

Rewarding of the Faithful Few

Malachi 3:16-18

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Introduction: “An English steamer was coming to Canada with a number of immigrants. One day the minister in that area of the boat asked, “What shall we sing? It must be something we all know, for nearly all the countries of Europe are gathered here.” The one in charge answered, “Then it must be an American tune – try ‘Jewels.’ “There were a thousand people in the area, speaking several different tongues, but with one voice they sang in full chorus, “When He Cometh.” The vessel landed at Quebec, & the immigrants filled two long trains of cars, one going east & the other to the Georgian Bay; & as they parted, each began to sing “When He Cometh.” The tune made the hymn a common language” (*The Story of the Hymns & Tunes*).

This “Jewels” song has been referred to as one of the most popular sacred songs ever written for children. William O. Cushing wrote the words for the children of his own Sunday School & church in New England. He was born December 31, 1823, in Hingham, Massachusetts. In addition to pastoring for over 20 years, he worked with gospel musicians such as Ira Sankey, Robert Lowry, & George Root. During his life-time he wrote over 300 gospel hymns, including “Hiding in Thee,” “Ring the Bells of Heaven,” “Under His Wings,” “There’ll be no Dark Valley,” & “Down in the Valley With My Savior I Would Go.” Known throughout his life as a noble & spiritual-minded Christian gentleman, he enjoyed a fruitful life & ministry. He died in Lisbon, New York, at the age of 78.

George Frederick Root was also born in Massachusetts. While still a young man, he became the organist at Boston’s historic Park Street Church. He later studied music & became a respected teacher. After moving to New York, he taught at the NY Institute for the Blind where he had Fanny Crosby as a student. Though he wrote a number of secular & patriotic songs, his first love was to compose simple SS-type gospel songs, able to be sung by people of all ages. The tune for this hymn was apparently an adaptation of a popular, post-civil war melody. “Jewels” became a familiar hymn on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Why so much history about a song? You will notice that the hymn is based upon the text of Malachi 3:17, “*And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; & I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*” This morning we saw the **reverence** of the faithful few for the Lord & the **response** to the faithful few by the Lord. Consider with me tonight the **reward** for the faithful few from the Lord.

I. Note **who** the Lord rewards (:17)

A. His “*jewels*” (elsewhere translated “*peculiar treasure*”):

1. A people of His own possession - Deuteronomy 14:2.
 - a. An explanation > Deuteronomy 7:6-8 & 9:4-5.
 - b. An expectation > John 15:13-16 & I Peter 2:9.
2. A people of His own promise – Exodus 19:5.
 - a. O.T. passages > Deuteronomy 6:22-25; Psalm 37:1-5, 23-25.
 - b. N.T. parallels > II Peter 1:4, “*precious promises*” – the promise of **salvation** (Romans 10:9-13; Ephesians 2:8-9); the promise of **supply** (His provision, Matthew 6:11; & His protection, I Peter 1:5); & the promise of **security** (Titus 1:1-2; & I John 5:11-13).

3. A people of His own purpose – Deuteronomy 26:18-19.
 - a. God’s **desire** for Israel > Deuteronomy 28:9-14 (Exodus 19:5-6).
 - b. God’s **design** for us > Titus 2:14 (I Peter 2:9) – redemption & purification
 Summary: Witness the transformation of hell-deserving sinners, the enemies of God, who become His rich & precious possession. We are a “*peculiar*” people – God’s “*jewels*.” Amazing Grace indeed!!

B. His “*son(s)*”

1. A personal relationship:
 - a. The picture of father & son – see Psalm 103:13.
 - b. The parallel of Heavenly Father & earthly sons – see John 1:12.
2. A powerful relationship:
 - a. The Father’s protection – “*spare*” members of the household (family).
 - b. The Father’s provision – as a father for his beloved children.

Summary: “The son who serves his father is twice beloved. He enjoys the love of the father automatically because he is his child, & beyond that he has pleased the father by faithful service. The father’s favor is both natural & earned, both instinctive & merited” (Stuart).

II. Note **how** the Father rewards (:18)

[“*Then shall ye return, & discern...*” can be > “Then you shall again discern...” (NKJV).]

A. The previous **discernment**:

1. The distinction between the righteous & the wicked – see Psalm 73.
2. The destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah in Lot’s day – see Genesis 18:25.

B. The future **discernment**:

1. The defeat of the wicked – see Mal. 4:1, “*the day that cometh*” – “Day of the Lord.”
2. The delight of the righteous – see Mal. 4:2-3.

Summary: The basis of discernment is “*him that serveth God & him that serveth him not.*” The word “*serve*” is in other contexts translated “*worship.*” Service for God is one way of worshipping Him. Worship cannot be separated from service (see Deut. 6:13 & Mt. 4:10). [“To serve God is both to worship Him & to live under & for His authority” (Stuart).]

Conclusion: Are you one of His “precious jewels”? Have you experienced the light of the “*Sun of righteousness*”? It was this same writer, William Cushing, who wrote the familiar hymn, “Under His Wings” (cf. Malachi 4:2 with Psalm 57:1). Can you sing with confidence the first verse: “Under His wings I am safely abiding, Tho the night deepens & tempests are wild; Still I can trust Him – I know He will keep me, He has redeemed me & I am His child”? If so, you know the truth of the song, “He will gather He will gather, the gems for His kingdom, All the pure ones, all the bright ones, His loved & His own.” Who are those so rewarded? Remember verse 16 - those who fear the Lord, those who fellowship with one another, & those who focus on His name. Could that be said of you? As I asked this morning, “What is God recording about your life?” Are you identified with the faithful few? Who are they? Those who reverence the Lord (indicating their salvation) who will be rewarded by the Lord. Where do you stand with God tonight?