



What Will We Be Doing When We Get to Heaven? (Part II)

John 14:3: (NASB) *If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.*



Going to heaven is a really big deal. Last week was Part I of our three-part series on what heaven-bound Christians will be doing when they get there. We uncovered the mechanics of why only chosen ones are privileged to go to heaven. We began to scratch the surface regarding what these disciples of Jesus will be doing. It turns out, the job descriptions we focused on were nothing like what most people envision as heavenly life. In this episode, we will dig deeply into what the responsibilities of those heaven bound will be. More than that, we will attempt to understand the “why” of it all by connecting several prophecies and scriptures. Our discoveries will reveal absolutely inspiring details and descriptions of how God’s plan is destined to work!

We encourage you to listen to all three parts in this series while using our companion CQ Rewind Show Notes in order to get the comprehensive answer to this important question.

We only began to answer the question in Part I, so let’s do a quick recap of the basic points we covered to bring us up to speed.

recap
recap

We looked at this topic through the lens of four aspects of the Christian’s heavenly reward:



Heavenly Groundwork:

What God’s plan dictates must be done as a foundation for heaven.



Heavenly Privilege

Some of the unmerited privileges faithful Christians will be given.



Heavenly Inheritance

Some of the amazing aspects of heavenly life the faithful will own.



Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements a faithful Christian life will lead to.

We left off with this scripture, which is obviously symbolic:

Isaiah 61:3: (NASB) *...So they will be called oaks (trees) of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.*

What is Symbolism?



- The use of a symbol to represent a meaning, idea or quality.
- Symbolic meaning attributed to natural objects or facts.



As we move on to the next verses, the “work” that these “trees” are called upon to do will unfold:

Isaiah 61:4-5: (NASB) ⁴*Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations; and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.* ⁵*Strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, and foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers.*

These trees seem active! They *rebuild, raise up and repair* - they are working! The *trees of righteousness* are very stable.



Lens 4:

Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements a faithful Christian life will lead to.



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities

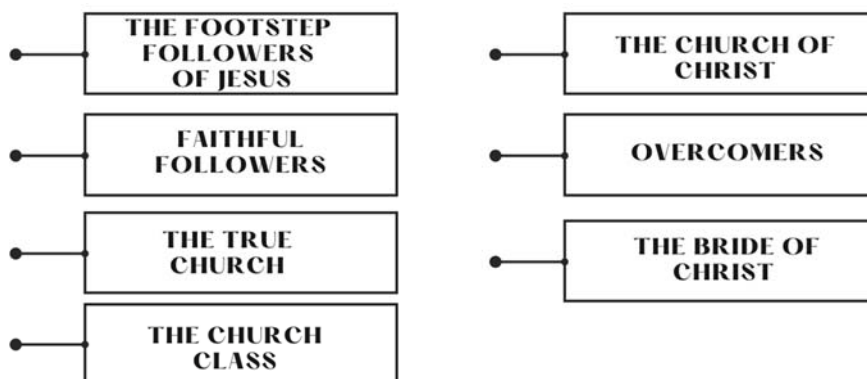
The faithful disciples of Jesus will be tasked with the responsibility of **overseeing the rebuilding of the world** after the time of trouble has ended.

The work mentioned in Isaiah 61 is the work of rebuilding, of bringing order and value back to where all was lost, and as we will soon see, it all will begin with the nation of Israel. As we discuss these next few verses, let's review a New Testament text we discussed in our last episode - 1 Peter 2:9 - that will help us label the heavenly responsibilities required.



In Part I we addressed the **GROUNDWORK** the footstep followers of Jesus need to accomplish in order to be prepared for heaven. One of these was to **accept the responsibilities and changes that come with discipleship**.

We have been describing this class of people with some interchangeable terms such as:



These terms describe the same small number of faithful ones who will be in heaven. The goal for all of us here at Christian Questions is to be in this special group.





As if those are not enough titles, let's read the descriptive verse we will keep returning to:

1 Peter 2:9: (NASB) *But you are a **chosen** <1588> race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

Chosen: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1588 *eklektos*, select; by implication, favorite: - chosen, elect



These verses open major understanding into what heaven will look like. They list several privileges and responsibilities that the faithful disciples of Jesus are not only given now but will be inherited later as well.

While the elements of this 1 Peter scripture are drawn from several Old Testament sources, we see them as all fitting in with the Isaiah 61 description of what the faithful disciples of Jesus will be tasked with once they are given heavenly glory. Isaiah 61:3-4 shows us these *trees of righteousness* are a specially chosen group.



Let's begin by focusing on the element of a *chosen* race. The King James Version says a *chosen generation*.



PUT IN MODERN TERMS, THE PHRASE "CHOSEN RACE" TRIGGERS THOUGHTS OF RACISM. WHY IS THAT NOT THE CASE HERE?



We are talking about God's representation. This *chosen race* is a group of people chosen from all nations, races and generations since Jesus lived. There is no racism; it is a chosen group. We cannot put 21st century labels on ancient sacred scriptures.

Revelation 17:14: (NASB) *These will wage war against the lamb, and the lamb will overcome them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with him are the called and **chosen** <1588> (select) and faithful.*



This word for **chosen** is only used in the New Testament to describe Jesus and his true disciples.

