in the age to come, he could have inherited eternal life as an immortal child of God in an eternal paradise! Jesus taught us that wealthy people tend to be complacent and to think that their lives in this world are as good as it gets; whereas, poor people are more likely to realize that something is wrong with this world. The poor tend to long for and search for a better life.

The Restoration

The word *restoration* is an accurate way to portray the millennium. During Christ's millennial reign, our bodies will be *restored* to healthy human bodies. The Genesis creation will be *restored* to its Edenic condition. The nation of Israel will be *restored* to the land promised to Abraham. And with Satan removed, Christ will be *restored* to his rightful place as the true God of this world. The millennium will be a *restoration* of this Genesis creation to its original function and purpose.

We tend to think that this future paradise will be for *our* pleasure. It will be for our pleasure, but the most important aspect of the millennial kingdom is that it will be for the Son of God's pleasure and glory. Before Adam and Eve rebelled against him, he delighted in his good creation. He enjoyed fellowship with righteous humanity in the garden of Eden and looked forward to mankind reproducing godly offspring and expanding this Edenic paradise throughout the earth.

But the Son of God was robbed of this pleasure when Adam and Eve disobeyed him, letting Satan into this world. His magnificent creation became demonized and cursed. An age of unrighteous and depraved humanity dawned. This fallen world has surely brought him great anguish and disappointment. At one point before the flood in Noah's day, when mankind had become exceptionally corrupt and evil, he expressed regret that he had even created this world. The world has lost its glory as God's kingdom on earth. As sinful human beings

living in an age of unrighteous humanity, we all fall short of the glory of a holy and righteous God.

Reformed theologians believe that the chief purpose of mankind is to glorify God. This is true, yet the future restoration is also for the glory of God. For one thousand years, he will once again delight in his creation when it is restored to its original glory. Notice that the word *glorious* is used to describe Christ's reign: "when the Son of Man will sit on his *glorious* throne." It is not that the throne itself is glorious; rather, his reign over the restored earth and a restored humanity will reflect his glory as our God and Creator and Savior.

As Christians, we are supposed to bring him glory in all aspects of our lives. Yet in this current evil age, we remain sinful humans and rarely bring him the glory he deserves. During the future restoration, however, an age of righteous humanity will dawn, and we will once again bring him great honor and glory.

I have discussed these verses about Christ's future reign over the restored earth with numerous amillennial theologians. Many insist that the promised "hundredfold" reward is *metaphorical*. They claim that it represents the internal joy and peace the disciples experienced as they walked with God through this troubled world. Paul experienced the joy of the Holy Spirit throughout all his various forms of misery.

But I point out that this *cannot* be what Christ is referring to because Christ links the hundredfold reward the disciples will experience *directly* to the removal of the curse and the regeneration of this earth to its Edenic condition. The curse on this Genesis earth was obviously not removed in the first century. Christ had even predicted that earthquakes and famines would continue to occur in the disciples' lifetimes. Therefore, Christ must be referring to a *future* period of human history when the disciples and all followers of Christ will receive a hundredfold reward on a *regenerated earth*—before they inherit eternal life when he returns.

Other amillennialists assert that the regenerated earth is a reference to *the eternal new heavens and new earth*. But Christ states that the hundredfold reward associated with the regenerated earth will occur "in this present age" and that the reward of eternal life in the eternal kingdom will occur "in the age to come." Consequently, the regenerated earth refers to this Genesis earth when Christ rules the

world—not to the future new heavens and new earth when he delivers his kingdom over to his Father.

Premillennialists, too, have an odd interpretation of these teachings. They have the departed disciples coming back to this earth at the first resurrection in their raptured, eternal bodies which are not given in marriage. Yet, Christ plainly describes the saints as experiencing a human paradise on this earth in their natural bodies, with marriage and extended human families as described by Isaiah and Ezekiel. We will inherit the regenerated earth through the regeneration of our natural human bodies, and when Christ returns, we will inherit the kingdom of heaven through the rapture and transformation of our natural bodies into immortal bodies. The rapture occurs at the final resurrection.

