

# Can you dodge financial consequences? (11:31)

If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!

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## THE TEXT (NASB)

If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner!

*Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.  
Classic KJV - Proverbs 11:31*

## INTRODUCTION



We harvest what we plant.

Heaven and hell begin on earth: God's just reward and retribution for our behaviour starts here—for everyone.

What goes around comes around, but is there more?



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## COMMENTARY

### Translation

As surely as night follows day, and winter follows summer, so God's wrath follows sin—regardless of who sins.

The Hebrew word, הֵן (hēn, pronounced “hen”), can function either as the beginning of a conditional statement —“if” in the NASB—or as an exclamation—“behold” in the KJV. But I think that translating hēn as a conditional “if” statement is a little misleading. That would imply uncertainty about God's responses in this life. The KJV seems to get the sense better in suggesting that God uses both positive reward and negative retribution—the carrot and the stick—in this present life.

### Loving Discipline



The text could read that God will certainly discipline lovingly the righteous ones, his children on Earth. God will not hesitate to give us painful medicine, if we need it. Therefore, the text goes on, be very sure that pain will also come to the wicked and the sinner—those who are openly rebellious against Him. Further, if a loving God would send his sinless son Jesus to an agonizing death on a cross, just think of what He will do to Satan and his followers!

### Who is Righteous?

Let's be clear that the only righteousness God rewards is built on faith in the Son of God, either as Lord Jesus Christ under the New Covenant, or as the coming Messiah under the Old Covenant. The righteous deeds of humanity, apart from personal faith and obedience to God, are all “filthy rags” in the eyes of the Holy God (Isaiah 64:6). Some recompense, though certainly not all, is given to us by God on Earth. Those who make sacrifices for Christ on Earth receive a hundred times more than they gave up (Mark 10:28-31).

### Classic Comments

The great English Biblical scholar Matthew Henry makes the following comment on this text:

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If the righteous, who do not deserve the least reward, yet have part of their recompense here on earth, much more shall the wicked, who deserve the greatest punishment, have part of their punishment on earth, as an earnest [first instalment] of worse to come. Therefore stand in awe and sin not. If those have two heavens that merit none, much more shall those have two hells that merit both.

Remember the righteous are saved only through the merits of Jesus Christ and his sacrificial death on the cross. If righteousness before God were achievable through good human living, then the sacrifice of Christ would have been unnecessary.

## OUR CREATOR, REDEEMER, AND FRIEND

In Jesus' parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), He described both positive and negative compensation, reward, and punishment.

The servants who worked busily received enormous rewards. The servant who did nothing not only lost his job, but was also painfully punished. Note also the giving of reward and punishment in the parable of the minas (Luke 19:12-26).

Be sure of this: The deeds of a man's hands will return to him (Proverbs 12:14).

## APPLICATION

- Memorize the text in your favourite Bible translation and think about it often.
- Be sure to use both rewards and punishments to fit the behaviour of those you are training. (e.g. coaching a team, raising children). God uses both the carrot and the stick.
- When you punish others, make sure the punishment fits the crime.
- Do not allow too much time to elapse between the action and the consequence.

Which of these steps, if any, does Jesus want you to take now? Ask Him.



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## KEY WORDS

compensation, discipline, incentive, injustice, justice, more assets (quantity), retribution, reward, righteous, sin, wicked

## ILLUSTRATION

### Who is Self-Centered Sam?



Self-Centered Sam looks out for number one. Who's that? It's Sam, of course! Sam doesn't consider himself to be self-centered. One of his favourite books is ["The Richest Man in Babylon."](#)

What does Sam do with his income? The cream, the very best goes to his own long-term growth fund. His motto is 'pay yourself first.' Some call him Stingy Sam. But he's not stingy; he's just making careful preparation for his own future, comfort, and well-being. He is part of the "me" generation. He typifies the Maslow's hierarchy of needs with self-actualization as apex of all values. Sam is a dedicated humanist. He doesn't recognize any higher power than himself. He's a tough negotiator.

Sam doesn't ignore charity. But how could he possibly help anyone one else unless there was something in it for him? Therefore any and all charitable donations must have full and public credit given to the donor. The more people are aware of his generosity the better. After all, a little bit of advertising is good for business. When his corporation gives a gift it comes as a percentage of profits, not revenues.

His financial hero is the multi-millionaire, whose assets once exceeded the entire US treasury:

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The great Railroad and Steamship Baron [Cornelius Vanderbilt](#).