The phrase "chosen people" reminds us historically of the nation of Israel:

Deuteronomy 7:6: (KJV) *For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.*

Israel has always been God's chosen people. Israel ultimately retains favor with God as the blesser nation on earth in the kingdom (the *sand of the seashore* in the promise to Abraham we will review shortly). The true disciples



of Jesus made up from all nations (the *stars of heaven* in that same promise) are the *chosen and faithful* described in Revelation 17:14.

1 Peter 2:9 calls these special ones a *chosen race*.



BUT CHOSEN FOR WHAT? THAT IS OUR CORE QUESTION – WHAT WILL THEY BE DOING FROM HEAVEN?



In part, they will be rebuilding the broken earth and blessing resurrected humanity.



Remember the promise given to Abraham:

Genesis 22:17-18: (NASB) ¹⁷*indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore...* ¹⁸*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*

We have talked about this incredible promise given to Abraham many times on Christian Questions. Every time we read it we are impressed by how it explains the breadth of God's plan. *Your seed as the stars of the heavens* - does this not sound like something spiritual? *And as the sand which is on the seashore* - earthly. *In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham was obedient.* Putting this together, we have the promise of the *trees of righteousness* playing a very important role as this spiritual seed.

We see its fulfillment here:

Galatians 3:16: (NASB) *Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, and to seeds, as referring to many, but rather to one, and to your seed, that is, Christ.*

Galatians 3:29: (NASB) *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.*

Heirs according to the promise - meaning the promise that *in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*. And here Galatians says those who *belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants* - the *chosen race* - are part of that seed of blessing. What a privilege!

But the inheritance the faithful ones are given is a huge mess. Taking Adam's sinful race of billions and billions and then transforming them into God's kingdom of righteousness on earth is an enormous undertaking.



In a sense, it is like the devastating pathway of the recent hurricanes we just experienced full of pain and heartache. On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian slammed into the west coast of Florida, and then other states, causing death and billions of dollars of destruction. More than two million people lost power and some also lost water - my wife and I included. We have a "boil water mandate" in our town. Repairing all that damage the hurricane caused will take years, if not decades. The mental health and stress of the people directly affected might never be repaired in this lifetime. But in the kingdom on earth, the faithful ones are given the privilege of helping to rebuild. What a merciful plan of salvation our heavenly Father had in place right from the start.



TIME TO GET PRACTICAL

The work that has to be done to reconstruct peoples' lives from a hurricane is a great microcosm example of what will need to be done in the kingdom. The Bible assures us the majority of the billions and billions of people

who ever lived will be resurrected back on earth. Think of the joy of children who died coming back to their parents, families finding each other and seeing their loved ones again. There are logistics involved on how, when and where everyone will be raised, housed, fed and educated on what has happened and what their future looks like. There will be a lot of work!

The Bible does not give the details of how this will be accomplished, but we know that to make the "blessing of all the families of the earth" prophecy come true, it will take a lot of work. It will be amazing - miracles by the minute! We cannot wait to see it happen. And we know the trees of righteousness are behind all this according to this prophecy.

Let's look through Lens 4 of heavenly responsibilities again as it relates to the chosen race:



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities

The chosen race - the faithful disciples of Jesus - will be tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the rebuilding of the world after the time of trouble has ended.



This major task requires God's power through Jesus and these chosen ones.

Further scriptural clarity on the restitution work to come:

Acts 3:20-21: (KJV) ²⁰And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: ²¹Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Times of restitution - the time for restoration, rebuilding and restoring.

The Isaiah prophecy shows these trees of righteousness to be a chosen race; chosen to rebuild and bless. They are put into a position of primary responsibility under Christ to get all this work done.

Let's go to this next prophecy in Ezekiel. God says He will "cause" things to happen, and we can now see that Jesus and his true disciples will "make" these things happen. God "causes" and then He has others to get the job done.

Before we review this, we note how some feel the literal fulfillment of this prophecy already happened when Israel became a nation in 1948.



HOW DO WE KNOW IT HAS A SECONDARY FULFILLMENT IN THE FUTURE KINGDOM?



The context tells us the primary fulfillment is in the future kingdom.



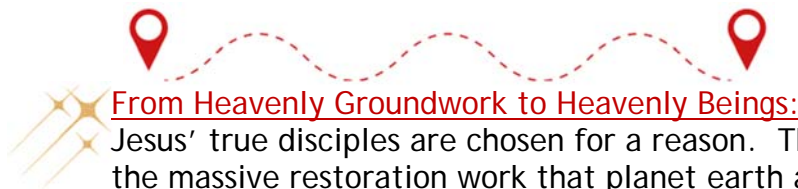


First notice God's approach and then how the nations around Israel acknowledge the LORD - this is yet future:

Ezekiel 36:33-36: (NASB) ³³Thus says the Lord GOD, On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt. ³⁴The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. ³⁵They will say, this desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited. ³⁶Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it.