The Delay of His Kingdom

I have often wondered why the Father has waited so long to establish his Son's kingdom on this earth. He could have done so in the first century, soon after Christ's ascension. Instead, for the last two thousand years his followers have experienced all kinds of misery, sickness, and death in this fallen world. Living on a cursed earth can be challenging, to say the least. The idea of a delayed messianic kingdom is something we should all stop and think about.

It is important to realize that this delay is part of God's wisdom and divine plan. He first wants to demonstrate his mercy on sinful mankind while we are held captive in Satan's dominion of darkness. And then when we are saved by grace, he wants to know if we will trust in his character and promises while we remain in this evil world where many of our human aspirations go unfulfilled. It does not matter if we experience his messianic kingdom in our current lifetimes because, with the power of resurrection, Christ can bring us back to life when he does eventually remove Satan and establish his kingdom.

Consider an abused slave living in the Deep South before the Civil War. When he heard the gospel for the first time, he would have had to overcome Satan's lies about God's love and character. *If God really loves me, then why am I enslaved by such an abusive master? Why am I a slave in the first place? Why am I poor and having to work long hours in unbearably hot, humid conditions, day in and day out? Why do my wife and children have to suffer under these same horrid condi-*

tions? And whenever he objected to the way his wife or children were being treated, he likely would have been subjected to the indignity of being whipped as if he were an unruly animal. His dignity as a man, a husband, and a father had been stolen, with no hope for the future.

If he and his family miraculously became Christians through the power of the Holy Spirit, how would he have reacted to his continued unjust situation? Would he have become bitter toward God? How would he have reacted if his master had resented his conversion and, out of spite, sold his beloved wife and children to another abusive master? Would he have had the maturity to wait patiently for God's justice and plan of redemption to unfold?

If this man had been born during the millennium, he would be living a prosperous life in ideal circumstances when he was first introduced to the gospel. God obviously wants to demonstrate his power of redemption while we remain under Satan's dominion, blinded by his lies about God's love and character. Once we are saved by his grace, we can count on experiencing trials and tribulations to test our character to see if we will continue to trust in his love for us. God wants to see what we are made of. Apparently, that must mean a lot to him because through the ages his people have had to endure all kinds of hardship.

But Christ promised his followers that he would reward them in the future. With the divine power of resurrection, he can richly reward all his people, including this poor Christian slave. When this slave is resurrected into his regenerated natural body at the first resurrection, he will live a peaceful, abundant, and fulfilling life in an Edenic paradise with his beloved wife and children. He will no longer be enslaved to anyone. And when Christ comes again for the sons of God, the former slave will inherit eternal life in a heavenly paradise. Now that is poetic justice!

It is sad that these truths of the millennial kingdom are not being taught in churches today. We may not experience the deprivations of a slave, but many Christians experience disappointing lives with many unfulfilled aspirations. It would certainly help them in their walk with Christ if they knew that their deepest longings would be fulfilled a hundredfold during the millennium.

For example, some women are unable to have children, but they deeply long to be mothers. It may be comforting to remind them that they are going to heaven when Christ returns. But as Jesus taught, their

desire for motherhood is not going to be fulfilled in heaven, for the children of God will no longer experience marriage and reproduction in the eternal kingdom. If they had been taught these truths about the first resurrection of the natural body in a restored Genesis creation, however, they could look forward to all their unfulfilled aspirations of motherhood being fulfilled during Christ's millennial kingdom.

This expectation of the future restoration of humanity gives us a spiritual immunity to protect us from becoming bitter toward God when circumstances in life do not go as we had hoped and prayed they would.

