

The Judgment Seat of Christ

I. A LIFE-CHANGING DREAM

- A. In October 1978, I had a dream in which Jesus said, ***“You are saved, but your life was wasted.”*** The thought rose up strongly in me that ***it is impossible to manipulate the Man Christ Jesus.*** I cried out, “Can I have another chance?” The next thought was that ***it is appointed unto man to die once, then comes the judgment*** (Heb. 9:27). I wept with a profound sense of loss and regret.
- B. I understood that the Holy Spirit allowed me to feel such great sorrow and regret so that I would live in such a way as to not have regret on the last day. A life without regret is based on seeking to walk out the first commandment with a spirit of faith and obedience. That is what Jesus wants most in us. What matters most about our life is what Jesus will think when our eyes meet. I fear regret more than anything else in my life. I pray, “Lord, shock me now, do not wait until then.”

II. JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST: THE PLACE OF REWARD

- A. Each believer will stand before Jesus to give an account of what we did with what God gave us. ***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)***
1. ***Judgment seat:*** This was a place to receive rewards not penalties. It was a familiar term describing where a judge sat to evaluate an athletic contest as in the Olympic Games. ***⁵The Lord...will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)***
 2. ***Give account:*** God gives each one a specific assignment based on the capacities that He gives them physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, and in their life circumstances. We are not accountable for what we do not have. God keeps detailed records of all that happens in His books (Dan. 7:10; Ps. 139:16; 87:6; Ex. 32:32; Dan. 12:1; Lk. 10:20).
- B. Eternal rewards are Jesus expressing how He feels about the way we loved Him in this age. We are saved as a free gift, by faith in Jesus’ work, but we are rewarded according to our works. Our entrance into heaven is not based on our works, but our place and role in heaven is. We are not rewarded according to our plans but according to the actual deeds done in our bodies. ***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)***
- ²⁷The Son of Man will come...He will reward each according to his works. (Mt. 16:27)***
- C. Every good work is rewarded, no matter how small or unnoticed it is by men (Mt. 10:42). ***⁴²And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. (Mt 10:42)***

- D. Paul gave us important details about our future appointment at the judgment seat of Christ. He mentioned six building materials. **Gold, silver, precious stones** are of great value, rare, found in small quantities below the ground, and are not diminished by fire. **Wood, hay, straw** are of little value, common, found in large quantities above the ground, and are destroyed by fire.
- ⁸*Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor...¹²If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work...¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:8-15)*
- E. There will be a vast range of degrees of reward that include a differing measure of God's glory in areas of our life such as our resurrected bodies, clothing, position of authority, etc.
- ⁴¹*There is one glory of the sun...and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)*
- F. Jesus' pure and all-knowing eyes of fire will test our works. His fire will reveal the truth.
- ¹⁸*These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire... (Rev. 2:18)*
- G. **Our work endures or is burned:** Work that endures the fire of God is rewarded. Work that is burned receives no reward. Work that receives reward honors the Word; it is motivated by love and is done before God's eyes instead of man's, seeking God's approval not man's.
- H. **Saved as through fire:** Some will be saved as through fire (Amos 4:11; Zech. 3:2; Jude 23). This phrase describes one who survives a burning building by escaping through the flames, yet loses all that they carried with them. They are pulled from the fire just in time, losing all.
- I. Which audience are we living before and whose applause are we seeking? Jesus called us to a lifestyle of charitable deeds that includes investing our time, money, words, or prayers for others.
- ¹*Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father...²When you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do...they have their reward...⁴Your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you. (Mt. 6:1-4)*
- J. Paul contrasted two ways of living: to live as unto God or as unto man, i.e., to live seeking the applause of God or of men. **Eyeservice** speaks of serving to gain the applause and recognition of men by serving with more humility, generosity, diligence, and purity when someone is watching.
- ⁶*Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,⁷with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men,⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord... (Eph. 6:6-8)*
- K. This life is the only time in our eternal existence when we have such a great "exchange rate."