What a picture of what is to come! First, God will forgive the iniquities of the people. Second, the land will be cleaned up and then cultivated. Third, cities will be rebuilt. When the *garden of Eden* is mentioned it does not mean we will be sitting in our own perfect gardens. It is a picture of perfection, and work will be done to bring it to that point. The land becoming again like the *garden of Eden* does not mean an absence of technology and everybody gets to name a lion!

On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities - it will be a future work. The nation of Israel will be cleansed, and it ends with - *the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it.* We have not seen this yet, which is why we know this is a future event. These prophecies all work together! The *trees of righteousness* will be the heavenly representatives driving all this work.



From Heavenly Groundwork to Heavenly Beings:

Jesus' true disciples are chosen for a reason. They will be an integral part of the massive restoration work that planet earth and its people will need. They will represent and accomplish the works and plan of God as strong and immovable symbols of righteousness. No wonder the groundwork they need to accomplish in this life is so demanding!



We have been systematically going through prophecy Isaiah 61. Now we are overlaying the 1 Peter 2:9 descriptive elements that describe the true church.



There is a massive restoration work to be done unequalled any time in history. The trees or oaks of righteousness are leading the restoration work with Christ.

Understanding and appreciating the symbolism of biblical prophecy really expands our comprehension of God's amazing plan!



**The disciples of Jesus are a “chosen race” that will deliver restitution.
What other heavenly responsibilities will they have?**

As we will see the heavenly responsibilities pile up, we will also notice that these responsibilities will be primarily focused on earthly restoration. This may sound odd; they go to heaven so they can do all this work on earth? Why? They go to heaven to be given the power and authority to accomplish the greatest restoration work in earth’s history! Once they receive this power, God releases them to begin this restoration.

Continuing:

Isaiah 61:6: (NASB) *But you will be called the priests of the LORD; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God...*

These two designations need to be individually understood. First, we will focus on *priests of the LORD*. We are NOT talking about priests like in some Christian denominations today. We are looking at the priesthood of Israel and the way it worked and will expand it further. This is built on Israel’s definition of what the priesthood was, not Christianity’s.



Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements
a faithful Christian life will lead to.

Looking through this lens, what do we
see regarding priests and ministers?



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities

The body of Christ is tasked with the heavy responsibilities of
executing godly rulership over the world
as priestly representatives of God through Jesus.

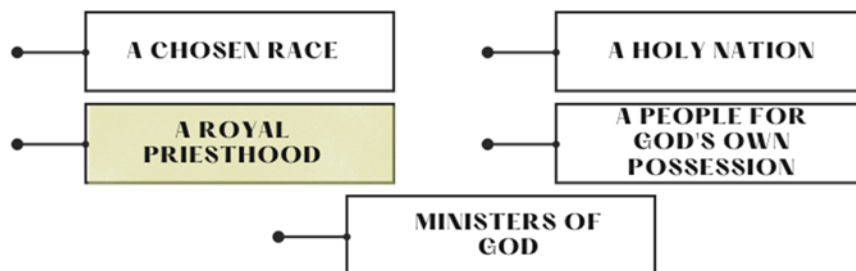
They accomplish this by following the leadings of Jesus.



Notice the term “godly rulership” - this will become important in a moment.

These trees of righteousness, Jesus’ faithful disciples, are called priests of the LORD.

In Isaiah 61:6, we have *priests* and *ministers*. Let’s overlay 1 Peter 2:9 onto that, and it is curious how Peter adds another dimension to this role of priesthood. He calls it a **ROYAL priesthood**.





HOW IS IT THAT ACCORDING TO PETER, THIS PRIESTHOOD WOULD BE “ROYAL”? ISRAEL’S PRIESTHOOD WAS NEVER THAT WAY.



First, Jesus is the HEAD of this royal priesthood:

Jeremiah 23:5-6: (NASB) *⁵Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, When I will raise up for David a righteous branch (pointing to Jesus); and he will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is his name by which he will be called, The Lord our righteousness.*

This powerful prophecy in Jeremiah has many connections to the previous prophecies. *He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness... he will be called, The Lord our righteousness.* There are connections here as we build our understanding of how the trees of righteousness act as priests of our LORD.

This royalty also appears and is expanded in Revelation, in the context of the Lion of Judah (from Revelation 5:5). In Part I, we discussed that Jesus was the LAMB SLAIN HERE ON EARTH, but he takes on the role of the LION OF JUDAH IN HEAVEN.



Revelation 5:9-10: (KJV) *⁹And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ¹⁰and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

We see, then, that this *royal priesthood* as Peter labels it, is corroborated by these other scriptures with the description of *kings and priests*. How did this royal priesthood come to be?

It was the overcoming of the Lamb of God that opened the door for the Lion of Judah to reign and therefore for the true church to reign with him, for they are his body:

Colossians 1:18: (NASB) *He is also head of the body, the church; and he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything.*



Heavenly Inheritance

Some of the amazing aspects of heavenly life the faithful will own.



looking through

Lens 3: Heavenly Inheritance

Royalty is inherited. The body of Christ is part of the kingly inheritance of the Lion of the tribe of Judah by virtue of being faithful to Jesus and his world-changing sacrifice as the Lamb of God. Once raised as spirit beings, the body of Christ is born into kingship!



