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Sermon Notes

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The Eternally Glorious Backward Look, Week 4

Rewards, The Grand Plan, The Control of Tyrants

The Premise: In heaven, God will reveal his mighty works in history to his redeemed, to the praise of his own glory and for the wonder and joy of his people.

I. The Doctrine of Rewards

A. People's Strange Attitudes about Heavenly Rewards

B. Christ Promises Rewards... and Teaches Us How to Store Them Up

1. Clear Promise of Rewards

Matthew 5:11-12 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 6:1-4 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² ¶ "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Jesus also makes similar promises about prayer and fasting:

Matthew 6:6 when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

2. Warning, Lest We Lose Our Rewards

3. The Command to Store Up Treasure in Heaven

Matthew 6:19-21 *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

C. Paul's "Crowns"

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 *For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰ Indeed, you are our glory and joy.*

Philippians 4:1 *Therefore, my brothers, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!*

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.*

D. The Essence of Rewards: Praise from God, Honor from Others

1. Praise from God

1 Corinthians 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

Romans 2:29 *His praise is not from men, but from God.*

John 5:44 *How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?*

Matthew 25:21 *His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'*

John 12:26 *Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.*

2. Honor from others

Philippians 2:29-30 *Welcome [Epaphroditus] in the Lord with great joy, and honor men like him, ³⁰ because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me.*

E. All Our Rewards Ultimately Glorify God

1. Apart from Christ... We Can Do Nothing!

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

2. Clearly Revealed that God Did It!

John 3:20-21 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Isaiah 26:12 LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.

Hebrews 13:21 [May God] equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

3. Casting Crowns

Revelation 4:10-11 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: ¹¹ "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power

4. Seeing Our Good Deeds, Praising Our Father

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in heaven.

F. Further Insight: Increased Capacity to Know God in Heaven

1. God is the Reward

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."

2. To Know God is Eternal Life

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

3. Shared Experience with God

Matthew 25:21 "Enter into the joy of your Master."

All rewards are a shared experience between a child of God and his/her heavenly Father. We are told to "find out what pleases the Lord" (Eph.

5:10) If we do what pleases our Father, he will let us into that pleasure in heaven.

4. The Measure You Use is the Measure You'll Receive

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

G. Horizontal Delight; No Pride (from Either Side)

1 Corinthians 12:26 if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

H. Jonathan Edwards's Insights: "Heaven is a World of Love"

Jonathan Edwards, "Heaven is a World of Love":

"Not the least remainder of any principle of envy shall exist to be exercised toward angels or other beings who are superior in glory; nor shall there be aught like contempt or slighting of those who are inferiors. Those that have a lower station in glory than others, suffer no diminution of their own happiness by seeing others above them in glory. On the contrary, all the members of that blessed society rejoice in each other's happiness, for the love of benevolence is perfect in them all. ...

The saints that are highest in glory will be the lowest in humbleness of mind, for their superior humility is part of their superior holiness. Though all are perfectly free from pride, yet, as some will have greater degrees of divine knowledge than others, and larger capacities to see more of the divine perfections, so they will see more of their own comparative littleness and nothingness, and therefore will be lowest and most abased in humility. ...

And, besides, the inferior in glory will have no temptation to envy those that are higher than themselves, for those that are highest will not only be more loved by the lower for their higher holiness, but they will also have more of the spirit of love to others, and so will love those that are below them more than if their own capacity and elevation were less. They that are highest in degree in glory, will be of the highest capacity; and so having the greatest knowledge, will see most of God's loveliness, and consequently will have love to God and love to the saints most abounding in their hearts."

"... all shall have as much love as they desire, and as great manifestations of love as they can bear; and so all shall be fully satisfied; and where there is perfect satisfaction, there can be no reason for envy."

I. The Central Command: Store Up as Much Treasure As You Possibly Can

II. The Grand Plan Revealed at Last

A. The Existence of God's Overarching Plan... from Before Time Began

1. The Gospel Planned Before the Beginning of Time

Ephesians 1:4-6 For he chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

1 Corinthians 2:7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory

2 Timothy 1:9-10 [God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began. ¹⁰ This has now been made evident through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus

Titus 1:2-3 in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, ³ and has in His own time revealed His message in the proclamation that I was entrusted with

2. The Plan and the Hand

Isaiah 14:26-27 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. ²⁷ For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Ephesians 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will

3. The plan extends to the smallest and greatest details of history

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

B. The Linear View of History

Revelation 22:13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

God planned a sequence of events... first this, then that, then the other

The entire sequence is more complex than we can possibly imagine

C. God is the Great "I Was"

Revelation 1:4 *Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come*

Revelation 1:8 *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."*

Revelation 4:8 *Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."*

Revelation 11:16-17 *And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign."*