An Abundant Life on the Edenic Earth

There are other prophecies that can be linked to this hundredfold reward on the restored earth. The prophets describe the Messiah as a good shepherd who leads his sheep to an abundant life on this earth. Jesus claimed to be a fulfillment of this prophecy:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. . . . I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. (John 10:10, 14)

Notice in the following prophecy in Ezekiel that the Lord will one day shepherd his sheep to an abundant life on a restored earth:

I will make with them a covenant of peace and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase [incredible abundance], and they shall be secure in their land [peace]. . . . And you are my sheep, human sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, declares the Lord GOD. . . . And they will say, "This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden [the regenerated earth]." (Ezek. 34:25–31; 36:35)

Christ is claiming to be the good shepherd who will one day usher in paradise on earth for his sheep. These prophecies are not merely a metaphor for the internal life of a Christian, as amillennialists assert. They are a description of a human paradise on an Edenic earth. Christ was not exaggerating when he promised his sheep an abundant life on this earth before he takes them to heaven.

Yet the disciples, like Jesus, did not experience an abundant life on this earth. But during his future millennial reign, the Good Shepherd will bind Satan and will remove the curse on this earth. Then, through the first resurrection, he will bring his sheep back to this earth in regenerated natural bodies to experience prosperous lives without anguish and suffering in a creation that has been restored to its Edenic condition.

Those who advocate a prosperity gospel apparently do not understand the current fallen world. Presently, we experience deprivation and all the other ill effects of living in a demonic world under God's curse. Christians often feel entitled and expect to be exempt from the things that plague mankind. But we should expect to experience some level of misery in this world. And becoming a child of God can even intensify Satan's attacks. Try convincing a Muslim living in a conservative Muslim nation that his life will be more pleasant on this earth after he becomes a Christian.

Do not misunderstand me. There is nothing wrong with hard work, resourcefulness, and taking advantage of opportunities to experience material success and comfort. We should strive for the well-being of our families and neighbors. We should attempt to restore human dignity on this earth whenever possible. But inevitably, we and our neighbors will suffer, to one degree or another, particularly as we age.

The prosperity gospel is simply misplaced. Jesus did not "promise us a rose garden" in this life. Only in the restoration will there be true prosperity for those who believe in Christ. At that time, he indeed does promise his sheep an abundant and prosperous life on this earth, as described by the prophets.

Paul understood this. He did not live in a palatial villa on the Mediterranean. Nor did he become wealthy from his income as a pastor or from selling his letters. He earned a living as a tentmaker so that no one could accuse him of marketing the gospel for profit.

Nature Restored

Before the fall, the trees and plants produced food for humans and the other living creatures. Apparently, all the earth's vegetation was edible. There were no poisonous plants, berries, fruit, or mushrooms. The creation account suggests that humans and other living creatures were vegetarians. In the garden of Eden, abundant vegetation provided food for man and animals:

And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." (Gen. 1:29–30)

After the fall, the curse, and the flood, the eating habits of man and the other creatures changed. It was after the catastrophic flood that God introduced the eating of meat: "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you" (Gen. 9:3). Animals in the wild are fearful, and rightfully so. Lions, leopards, wolves, and bears feed on sheep, goats, and various cattle. Their newborns are particularly vulnerable and must be protected by shepherds. This predator-based ecological system is a tragic one.

In Isaiah 11, the prophet foresees the day when the original "good" creation will be restored, affecting both mankind and the animal kingdom. Rather than quote this long prophecy, I will outline the vast changes in the animal kingdom that will take place when the natural earth is restored to its Edenic condition.

During Christ's reign:

- Wolves will live with lambs.
- Leopards will lie down with goats.
- Lions and calves will eat together.
- A little child will play with a lion.
- Bears and cows (and their young) will graze together.
- Lions will eat straw like oxen.
- A nursing child will play over the hole of a cobra.

Isaiah is describing an extraordinary change in the ecological system of this creation. All animals will live peacefully together with mankind as they are restored to the vegetarian-based ecology that existed before the fall. We can truly enjoy their company without being afraid.

The Holy Spirit in the Restoration

The Holy Spirit will play a crucial role in establishing righteousness during the restoration. While Christ remains in heaven with the Father, he in effect comes to the world through the person of the Holy Spirit, just as he came to the disciples through the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Ezekiel seems to foreshadow yet another type of Pentecost occurring during the restoration. I label this “Pentecost Phase 2.” It is through the Holy Spirit that we shall see the face of Christ in the restoration:

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. *And I will put my Spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. . . . And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord God. (Ezek. 36:26–28; 39:29)

Christ does not need to physically return to this earth for us to see his face. All he must do is pour out his Spirit, and we will sense his presence.