This is a heavenly inheritance. We do not deserve this! It is too big for us! Yet, God’s grace says this is what He wants for us and from us, because He has work to do with us.



We have established the royalty aspect through Scripture - now for the priesthood part. The priesthood aspect of the body of Christ also has deeper meaning and responsibility than we might have thought.

Remember, the priesthood in Israel came through the tribe of Levi.

Jesus was born to the tribe of Judah and his priesthood therefore has a completely different origin.

How is that possible that Jesus comes from a different tribe if we're building the picture of the priesthood after Israel's priesthood?



Hebrews 7:11,14,17: (NASB) *¹¹Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood... what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek...? ¹⁴For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. ¹⁷For it is attested of him, you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

Melchizedek is mentioned only three places in the Bible. Historically in Genesis, he was the king of Jerusalem and called *a priest of the Most High God*. The second mention is in Psalms 110:4. In Hebrews, Melchizedek is used as a title or designation of honor to be filled by a worthy candidate. *The term is a transliteration of two Hebrew words, melek and tsedeq. Melek means king and tsedeq means righteousness.* God used Melchizedek - *who was both a priest and a king* - as a picture of *Christ and his triumphant Church who will act as priests and kings* in the future kingdom on earth. It is a great analogy.

The trees are oaks of righteousness, solid foundations of righteousness under the head of the king of righteousness! This all fits together scripturally to define this royal priesthood.

As with the Old Testament priesthood, this royal priesthood will accept the offerings of the people that they bring before God. They will teach the people, intercede for the people and bring them God's blessings as well.

Practically speaking, after the devastation and then the rebuilding of this world, we can picture the teaching process something like this:

1. **Love** - Why? Jesus loved them first. They are given this free gift of life.
2. **Joy** - because their loved ones are returned to them. Can you imagine the reunions?!
3. **Peace** - there is no more war or Satan's influence.
4. **Patience** - learning how to forgive and be forgiven.
5. **Kindness and goodness** - because everyone has been given both.
6. **Faithfulness** - which secures everlasting life.
7. **Gentleness** - because this is the peaceable kingdom.
8. **Self-control** - because all of their righteous needs are met.





Jesus embodies all of these qualities. There is a lot of ministering (which we will talk about in the next segment) which helps the people get to this point.

The priesthood we are privileged to have now in the beginning stages is for the purpose of blessing the world later:

1 Peter 2:4-6: (NASB) ⁴And coming to him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For this is contained in Scripture: behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.

We also are living stones... being built up as a spiritual house. This is yet another picture of us working with Christ. Jesus is the *chief corner stone* after which this house is fashioned. It all comes back to Jesus who brings his followers with him so that they can work the works of God through Christ and the trees of righteousness, the royal priesthood which will help the people of the earth step up to godliness.



Lens 4:

Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements a faithful Christian life will lead to.



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities

The body of Christ is tasked with the heavy responsibilities of executing godly rulership over the world as priestly representatives of God through Jesus.

They accomplish this by following the leadings of Jesus.



From Heavenly Groundwork to Heavenly Beings:

To become a royal priesthood that directly represents God, and His plan is no small thing. It requires sanctified faithfulness to sacrifice in this life and being born into a spiritual inheritance in the next. The responsibilities of this inheritance will include priestly service to the redeemed and resurrected race of humanity.

The responsibilities of kingly rule and a priestly role can be daunting! No wonder the heavenly call is not for everyone!

**The Isaiah prophecy revealed becoming both priests and ministers.
Are these not the same thing?**

While being a priest and minister is absolutely all about the same end result, there are important distinctions between the two responsibilities. As we move forward and define the differences, we will again be reminded how the future responsibilities of Jesus' true disciples will be specific and dynamic. Think about it: God had this planned long, long ago! God saw all the details and necessities which He worked into His plan. Those that are faithful to Jesus become part of these details.

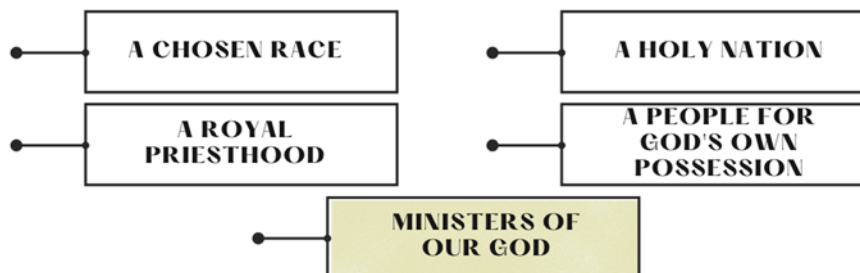


Isaiah 61:6: (NASB) *But you will be called the **priests <3548>** of the LORD; you will be spoken of as **ministers <8334>** of our God...*

Priest: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3548 *kohen*; literally, one officiating, a priest; also (by courtesy) an acting priest (although a layman)

Minister: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #8334 *sharath*; to attend as a menial or worshipper; figuratively, to contribute to

"Menial" means a domestic servant, or one of humble rank. We are to be both a priest and a minister? Yes, despite the considerable difference between those two jobs, they work together hand-in-hand, and those faithful ones will fulfill both roles.