The unchanging God wants to be known for what he WAS as he has revealed throughout history. Yet we know he is the unchanging God... forever the I AM:

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

Malachi 3:6 *I the LORD do not change.*

Exodus 3:14 *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

John 8:58 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

But the historical record of God's actions in every era of human history is worth knowing; thus he says again and again in Revelation that he the "God who WAS"

D. The Complexity of Providence

Romans 11:33-34 *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ³⁴ "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"*

When Paul asserts that God's paths are "beyond tracing out," he uses a fascinating Greek word that pictures a tracker, like one who follows a trail—a hunter, following the trail of an animal; a detective, following the trail of a fugitive; a bloodhound, pursuing a quarry. He's saying God's ways are ULTIMATELY UNTRACKABLE

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ² a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, ³ a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to*

dance, ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

History is vastly complex... even a single day of history is beyond our ability to comprehend.

1. The tapestry illustration
2. The watch illustration
3. The Apollo 11 illustration
 - a. Saturn V rocket, heaviest rocket in history
 - b. What was launched: five different vehicles in a series of stages
 - c. 5.5 million separate parts
 - d. 400,000 scientists, engineers, technicians
 - e. One mission: to put a man on the moon, and bring him back safely to the earth
 - f. 195 hour mission with seven distinct phases
4. This mission: vastly more complex!!

Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Revelation 7:13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes-- who are they, and where did they come from?"

E. J.I. Packer's "York Signal Box Error"... Finally Answered

1. *Knowing God*: "God's Wisdom and Ours"
2. Argues against us having a full comprehension of the details of providence in this world

3. He uses an illustration of the “York Signal Box Error”

“If you stand at the end of a platform on York station, you can watch a constant succession of engine and train movements...But you will only be able to form a very rough and general idea of the overall plan in terms of which all these movements are being determined...If, however, you are privileged enough to be taken by one of the high-ups into the magnificent electrical signal box...you will see...the entire track layout for five miles on either side of the station, with little glow worm lights moving or stationary on the different tracks to show the signalmen at a glance where every engine and train is. At once you will be able to look at the whole situation through the eyes of the men who control it: you will see from the diagram why it was that this train had to be signaled to a halt, and that one diverted from its normal running line, and that one parked temporarily in a siding. The why and the wherefore of all these movements becomes plain, once you can see the overall position.

Now, the mistake that is commonly made is to suppose that this is an illustration of what God does when He bestows wisdom: to suppose, in other words, that the gift of wisdom consists in a deepened insight into the providential meaning and purpose of events going on around us, an ability to see why God has done what He has done in a particular case, and what He is going to do next.

People feel that if they were really walking close to God, so that He could impart wisdom to them freely, then they would, so to speak, find themselves in the signal-box; they would discern the real purpose of everything that happened to them, and it would be clear to them at every moment how God was making all things work together for good. Such people spend much time poring over the book of providence, wondering why God should have allowed this or that to take place, whether they should take it as a sign to stop doing one thing and start doing another, or what they should deduce from it. If they end up baffled, they put it down to their own lack of spirituality.”

Final statement:

“Thus the effect of His gift of wisdom is to make us more humble, more joyful, more godly, more quick-sighted as to His will, more resolute in the doing of it and less troubled (not less sensitive, but less bewildered) than we were at the dark and painful things of which our life in this fallen world is full. The New Testament tells us that the fruit of wisdom is Christlikeness – peace, and humility, and love (Jas. 3:17) – and the root of it is faith in Christ (1 Cor. 3:18; cf. 1 Tim. 3:15) as the manifested wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24; 30). ...

Let us see to it, then, that our own quest for wisdom takes the form of a quest for these things, and that we do not frustrate the wise purpose of God by neglecting faith and faithfulness in order to pursue a kind of knowledge which **in this world** it is not given to us to have.

My question: WHAT ABOUT IN THE NEXT WORLD? What about in heaven? Will God take us into the signal box of the universe to show us in retrospect all that he decided to do in history for the good of his elect people? To show us the details of providence??

F. William Cowper: Painful Providences Explained

God moves in a mysterious way
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants His footsteps in the sea
 And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never failing skill
 He treasures up His bright designs
 And works His sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
 The clouds ye so much dread
 Are big with mercy and shall break
 In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust Him for His grace;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
 And scan His work in vain;
**God is His own interpreter,
 And He will make it plain.**

Ok... God will interpret his own providences... he will "make it plain." BUT WHEN? Will it not be in heaven??

G. The Example of Jacob and Joseph

1. Jacob's sons were jealous of his love for Joseph; they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him

2. They conspired to sell him into slavery and soak his robe in blood and lie to their father that he had been torn to pieces by an animal
3. For years, Jacob wept over the death of his beloved son
4. But Joseph wasn't dead... he was alive in Egypt
5. God was working out a mysterious providence, which would immediately result in many lives being preserved during the famine, and would ultimately culminate in the Exodus of the Jewish nation 400 years later under Moses
6. Joseph's amazing understanding

Genesis 45:5 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

7. Jacob's pain—all based on a lie—was a necessary part of the plan

H. Christ's Commitment to Tell Us Everything

John 15:15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Like God with Abraham:

Genesis 18:17 Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?"