Because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the regeneration of this creation, the restoration will be a time of tremendous joy and thanksgiving. Isaiah poetically described this joy that the world would experience during Christ’s reign:

Oh sing to the LORD a new song,
 for he has done marvelous things!
 His right hand and his holy arm
 have worked salvation for him.
 The LORD has made known his salvation;
 he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth;
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and the sound of melody!

With trumpets and the sound of the horn
make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
the world and those who dwell in it!

Let the rivers clap their hands;
let the hills sing for joy together
before the LORD, for he comes
to judge the earth.

He will judge the world with righteousness,
and the peoples with equity. (Ps. 98:1–9)

Today Satan orchestrates the affairs of sinful man on this cursed earth. The result is many sour and discordant sounds in a world that is full of selfishness, greed, and strife—even war. Sometimes we hear the echo of the garden of Eden, but the world is badly out of tune. One day, however, the mighty God who orchestrated the creation of this world will remove this alien conductor and reclaim his creation. Through the Holy Spirit, the Prince of Peace will then orchestrate the affairs of man, and the sounds in this world will be harmonious and joyful once more. The regenerated earth will be in tune again.

The world will be so thrilled by Christ's conducting such magnificent works that even the rivers will "clap their hands" and the hills will "sing for joy." When our deepest human aspirations are fulfilled during the restoration, we will sing and rejoice every day for hundreds of years. The Old Testament is full of remarkable descriptions of the Messiah's coming earthly kingdom. And when Christ comes again on the last day to take us to heaven, we will sing a totally new song of joy and thanksgiving.

To demonstrate how well postrestorationism harmonizes with the Old Testament vision of the messianic kingdom, I have paraphrased and combined Christ's teaching of a hundredfold reward with John's teaching on the millennium in Revelation:

Truly, I say to you, in the future when Satan is removed and I sit on my glorious throne in heaven and govern the world, I will remove the curse and restore this Genesis creation to its Edenic condition. And you who have sacrificially followed me will experience a regeneration of your natural bodies through the first resurrection so that you can inherit this paradise on earth. You will also sit on earthly thrones and assist me in governing the twelve tribes of Israel, along with other righteous men and women who will sit on thrones that will be set up around the world to govern their people. Everyone who has been willing to leave houses or lands or their families for my name's sake will receive a life on this regenerated earth that is a hundred times better than the rich man's life.

After you experience my earthly kingdom for a thousand years, I will come again on Judgment Day and rapture you into eternal bodies as sons of God so that you can inherit eternal life when you join me in my Father's kingdom. As the Alpha, I created this Genesis creation, but as the Omega, I will destroy this creation and send Satan, his demons, and all unbelievers to the lake of fire. I will then create the new heavens and new earth as our eternal home, where you will see me and my Father in all our glory. There you will experience rivers of life and joy from the Holy Spirit. I have revealed my plans for the future to you through John's vision. Be careful not to distort or deny any of these truths. Be vigilant and remain faithful until I come again to take you to an eternal paradise in heaven.

Summary

The rich man in Jesus' day thought he was living the good life. When Christ told him that he would have to give up his temporal wealth to inherit eternal life, he walked away sad. The disciples, who

were experiencing a great deal of deprivation as they followed Christ, wanted to know what their reward would be for devoting their lives to him.

Christ's answer was remarkable. He promised the disciples that when he sits on his throne in heaven and rules the world as the Messiah, they will inherit an Edenic paradise on a regenerated earth that is a hundred times better than the rich man's life. A hundredfold reward indicates that our deepest human aspirations that have not been fulfilled in this current fallen world will be abundantly fulfilled during his reign. In addition, he promised that they would inherit eternal life in the age to come. They would inherit God's kingdom on earth *and* in heaven. God's divine power of resurrection will enable these promises to be fulfilled.