Remember when James and John asked Jesus to be seated at his right and left hands? Let's look at what else Jesus said to his disciples in that account. The New Testament Greek words for *minister* and *ministered* here have the same definition of service as the Old Testament Hebrew word for *minister* in Isaiah 61:6.

Matthew 20:25-28: (KJV) ²⁵But Jesus called them unto him, and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. ²⁶But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your **minister <1249>**; ²⁷And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: ²⁸Even as the son of man came not to be **ministered <1247>** unto, but to **minister <1247>**, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Minister (noun): Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1249 *diakonos*; an attendant, i.e., a waiter (at table or in other menial duties); specially, a Christian teacher and pastor (technically, a deacon or deaconess): - deacon, minister, servant

Ministered (verb): Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #1247 *diakoneō*; from G1249; to be an attendant, i.e., wait upon (menially or as a host, friend, or (figuratively) teacher); technically, to act as a Christian deacon: - (ad-)minister (unto), serve

Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant - Jesus himself said he came to minister, to serve and be a part of peoples' lives.

To be *priests of the LORD* is to hold an office of spiritual responsibility for the people.

To be *ministers of our God* is to be at the instruction of God, to directly serve and help among the people. To be a minister is the "get your hands dirty" part of the priestly position. It is not holding a lofty position above the people, as the Pharisees tried to do. Jesus showed us we could have that spiritual authority, but still get our hands dirty. He is the model of being a priest and minister.



Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements
a faithful Christian life will lead to.



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities



The responsibility of being both priests of the LORD and ministers of God describes a far-reaching task. **As a priest, the true church will represent the will and way of the LORD.** Through the High Priest, Jesus, they will be the pathway to God for the resurrected world. Alongside of this power and privilege, they will carry out God's bidding by serving and guiding the people to lives of godly righteousness.

At the command of God through Jesus, the true church will have a sacred responsibility to reconcile the world to God. It is sacred because God the Father instructed them to implement this reconciliation.



TIME TO GET PRACTICAL

Let's talk again about the practicality of reconciliation. Think again of the billions of people being resurrected from their graves - we believe they will be in their same mental state of sin as they were in when they went to sleep in death. Part of the rebuilding of the world would have to include counseling and education. Think of the trauma that has happened throughout history. There will be murderers coming face-to-face with their victims, and all the horrible things people have done to each other will be made known. Everyone will have to give an account; they will have to make amends and set things right in order to progress in God's righteous kingdom. Christ and his church will be overseers in making this massive, humanity-wide rehabilitation project work. It is a colossal undertaking in order to put people on the right path.



My hope and prayer is that I can be faithful and be part of that reconciliation process. I think about how wonderful it would be to help rehabilitate my sister who was killed in a tragic car accident at age 34. She was agnostic, and I would love to be able to teach her about the LORD.



I remember this - we worked in the same cabinet shop, and you gave me a call early in the morning to tell me you would not be coming in because of this horrible accident. It was a shock to me. I remember it vividly not only because it was a tragedy. She was only 34 years old, and you were even younger. You described the shock your family was in, and you had that deer-in-the-headlights feeling. After it was all over, your dad said that you really stepped up and took charge of everything. I think it was by God's grace that you were able to minister to them even at the depth of tragedy of a sudden loss like that.



Remember in the last segment we mentioned Satan's influence would not be there? Revelation 20:2 describes Satan being bound during this time of rehabilitation and unable to interfere in the recovery efforts.

This reconciliation task begins in our lives now:

2 Corinthians 5:18-21: (WEY) ¹⁸And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has appointed us to serve in the *ministry* <1248> of reconciliation. ¹⁹We are to tell how God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not charging men's transgressions to their account, and that He has entrusted to us the message of this reconciliation. ²⁰On Christ's behalf therefore we come as ambassadors; God, as it were, making entreaty through our lips: we, on Christ's behalf, beseech men to be reconciled to God.

This is about what we are doing here and now. The big picture is later, once the church has the glory of their heavenly resurrection and have come back as these trees of righteousness. The work starts now in this lifetime.



²¹He has made him who knew nothing of sin to be sin for us, in order that in him we may become the righteousness of God.

That in him we may become the righteousness of God - sound familiar?

Isaiah described the destiny of the faithful ones to be trees of righteousness that glorify God.

Isaiah 61:3: (NASB) ...So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

We see this theme coming out again and again: *The righteousness of God... glorifying God in righteousness...*

This is why God calls individuals to follow Jesus. The future of humanity's reconciliation will be driven by these ministers doing the hard work of representing, exempling and implementing *the righteousness of God*.

3 THREE PARTS OF RECONCILIATION 3

- 1 We need to be reconciled - be made right with God through Christ - here and now.
- 2 We then teach others who are drawn to be reconciled now and follow in the footsteps of Jesus.
- 3 The faithful bring reconciliation to the whole world of mankind during the kingdom work in the future.

In addition to being priests and ministers, with the power of *the righteousness of God*, the faithful will have yet another job. At the command of God through Jesus, the true church will have a sacred responsibility to judge.