I. Aspects of the Plan

1. God's sovereign control over all nations and world history

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

2. God's control over the rise and fall of massive world empires

Psalm 75:6-7 No one from the east or the west or from the desert can exalt a man. ⁷ But it is God who judges: He brings one down, he exalts another.

3. God puts kings in place and decides how long they will rule

Exodus 9:16 [God said to Pharaoh] *But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.*

4. God's control over kings and their decisions

Proverbs 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.*

5. Whether that king knows God or not

Isaiah 45:1-7 *"This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: ² I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. ⁴ For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. ⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, ⁶ so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting men may know there is none besides me. I am the LORD, and there is no other. ⁷ I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.*

6. Rise and fall of empires

- a. Daniel 2: Nebuchadnezzar's statue
- b. Daniel 7: Four beasts from the sea
- c. The Lesson... Daniel 4: God's sovereign rule

Daniel 4:17 *the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.*

All the days of every human being are measured out ahead of time:

Psalm 139:16 *All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*

- 7. The point of God's sovereign control: his glory in the salvation of the elect
- 8. The spread of the gospel "From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth"

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Isaiah 66:19 "I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations-- to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations.

- a. Every era of church history will be recounted
 - b. The lessons and heroes/heroines from each era will be heard, studied, praised... to the praise of God's glory
 - c. The early church era... from the Apostles, through the gradual spiritual conquest of the Roman Empire
 - d. The spread of the gospel among the barbarian tribes in Europe
 - e. The movement of the gospel east toward India (by Thomas)
 - f. Slowly, gradually, the light of Christ spread in every generation
 - g. God does not pursue geography by people... GPS locations are not so important as the unconverted elect
9. Each of the multitude of the redeemed from every nation on earth will have been redeemed in their own way... called from their own nation, language, and people to cross over from death to life through faith in Christ

Richard Baxter: "God breaketh not all men alike."

The elect will get redeemed one at a time by the hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ with faith. But who the evangelist (or series of evangelists) will be is varied.

Mothers and fathers will lead a huge percentage to Christ

Brothers and sisters will lead many to Christ

Extended family members will lead many to Christ

Tribal/community leaders will lead many to Christ

Traveling evangelists, cross-cultural missionaries, pastors, Bible teachers will lead many to Christ

Remote media, including printed materials, telegraph, telephone, radio, television, internet will have played a role in leading many to Christ

Beyond all of this, God will be controlling the matrix of unfolding current events:

Wars and rumors of wars will play a role:

Illustration:

In 1536, John Calvin, a 27-year old scholar from France, was moving from the persecution in his homeland to find a quiet place for study. But current events intervened. While he was traveling to Strasbourg to find his quiet retreat, a war between Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor, from Spain) and Francis I (of France) resulted in troop movements that blocked the road to that city. So he had to take a detour through Geneva, Switzerland. There, William Farel heard he was in his city and went to persuade him to stay in Geneva to aid in the reformation there. Calvin wanted to get to a quiet place and rest, but Farel, burning with zeal, shouted, "May God curse your rest if you do not help with this work!" Calvin was afraid of God's curse and began his life's work as a reformer in that city.

John Piper:

"In retrospect one has to marvel at the providence of God that he should so arrange armies to position his pastors where he would!"

10. In heaven, the details of how God controlled the events of human history to guarantee the salvation of every single elect person will be a magnificent story to tell

III. God's Final Laugh Over Tyrants

A. Psalm 2

Psalm 2:1-9 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ³ "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." ⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, ⁶ "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill." ⁷ I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

Acts 4:25-28 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ²⁶ The

kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.'* ²⁷ *Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

B. God's Laughter = His Power to Deal Even More Subtly Than They Do

1. God laughs at the wicked... it is a laugh of derision that they think they can oppose him
2. God's laughter also is in the way he twists the plans of the wicked back on themselves

Psalm 18:25-26 To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, ²⁶ to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd.

"Shrewd" = tricky, twisted... almost devious

Job 5:13 He catches the wise in their craftiness, and the schemes of the wily are swept away.

Proverbs 26:27 If a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him.

3. Like Haman, who plotted to destroy Mordecai and all the Jewish people; he specifically planned to hang Mordecai on a gallows he had built in his yard

Esther 7:9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A gallows seventy-five feet high stands by Haman's house. He had it made for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king." The king said, "Hang him on it!"

