

Session 11 The Generosity of the Judge: the Judgment Seat of Christ

I. THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST: THE PLACE OF REWARD

- A. In October 1978, I had a supernatural encounter in which I was on my knees before Jesus. He said to me, ***“You are saved, but your life was wasted.”*** I protested, thinking, “You have the wrong person.” The thought rose up that ***it is impossible to manipulate the Man Christ Jesus.*** I cried, “Can I have another chance?” ***It is appointed to man to die once, then the judgment*** (Heb. 9:27).
- B. The most important appointment that any of us will ever have is in our future—when we stand before Jesus. Each will stand before Jesus at His judgment seat to give an account of what we did with what God gave us. The judgment seat or the *“bema seat”* in the ancient world was a place to receive rewards, not penalties. It was a familiar term, describing the platform a judge sat on to evaluate athletic contests. The Lord gives each person life assignments based on the capacities He has given them physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, and in their life circumstances.
- ¹⁰We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...¹²Then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. 14:10-12)***
- ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)***
- C. ***Rewards:*** Rewards express how Jesus feels about our love for Him in this life and about our having worked closely with Him in what He calls precious. They are not about superiority over others.
- ²⁷“The Son of Man will come...He will reward each according to his works.” (Mt. 16:27)***
- D. Jesus remembers every small act of love, even giving someone a cup of water (Mt. 10:42).
- ⁴²“Whoever gives...only a cup of cold water...he shall by no means lose his reward.” (Mt. 10:42)***
- E. Paul gave us important details about our most important appointment (judgment seat of Christ).
- ⁸Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor...¹¹No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one’s work will become clear...it will be revealed by fire... ¹⁴If anyone’s work...endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved. (1 Cor. 3:8-15)***
- F. ***No other foundation:*** The gift of God’s righteousness is our foundation (2 Cor. 5:21). We are saved as a free gift, by faith in Jesus’ work on the cross, but we are rewarded according to our works. Our *entrance* into heaven is *not* based on any of our works, but our *role* and *function* in heaven are.
- G. Jesus called us to buy gold by developing our relationship with Him and obeying Him. We “buy gold” by making choices that express our love to Jesus through our obedience to Him (Jn. 14:15).

¹⁸“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.” (Rev. 3:18)

II. DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEAVENLY REWARDS ARE GIVEN IN VARYING MEASURES

- A. Some in the kingdom will be called the least and some the greatest. Our smallest acts of obedience are remembered. This life is the only time where there is such a high “exchange rate.”

¹⁹“Whoever breaks [consistently]...the least of these commandments...shall be called least in the kingdom...whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom.” (Mt. 5:19)

- B. Believers will receive many different types of heavenly rewards at the time of the second coming. This vast range of varying rewards will include a differing measure of God’s glory in our life.

⁴¹For one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)

- C. Reward #1: **Resurrected bodies**—God’s glory will be manifest and reflected in different measures.

⁴³“The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Mt. 13:43)

- D. Reward #2: **Heavenly garments**—will be given as rewards for acts of righteousness this age.

⁸To her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Rev. 19:8)

- E. Reward #3: **Authority to reign**—as priests and kings (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). One’s work assignment in reigning with over nations and cities will vary with each believer (Dan. 7:22, 25-27; Mt. 19:28, 30; 20:16, 27; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21).

²¹“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne.” (Rev. 3:21)

²⁸“Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration [the Millennium]... you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mt. 19:28)

¹⁷“Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.” ¹⁸And the second came...¹⁹likewise he [master] said to him, ‘You also be over five cities.’” (Lk. 19:17-19)

- F. **Reward #4: Crowns**—Receiving a crown is not the same as having the gift of eternal life. It is not related to salvation, but may be like receiving a gold medal.

¹¹“I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.” (Rev. 3:11)

- G. Reward #5: **Praise**—affirmation from God (1 Pet. 1:7; cf. Mt. 25:21, 1 Cor. 4:5).

⁵Then each one’s praise [affirmation] will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)

- H. Reward #6: **Treasures**: Jesus' call to gain treasure in heaven includes many different things (Mt. 5:12; 6:4, 6, 18, 20; 10:41-42; 16:27; 19:21; Mk. 9:41; 10:21; Lk. 6:23, 35; 12:21, 33; 18:22).
- I. Reward #7: **Communion**: Our communion with God will vary according to our spiritual capacity. He will reward some by writing the Father's name on them—including receiving insight about God.
- ¹²He who overcomes...I will write on him the name of My God...and write on him My new name. (Rev. 3:12)*