This will be equally as important as reconciliation:

1 Corinthians 6:1-3: (NLT) *'When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers! ²Don't you realize that someday we believers will judge the world? And since you are going to judge the world, can't you decide even these little things among yourselves? ³Don't you realize that we will judge angels? So you should surely be able to resolve ordinary disputes in this life.*

Now is our "dress rehearsal" for future work. We have all heard the expression, "Practice makes perfect," but it is more accurate to say, "Perfect practice makes perfect." If we prove to be faithful, we will teach others how to practice perfectly in the future kingdom.

Our training of this present life is for the purpose of preparing us for the hard-to-fathom future responsibility of not only being judges of humanity, but judges of angels as well.

Priests, ministers and judges - there are so many job descriptions here! Perfect and unerring judgment comes through being a priest AND a minister, being endowed with the authority and direction of God.

JUDGES OF
HUMANITY AND
ANGELS

REMINDER



Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements a faithful Christian life will lead to.



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities

Judgment and reconciliation show us the magnitude of the trust that God has for the glorified true church and the power they are given as a result. To be in possession of such responsibility and power gives these glorified beings great ability to be living examples of praise and honor to God.

We learn by seeing great examples!

Back to Isaiah's prophecy and the world being reconciled back to God:

Isaiah 61:6-7: (NASB) *⁶...You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. ⁷Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs.*

In their riches you will boast - the church, the trees of righteousness, will rejoice in this reconciliation. They will look at how the world is growing and what is being accomplished, especially with Israel. This will be worth drawing attention to and being excited about. It is like a parent looking at their children and saying, "You are doing such a good job. Keep it up!" Blessings will flow. The church will be excited at the growth in others.





The idea of partaking of the *wealth of nations* - of all people - shows these priests and ministers have, in fact, *inherited the earth* - Matthew 5:5. With this inheritance, there will be a turning of the tide (a reverse of events) for all.

FOR THE faithful ones

Trying to follow Jesus now is difficult, but instead of your shame you will have a double portion.

1 Peter 1:6-7: (NASB) *⁶In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ - this is the contrast between the shame and the difficulty now with the glory and honor later. Praise, glory and honor to God is the end purpose.

FOR THE world of mankind

The world's humiliation of sin and death will turn into a double portion of blessings for everlasting joy.

Isaiah 2:3-4: (NASB) *³And many peoples will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.*

Implements of war will turn into tools of cultivation. So many families have been devastated by war throughout history. This is life in a righteous environment instead of a broken environment we live in now. Those trees of righteousness as priests, ministers and judges are making it work!



From Heavenly Groundwork to Heavenly Beings:

To become a minister of God is to do the work of His will. This work is a work of service, building, reconciliation, judgment and guidance and can only truly be accomplished with the priestly authority they have been endowed with.

They will have been given both the authority and the ability to reconcile broken humanity back to God. This is very inspiring!

To be a minister of God never looked so amazing. In this age, this ministry touches only a few, but later it will raise up and affect billions!



A chosen race, a royal priesthood, and ministers of God! How much more responsibility could there possibly be?



With all that we have covered, we have only focused on the work of bringing the world back to God as a result of Jesus' sacrifice. While this is a massive and defining work, the same responsibilities are also focused in on God's other chosen people, the physical nation of Israel. All that happens with Israel lays the foundation for the rest of the world. Israel's part is one of the linchpins for enabling God's plan to move forward.

The focus now shifts as we go back to the Isaiah 61 prophecy. The previous verses focused on the glorified disciples of Christ and the entire redeemed world. These next verses now focus on Israel as the lead nation among all the peoples of the world.

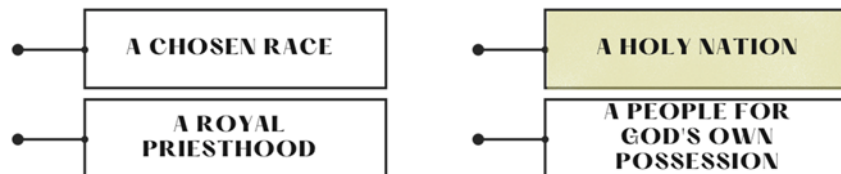
It is interesting how verse 9 proves verse 8:

Isaiah 61:8-9: (NASB) *⁸For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense and make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples.*

In the previous verses of Isaiah 61, we looked at the positions and responsibilities that the glorified body of Christ (the church) fulfills with the world in God's kingdom. They will also fulfill these with the physical nation of Israel here on earth. It will be God's *holy nation* (the church) serving God's chosen nation (Israel).

All those Old Testament prophecies describing the physical nation of Israel receiving special blessings are still in play and are happening now and in the future. The Jewish people were God's original "chosen" and still have promises coming to them.

Again, 1 Peter 2:9 describes the true church as:



As a *holy nation*, this elite group of faithful people are the example of being in full compliance with God. They were human beings living in the same world of temptation and trials as everyone else, but they were in compliance with God's will to the best of their ability. Resurrected humanity will look up to them throughout the ages to come as examples of righteousness, the embodiment that compliance with God's ways is not only possible but is the best way.

