

Colossians 3:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Analysis

Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Paul provides ultimate motivation: divine reward. "Of the Lord ye shall receive" (para Kyriou apolēmpsesthe, παρὰ Κυρίου ἀπολήμψεσθε) promises future recompense from Christ. "The reward of the inheritance" (tēn antapodosin tēs klēronomias, τὴν ἀνταπόδοσιν τῆς κληρονομίας) refers to heavenly inheritance (1:12), given as reward for faithful service.

This isn't salvation by works—inheritance comes through grace (1:12-14). But Scripture teaches degrees of reward based on faithfulness (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). "For ye serve the Lord Christ" (tō Kyriō Christō douleuete, τῷ Κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε) grounds everything: slaves serve Christ through serving masters. This transcends mere duty, transforming service into worship. Christ sees, values, and will reward faithful service unnoticed by earthly masters.

Historical Context

Slaves had no inheritance rights; they owned nothing, not even children or their own bodies. Paul promises slaves heavenly inheritance surpassing anything earthly masters could give—revolutionary hope transforming perspective on present suffering. This didn't make slavery acceptable but made it bearable while planting theological seeds that would eventually delegitimize the institution. Slaves who served Christ faithfully despite injustice would receive eternal vindication and reward.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does expectation of future reward from Christ motivate present faithfulness in unnoticed or unrewarded service?
2. Do you serve people or serve Christ through serving people—what's the difference practically?
3. How would you work differently if you truly believed Christ sees and will reward your faithful service?

Interlinear Text

εἰδότες	ὅτι	ἀπὸ	κυρίῳ	ἀπολήψεσθε	τὴν	ἀνταπόδοσιν
Knowing	that	of	the Lord	ye shall receive	G3588	the reward
G1492	G3754	G575	G2962	G618		G469
τῆς	κληρονομίας	τῷ	γὰρ	κυρίῳ	Χριστῷ	δουλεύετε·
G3588	of the inheritance	G3588	for	the Lord	Christ	ye serve
	G2817		G1063	G2962	G5547	G1398

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 6:8 (References Lord): Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Luke 14:14 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

1 Corinthians 7:22 (References Christ): For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.

Ephesians 6:6 (References Christ): Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Galatians 1:10 (References Christ): For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Acts 20:32 (Parallel theme): And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Hebrews 11:6 (Parallel theme): But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Hebrews 10:35 (Parallel theme): Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

Proverbs 11:18 (Parallel theme): The wicked worketh a deceitful work: but to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.

Matthew 5:46 (Parallel theme): For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?