C. Judgment Over Tyrants

Isaiah 14:9-11 The grave below is all astir to meet you at your coming; it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you-- all those who were leaders in the world; it makes them rise from their thrones-- all those who were kings over the nations. ¹⁰ They will all respond, they will say to you, "You also have become weak, as we are; you have become like us." ¹¹ All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you.

D. Examples from History

1. The systematic persecution of Christians by various Roman Emperors resulted in an explosion of Christianity across the entire empire. For this reason, Tertullian said, "The blood of martyrs is seed." The public conversion of the

emperor Constantine to Christianity in the year AD 312 marked a clear display of the progress of Christianity amongst the nobility and the military of Rome

2. Voltaire's defamation of Christianity... and God's final word

a. Voltaire (1694-1778) was a French Enlightenment philosopher, satirist, and playwright

b. Voltaire's hatred of Christianity

"The Bible. That is what fools have written, what imbeciles commend, what rogues teach and young children are made to learn by heart" (Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, 1764).

"We are living in the twilight of Christianity" (*Philosophical Dictionary*).

In a 1767 letter to Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, he wrote: "Christianity is the most ridiculous, the most absurd, and bloody religion that has ever infected the world...My one regret in dying is that I cannot aid you in this noble enterprise of extirpating the world of this infamous superstition."

Voltaire ended every letter to friends with "Ecrasez l'infame" (crush the infamy – the Christian religion).

In his pamphlet, *The Sermon on the Fifty* (1762) he attacked viciously the Old Testament, biblical miracles, biblical contradictions, the Jewish religion, the Christian God, the virgin birth and Christ's death on the cross.

Of the Four Gospels he wrote, "What folly, what misery, what puerile and odious things they contain [and the Bible is filled] with contradictions, follies, and horrors

Voltaire's prediction concerning the Bible

"One hundred years from my day, there will not be a Bible on earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity-seeker." (1776)

c. God laughs last

In August 1836, only fifty-eight years after Voltaire's death, Rev. William Acworth of the British and Foreign Bible Society saw with his own eyes Voltaire's former residence in Geneva, Switzerland, *Les Delices*, being used as a "repository for Bibles and Religious tracts." The house at this time was occupied by Colonel Henri Tronchin (1794-1865), who served as the president of the Evangelical Society of Geneva from 1834-39.

Acwith's Statement: "I went through Geneva, and was much refreshed by meeting the Committee of the Evangelical Society, with whose proceedings and objects I was so much gratified, that I wrote to this Society to make a liberal grant of 10,000 copies of the French Scriptures to promote the objects of that Society. Our committee have only granted 5,000; but I have no doubt they will, err long, send the other 5,000. Before I left Geneva, my friend observed. "Probably you will like to see the house where Voltaire lived, and where he wrote his plays." Prompted by the spirit of curiosity, so characteristic of an Englishman, to visit the house of the celebrated infidel, I was about to put on my hat to walk into the county, when he said, "It is not necessary you should put on your hat" and he introduced me over the threshold of one room to another, and said, "'tis the room where Voltaire's play were acted for the amusement to himself and his friend." And what was my gratification in observing that that room had been converted into sort of Repository for Bibles and Religious Tracts. Oh! my Christ Friends, that the spirit of infidelity had been there, to witness the results of other vaticinations [acts of prophesying] respecting the downfall of Christianity!"

<https://bellatorchristi.com/2019/03/18/voltaires-prediction-home-and-the-bible-society-truth-or-myth/>

Final mocking by God:

Over 100 million Bibles are printed/downloaded worldwide *every single year*.

The Bible Society estimated that between 1815 and 1975, over 2.5 billion copies of the Bible were published.

Matthew 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

3. Mao and Christianity in China

Mao Zedong, the leader of Communist China, was fiercely opposed to Christianity. He carried out a long program of violence against Christians, imprisoning them, and killing many. As the number of Christians kept going down because he was killing so many, he decided to stop killing and to try to humiliate Christians and debase the very idea of Christianity itself. He noted that Christians gain strength from being together, so he scattered Christians all over China. Furthermore, the communist party gave humiliating jobs to these scattered Christians, like garbage collectors, who went house to house every day collecting garbage and talking to people about Jesus. My missions professor, Christy Wilson, said "The Chinese government became the largest missions sending agency in the twentieth century!"

4. Cuban doctors in Iran

Just heard this at last week's missionary meeting in Amsterdam. American missionaries can in no way gain access to Iran, which is fiercely Islamic. But for some reason the communist government of Cuba has a strong relationship with the Islamic government of Iran. And Iran has asked Cuba to send doctors to care for their people. As it turns out, there is an amazing revival going on right now in Cuba, and evangelical Cuban doctors are lining up to go care for the people of Iran... and seek to lead them to Christ!

So... the communist government is paying for the evangelization of the Islamic people of Iran!

Psalm 2:4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

E. The Complete Story in Heaven