This holy nation has yet another description:

Daniel 7:27: (NLT) *Then the sovereignty, power, and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will last forever, and all rulers will serve and obey him.*





God is a master delegator. He has chosen special ones to fulfill all aspects of His plan. As we go through all these responsibilities of the true church glorified in heaven, the amazing thing is that all these scriptures tie together. They interweave and tell us an amazing story!

As we have seen, the “spiritual seed” of Abraham (*the stars of the heavens*) will be the ministers of God. They will carry out His will. When we see that God will *make a new covenant with the house of Israel* in the following prophecy, we understand it to mean that the covenant will be made with Israel through the mediation of God’s *holy nation*. Like we read earlier in Ezekiel 36:33-36, when God says He is going to do something, He works with those He has put in place to get it done.

Jeremiah 31:31-34: (NASB) ³¹*Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD.*

God compares a new covenant with Israel with the old one they broke back in the wilderness after they left Egypt. The Old Law Covenant was mediated by Moses (a picture of Jesus) between God and Israel.

A new and different covenant is promised to Israel:

³³*I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

This covenant goes far beyond what that Old Law Covenant could actually do. As Moses mediated the first covenant, so God’s HOLY NATION through Jesus mediates the New Covenant.



God made certain promises, or covenants, to certain groups of people at various times. One of the most recognizable was the *Rainbow Covenant*, when God promised Noah He would never flood the earth again. See Genesis 9:8-17.

We have been talking about the *Abrahamic Covenant* - *in thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*.

God made the *Law Covenant* with Israel, which included the Ten Commandments. It required a mediator, a translator, someone who intervenes between two sides at odds to bring them together. Moses was that mediator. God dealt directly with Moses, and Moses brought the message to the people. See Exodus 13:3-9 and Galatians 3:19.



Christ is the mediator of the **New Covenant** referenced here in **Jeremiah 31**. He is the "go-between" for the two sides - God and mankind. Remember, where Christ goes, there goes his church. The church will be a part of the mediation work to reconcile mankind back to God.



Now we focus on verse 9:

Isaiah 61:9: (NASB) *Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring whom the LORD has blessed.*

This picture is about Israel. This special people will be recognized as *the offspring whom the LORD has blessed*. They are different because they have the heritage of God's hand in their lives throughout all of their history.

Israel will be plainly seen as blessed of God, as God's own people, just as Jesus' faithful disciples will be seen as God's own faithful sons. With natural Israel, after the Law is written upon their hearts, they take what they learned and support the heavenly work to spread God's kingdom.



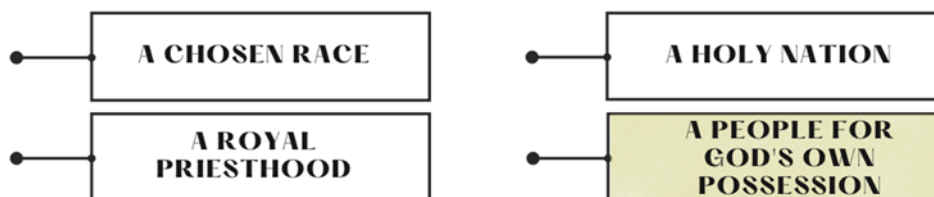
As an illustration, imagine a cloth and dip the corner of it in oil. Let's picture the church as the initial oil at the tip of the cloth. The oil is absorbed through that dry cloth and then it goes to the next part of the cloth - Israel - which becomes saturated with oil. Soon the oil is throughout the cloth - going to the whole world until all are saturated. The church works through Israel to bring blessings to all the families of the earth.



So, the hierarchy is: God works through Christ and his church, who work through Israel so that the world can be in harmony. Righteousness spreads in an unstoppable way!

When we look at the responsibilities of the *oaks of righteousness*, we see that God's plan is not just for them. They start the process so that the rest of the world, through Israel, can understand the necessity for righteousness and grow into it.

And now we come to the last description from **1 Peter 2:9**: *a people for God's own possession*.



Like Jesus, they are chosen to be sons of God, and they have God's plans work through them.



Here is another time this phrase is used:

Titus 2:14: (NASB) *who gave himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds.*

It is confusing to us how the majority of Christianity teaches that if you just believe in Jesus, you are saved and go to heaven. But that is not what the Apostle Paul describes in Philippians 3:12-14. He struggled to live that high standard of sacrifice it takes to be worthy of the calling to follow Jesus. He said he still had a lot of work to do. If the Apostle Paul struggled, are WE worthy to be a people for God's own possession? Would God give someone immortality - deathlessness - if He could not trust them? No way! Very few will achieve this position.

This is why this Titus scripture is so important. It says he *gave himself for us to redeem us...to purify...a people for his own possession...* It is not about how great we are, but how great Jesus' sacrifice is and how great the grace of God and His spirit is working in our lives.



Heavenly Responsibilities

Some of the requirements a faithful Christian life will lead to.



looking through

Lens 4: Heavenly Responsibilities

The titles of "Holy Nation" and "a People for God's Own Possession" clearly reveal the inherent **status, power, and authority** that Jesus' faithful ones will be given once they are glorified. **These qualities are their permanent inheritance and privilege.**

As we begin to come to the end of this prophecy, let's touch on one more detail:

Isaiah 61:10: (NASB) *...As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

The picture of Jesus as the bridegroom and his true disciples as the bride is well understood in Scripture. There are also other wedding scenarios that show this connection.



