

## DEATH AND AFTER

### Judgment For the Believer After Death

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Every Christian must be judged by God one day, but this judgment is not the same as that of the unbeliever. This judgment will take place whenever the Christian meets his Lord face to face whether that is at death or at the coming of Christ.
- B. The judgment of Christians is not at the Great White Throne where unbelievers will be judged for their unbelief, sins and inadequate works (Rev. 20:11-15) but at the Judgment Seat of Christ where the true believer will be judged for his works done for Christ in this life.
- C. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not for sin but for service, not for punishment but for reward, not for faith but for works, not what we have done with Christ but what we have done for Christ. NOTE: The Bible clearly teaches that the Christian can never be eternally judged for his sins because Christ has died for those sins; thus, there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). The Heavenly Father, through Christ, has put away forever the sins of those who have trusted Christ (Psa. 103:12; Mic. 7:19; Isa. 38:17; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12). NOTE: The Bible also clearly teaches that while the sin problem has been solved forever by Christ for the Christian, the Christian will be examined for his works done for Christ and will be rewarded accordingly.

#### II. THE JUDGMENT SEAT AND CHRISTIAN LIVING (II Cor. 5:9, 10)

- A. “Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” – The whole goal of the Christian is to please Christ in every area of life. Real dynamic Christian living comes when we arrive at the place where we live our life because we are motivated out of love for Jesus Christ.
- B. “For we must all appear” (be made manifest) – The Christian lives to please his Lord because he knows someday he will be examined for his faithful labors on this Earth. This is a universal judgment for all believers and none will be exempted from this examination. The word “appear” literally means “made manifest” or “revealed.” This means that every Christian will be turned inside out so it can be displayed exactly what he was on the inside. This judgment will not deal just with our outward works but with the motives behind our works. NOTE: If our works were done in the power of the Spirit and to bring glory to Christ, there will be reward. If they were done to bring glory to ourselves and done for selfish reasons, there will be no reward.
- C. “Before the judgment seat of Christ,” – The idea of judgment to the English mind is that of punishment, but in the Greek language this Judgment Seat is really called the Bema of Christ. Every Corinthian knew what Paul was talking about when he said the Bema. An Olympic stadium was on the outside of the city where the Olympic games were held. The Bema was a special stand, ideally located in the stadium, where the honored citizens and the heads of state would watch the games. The victor of each event, if he had participated lawfully, would come up to the Bema and receive an award, which was a wreath made of leaves. This wreath was either put

on the head or thrown over the shoulder. NOTE: This is a beautiful picture of Christians coming before Christ to be rewarded for the things they have done for Christ while on this Earth.

- D. “That each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” – The terms “good” and “bad” may refer to sins and righteousness or they may also mean that which is usable or unusable, acceptable or unacceptable. This is, those things that were of worth and those things that were worthless. NOTE: When we are examined our whole life will be laid naked before Christ and we shall see whether the things we did were of value for Christ or were worthless because they were done to bring glory to self.

### III. THE JUDGMENT SEAT AND JUDGING OUR BROTHERS (Rom. 14:10-12)

- A. Introduction: This context is about judging our Christian brothers in the area of doubtful things or questionable practices. Christians are not to judge one another for God someday will judge every Christian.
- B. “But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, ‘AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.’” – Each Christian, before he judges or criticizes his brother, must remember that one day he shall be judged by God at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- C. “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.” – This verse says that every Christian will give an account to God for the way he lived his life down here on Earth, especially in relation to his brothers and sisters in Christ. NOTE: This day of judgment could be quite an embarrassing moment for many Christians, but, if we are pleasing Christ, we shall not be ashamed at His coming (I Jn. 2:28).

