

Are You Preparing to Rule With Christ?

ROLESHIP

Jesus Christ will soon return as supreme ruler to establish the world-ruling Kingdom of God on earth. But what about you? Will you be one of Christ's assistants in the world tomorrow?

Are you preparing to rule with Christ?

Preparation to rule begins with repentance, baptism and the receipt of God's Holy Spirit. One then becomes a Spirit-begotten child of God — a true Christian. Then, as recent mini-studies have explained, one must overcome spiritually and grow in the character of God.

This growth is what prepares one to rule with Christ in the world tomorrow!

Let's begin to understand.

1. Even though Christ was the very Son of God, did He still have to learn obedience? Hebrews 5:8-9. Did Christ overcome? John 16:33. Did He resist the temptations of the flesh? Hebrews 4:15.

2. Because Christ overcame during His human life and was born again by a resurrection, where is He now seated? Revelation 3:21. Have all angels, authorities and powers been made subject to Him under His Father? 1 Peter 3:22, Ephesians 1:20-22, 1 Corinthians 15:27.

3. Just how great is the authority Christ has already inherited? Hebrews 1:1-2, Matthew 28:18.

Notice how the Moffatt translation renders the original Greek of Hebrews 1:2: "But in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son — a Son whom he appointed heir of the universe"

4. Will Christ be the only inheritor and ruler of this earth and the vast universe? Or will there be co-rulers, joint heirs with him to share His great inheritance and responsibility? Romans 8:16-17. Revelation 21:7.

We, if we are true Christians, are heirs — joint heirs with Jesus Christ — destined to inherit and help rule everything God has created when we are born again at the resurrection as members of the Family of God!

5. What does the Bible say the resurrected saints will be doing in the Kingdom of God during the first thousand years of their eternal life? Revelation 2:26, 3:21, 5:10, 20:4, 6. Just

how important is overcoming to their being in God's Kingdom and ruling with Christ? Revelation 2:26, 3:21, 21:7.

The above scriptures clearly tell us that in the world tomorrow Spirit-born Christians will receive positions of rulership as kings and priests (teachers), administrators and assistants under Christ in the world-ruling Kingdom of God. These responsibilities are in addition to the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

The Christian life today is one of overcoming, growing, preparing and developing spiritually for great service through rulership in tomorrow's world. All Spirit-begotten Christians are now in training for significant roles in helping Christ teach the world God's way and administer the government of God for the good of the humans who will then be living on earth. Let's understand further.

6. Will one's spiritual "works" in this life determine his reward — his opportunity for great service — in God's Kingdom? Matthew 16:27.

Through overcoming the sinful pulls and impulses of the flesh, the world and the devil, and instead submitting to God and God's way, spiritual character is being developed in God's begotten children. God, with their willing cooperation, is building His character within them. And the more they overcome and develop God's character, the greater the responsibility Christ will give them in His government. Thus the greater will be their reward.

But no one can overcome and produce spiritual works for us. It requires putting forth effort on our part, together with the help of God's Holy Spirit, to become the spiritually minded and motivated persons God can use in His Kingdom. Overcoming (ceasing from doing) the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) involves letting Christ, by means of His Spirit, live in us to empower us to bear spiritual fruit — to perform spiritual works.

7. By what great principle can a person of ordinary ability and humble opportunity in this life qualify to take on far greater responsibility in the Kingdom of God? Luke 16:10. (Notice

also verses 11-12.) What will Christ say to those who have been faithful over the little that He entrusted to their care? Matthew 25:21.

We learn to rule by being faithful — conscientious — in whatever we do as we live by the principles and laws we learn from God's Word. Even the person who considers himself or herself as having only little ability and natural talent can qualify to rule — serve — in God's Kingdom.

Let's notice further the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. This parable illustrates that God will reward us according to our works. But it also illustrates another aspect — God's complete fairness in rewarding His overcomers, taking into consideration their own natural limitations.

8. In what way did the rich man, who represents Christ, divide up his goods? Matthew 25:15.

Notice that the quantities were not equal. The amounts were given according to each servant's natural ability. (The Greek word translated "talent" is *talanton*, which was a measure by which gold or silver was weighed.) These units of money picture spiritual gifts. God knows some have more hereditary ability, aptitudes, personality or physical strength than others. Some also have had more education and better opportunities.

9. In this parable, what did the servants do with the money given to them before Christ came back to settle accounts with them — to judge their works? Verses 16-19. How were the first two judged? Verses 20-23.

The servant who was given five talents doubled his spiritual stock-in-trade. Likewise, although the man with two produced less in number than the one with five, he also doubled what he started with. He did as well in proportion to his ability.

Notice how fair God is. Even though each servant was originally given an amount based on his natural abilities, both of the first two servants grew 100 percent. Christ therefore puts both essentially on an equal level in rewarding them. The Bible here reveals the principle that God will judge us according to how well we do with what we have to work with.

10. Does this parable reveal that each servant who is faithful "over a few things" — that is, over his or her limited abilities and opportunities of this life — will be rewarded with rulership over "many things" when Christ returns? Verses 21, 23.

Christ will not establish world rule until He has first trained His assistants. God will entrust the incomprehensibly great powers of His ruling Family only to those who, in this human life, obeyed Him and learned to properly control the

small powers we all have at our disposal. God wants to know that we will use His incredible power in love and self-control and for the good of all under our authority.

We prepare to responsibly rule for the good of ourselves and others in the world tomorrow by learning to better manage the affairs in our control today, no matter how small they may be. There are many chances to grow right on the job, at school or in the home — in whatever our circumstances.

11. Does the principle of Matthew 24:46-47 illustrate that it is only those who are faithful and overcome to the very end — those who are still growing in character at Christ's return (or at their death, if that comes first) — who shall inherit God's Kingdom and receive a reward?

12. Does II Peter 1:5-9 also show there is need for continual spiritual growth as long as a person lives? Do verses 10-11 show that those who don't continue to grow and overcome will not be born into God's Kingdom?

13. In what capacity is Christ now serving true Christians? Hebrews 4:14-16.

As the High Priest of all Spirit-begotten children of God, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, is always available to help us overcome. He takes special interest in our spiritual development, helping prepare us so we can eventually inherit all things with Him.

If we have been begotten by God's Holy Spirit and continue to overcome and grow spiritually, thus building the character of God until death or until the moment Jesus Christ returns, God will at the resurrection instantly change our weak, mortal bodies into powerful, sinless, glorified spirit bodies (Philippians 3:20-21).

It is then that we will be rewarded with stimulating responsibilities and opportunities to do great good serving in the world tomorrow as members of the ruling Family of God.

It's a breathtaking, exciting, incredible calling! A glorious, wonderful future! Have you begun to walk spiritually toward that goal?

Are you preparing to rule with Jesus Christ? □



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