IN SOME OF THESE SCENARIOS, IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THERE IS ANOTHER GROUP WHO ARE "LESS THAN" THOSE MOST FAITHFUL. WHO ARE THEY? ARE THEY IN HEAVEN TOO?



We will cover this in Part III of this series. While we have been talking about this specific group, the church, and their responsibilities, the Bible tells us there will be another assembly of individuals in the heavenly realm.

Here is one small glimpse at this other group:

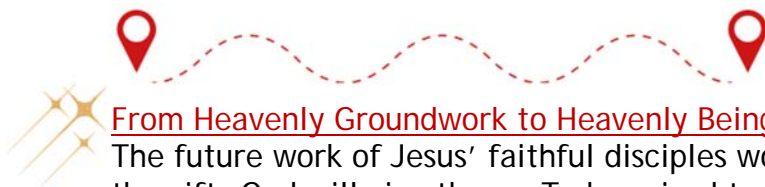
Matthew 25:1-5: (NASB) *¹Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the*



prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

One group of virgins are entirely faithful, and the others have faith but fall short. This principle of having faith but falling short is important and needs to be clearly understood in the context of heaven's responsibilities for true disciples.

Who are these individuals, how are they described and where are they in the future? We will also look at the descriptions of "bride" of Christ and "body" of Christ. There is much more to the Isaiah 61 prophecy to study! Listen to Part III for more!



From Heavenly Groundwork to Heavenly Beings:

The future work of Jesus' faithful disciples would be daunting, were it not for the gifts God will give them. To be raised to heavenly glory and become known as a CHOSEN RACE - a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD - PRIESTS and MINISTERS of GOD - a HOLY NATION - and a PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION is a level of privilege and existence of which it is impossible to be worthy. Thank God for His plan! Thank Jesus for his sacrifice and faithfulness!

When we look at the privilege we have to be *called according to His purpose*, to be called to a life of sacrifice, we realize there is so much more to this than our lives now. This knowledge makes the trials and difficulties of this life a lot easier to face, understand and accept. If God calls us and we are given God's holy spirit, we should expect to be severely tested. God needs to be sure we can handle all of these things that are coming later.

There is a depth of privilege and responsibility in this call along with an overwhelming sense of awe when we look at God our Father, Jesus our Lord and the call of the true church. There is so much good to be had from this. Let's work at being faithful.

*So, what will we be doing when we get to heaven?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on October 10, 2022

Ep. 1250: What Will We be Doing When We
Get to Heaven? (Part III)

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1249: What Will We Be Doing When We Get to Heaven? (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1249-heaven-part-ii/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. Who are the “oaks of righteousness” in Isaiah 61:3?
What are the works these trees will do in the future? When will this work begin? (See Isaiah 61:3-5)
2. What are the various names of the footstep followers of Jesus used in scripture? What new names does 1 Peter 2:9 add? Where do the people in the “chosen race” or “chosen generation” come from?
3. Historically in the Bible, who were God’s chosen people? Israel and Jesus’ faithful followers are in God’s promise to Abraham. Which position does each hold? (See Revelation 17:14, Deuteronomy 7:6, Genesis 22:17-18, Galatians 3:16,29)
4. What does Acts 3:20-21 tell us about what Jesus does in the future?
5. Explain Ezekiel 36:33-36.
6. Where are Jesus’ true followers working? What are two more of their roles in Isaiah 61:6? How are they part of a “priesthood”? Who is the head of this group? Why are they said to be a “royal priesthood” when the original Jewish priesthood was not from royalty? What might they teach the world? (See 1 Peter 2:9, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Revelation 5:5,9-10, Colossians 1:18, Hebrews 7:11-17)
7. How does the royal priesthood minister in this life and the next? What are three parts of reconciliation? Who will these faithful ones judge? (See Isaiah 61:6, Matthew 20:25-28, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, 1 Corinthians 6:1-3)
8. What have the priests and ministers inherited? How will their lives change in the kingdom? How will the world’s lives change at that time? (See Matthew 5:5, 1 Peter 1:6-7, Isaiah 2:3-4, 61:6-7)
9. What will Israel’s special position be in God’s kingdom? How does this contrast with God’s holy nation? We know God’s holy nation has several responsibilities towards the world in God’s kingdom, but what about with the physical nation of Israel? (See Isaiah 61:8-9, Daniel 7:27)
10. What is a covenant? What kind of covenant will God make with Israel in the future? Is this the first covenant He made with them? Explain the various covenants in the Bible and identify their mediators where applicable. Why does God often work through a mediator? (See Jeremiah 31:31-34)
11. How can we be worthy to be called “a people for God’s own possession”? How do we know this is not an easy road to follow? What is our ultimate purpose, should we be faithful, in the hierarchy of rulership in the kingdom? Do you wish to be an “oak of righteousness”? (See 1 Peter 2:9, Titus 2:14, Philippians 3:12-14)