### IV. THE JUDGMENT SEAT AND MINISTERING FAITHFULLY (I Cor. 3:11-15)

- A. Introduction: This context is speaking about full-time ministers but by application this applies to all Christians for all are ministers of Christ. From this section every Christian can learn what is going to happen to him at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- B. “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” – A believer’s life is compared to a building. The foundation of a Christian’s life is Jesus Christ. Upon this foundation, each man has the responsibility to build a building or a life which will stand the test of God’s final judgment.
- C. “Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,” – Gold, silver and stones are symbolic of the works that a believer can do that will be rewarded in eternity. Notice that these materials are indestructible and will not burn. Wood, hay and straw are symbolic of believer’s works that will not be rewarded. These materials are destructible and can be burned. NOTE: A Christian can build on the foundation of his life, which is Christ, a shaky structure that will not count for eternity or he can build a strong, healthy, superstructure that will reap many rewards in eternity.
- D. “Each man’s work will become evident (made manifest);” – Again the Christian’s life will be turned inside out and God will judge the motives behind our external works.
- E. “For the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.” – The Christian’s works shall be revealed

by fire. Fire purges the dross and leaves the pure metal. This fire may be symbolic of God's holiness. God will apply the judgment of His holiness to determine what is destructible and what is indestructible. This fire will test every Christian's work as to the quality. This is not looking at the quantity of work but the quality of work and the motive behind it. It is not how much we have done but how faithful we have been. NOTE: It is possible for a person who has seemingly done little work to have a big reward because his motive was right. But it is also possible for a person to have outwardly done much work but whose motive was wrong and have little reward. The ideal is much work with the right motive.

- F. "If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward." – For faithful service there is reward.
- G. "If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire." – Notice carefully it is the man's works that are burned, not the man. This is not a Protestant purgatory. He shall suffer loss of reward but he himself shall be saved. We may lose reward but we cannot, if we are true Christians, lose salvation.

## V. REWARDS

- A. We are told in many places that there are awards for Christians for faithful service. We also know that a Christian may fall short of the reward that might have been his (II Jn. 8). The Christian's rewards are spoken of as crowns.
- B. There is the incorruptible crown for those who walk a holy life (I Cor. 9:25), the crown of rejoicing for souls we have led to Christ (I Thess. 2:19), the crown of righteousness to all who long for the return of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 4:8), the crown of life for those who faithfully endure testing on this Earth (James 1:12), a second crown of life for those Christians who die as martyrs for the faith (Rev. 2:10) and a crown of glory for faithful pastors who instruct their flocks (I Pet. 5:4).
- C. Upon being rewarded, each Christian is not going to parade around showing off the size or number of his crowns. In Revelation 4:10, the Apostle John tells that the 24 elders cast their crowns at the feet of the Lord Jesus and worshipped Him. NOTE: These crowns will not be given to us as a permanent possession, but will be given to us that we may place them at the feet of the Lord Jesus. NOTE: There is a spiritual meaning behind these crowns. Daniel 12:3 indicates that God's people will shine throughout all eternity. Therefore, it may be suggested that our reward in eternity will be a capacity to manifest and radiate forth the glory of God. In eternity, each Christian will radiate the glory of God to his capacity. Each will be perfectly happy and collectively God's people will shine for God to bring glory to God. But how much we will contribute to the glory of God in eternity will depend on our faithfulness as stewards of the grace of God now.

## VI. EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIANS

- A. God Wants Faithfulness: In I Corinthians 4:2 it says, "Moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy (faithful)." It does not say fruitful but faithful. So many times success is judged by the number of souls won, and God knows that we should all be faithful witnesses and seeking to help others find the Saviour. But God first requires faithfulness. NOTE: If God has put you in a shop, an office, in business, in a home, God is asking one thing of you as the basis of reward, and that is faithfulness to what He has given you to do. If you are faithful in

what God has for you, your reward will be just as great as any other famous Christian such as Augustine, Luther, Moody or Billy Graham.

- B. God Will Reward You: Every true Christian will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Some, however, will be rewarded more than others for their works done in faith and perseverance. All Christians will have some crowns to throw at the feet of Jesus.