

The Judgment Seat of Christ: Going for the Gold

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, with a very serious look, ***“You are saved, but your life was wasted.”*** I protested, thinking, “This is a mistake! 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?” The next thought came in a powerful way—that ***it is appointed unto man to die once, then comes 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)***
- 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)***
- ¹²“I am coming...My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.” (Rev. 22:12)***
- 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)***
- ¹⁰God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints. (Heb. 6:10)***
- E. Paul gave us important details about our future appointment at the 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; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 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. (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 *is*.
- 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

- A. Some in the kingdom will be called the least and some the greatest (Heb. 8:11; Rev. 11:18; 19:5).
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 areas of our life, such as our resurrected bodies, clothing, dwelling place, position of authority, and relationship with God. This life is the only time where there is such a high “exchange rate.”
⁴¹***For one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)***
- C. Reward #1: God’s glory will be manifest and reflected in resurrected bodies 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 done in this age.
⁸***To 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)***
²⁷***“We [the apostles] have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” ²⁸Jesus said to them, “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. 19:27-28)***
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: Some will be rewarded with various 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: Believers will receive varying praise from God (1 Pet. 1:7; cf. Mt. 25:21, 1 Cor. 4:5).
⁵***Then each one’s praise [affirmation] will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)***
⁷***...that the genuineness of your faith [response to God]...may be found to praise [affirmation], honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus. (1 Pet. 1:7)***
²¹***“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things...” (Mt. 25:21)***

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