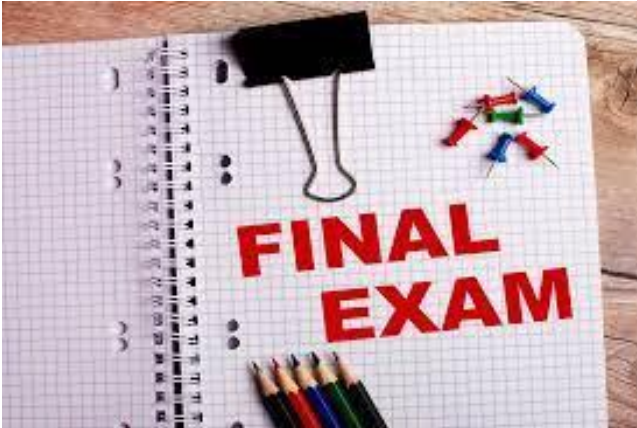


The Final Examination

(A Study of the Judgment Seat of Christ)

Pastor Kelly Sensenig



I remember the church history final examination that I had to take during my last year at the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music in Grand Rapids Michigan. A friend of mine in my house also took the class with me and we stayed up all night studying for the church history final. We ordered pizza

and drank coffee and Coke all night to try and stay awake. By early morning, we were like zombies. I mean, we were at the point where we didn't care who the French philosopher Descartes was! Descartes concluded that everything could be doubted except the fact that he was doubting! He coined the famous line – "I think therefore I am." We really did not care what this fruitcake in church history said. All we wanted to do was to take the final exam in the morning, try to pass it, and then get some rest!

This experience reminds me that there is coming a day when every Christian will have to take a final examination. It will be a day when we, as God's people, stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Bible teaches that my life is an open book before God. He knows everything about me and will examine me in relationship to my over all living, faithfulness, and service to Him in this day of final examination.

This final examination will occur in conjunction with the Rapture of the Church, so we want to study about the Judgment Seat of Christ as an event associated with the Rapture. God's Word repeatedly states that He knows how we are living our Christian life. This means He will be able to properly

access and judge each one of us someday in relation to our Christian life and service.

Revelation 2:2

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

Revelation 2:9

“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty ...”

Revelation 2:13

“I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.”

Revelation 2:19

“I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.”

The day of the final exam is coming for the Church! Christ will examine us for who we really were! May God stir our hearts and motivate us to live right, do right, and be right when considering this future examination day. What grade will you receive on the final examination?

God will examine His people someday. This is seen in seven specific ways.

I. The Picture of the Examination

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (*an inclusive judgment for all Church Age saints*); that every one may receive (*payment or reward*) the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad” (*an inclusive judgment of all our works related to living and service*).

No Christian will be left out of this judgment. You won't be able to hide behind a cloud and be missed! Furthermore, everything from A-Z in our lives will be examined on this day with the fiery omniscience of God and only those things which are worthy of reward will pass the test. Everything else that does not meet God's approval, which is unworthy and of no value, will not pass the test or final examine. In the end, no reward will be given for the "bad" (worthless) actions or deeds but only the "good" (worthy) actions and services rendered unto God. This is why I want to concentrate on always doing "good" or what is worthy in God's sight. My motivation must always be to do what is good and right.

Bob Jones used to say, "Do right!" This is sage advice for the day in which we are living. Keep doing good, keep doing what is right.

Ron Hamilton wrote:

"Right is always right, and wrong is always wrong,
And we must learn to separate the two!
If you love the right, the Lord will give you light;
So seek the right in every-thing you do!"

"Do right till the stars fall, do right till the last call
Do right when there's no one else to stand by you!
Do right when you're all alone, do right though it's never known.
Do right since you love the Lord — do right, do right!"

Doing good, doing right, doing that which is worthy in God's sight will pay eternal dividends!

The words "judgment seat" (GK. bema), as found in 2 Corinthians 5:10, pictures the elevated step or platform where decisions were made by Roman officials and where rulers would pass judgment on people. The word signifies the raised platform where the judge would sit. It was a tribunal or court of justice (Acts 12:21; 18:12-17). The Bema was also the place where awards were handed out to the winners in the annual Isthmian games which were a forerunner to the Olympic games. The umpire or judge would watch the games being played on the raised platform (the bema or

judgment seat) and then award the winners. The raised platform was the place where the victorious athletes went to receive their crowns. The Bema was then a place used in the political and athletic arenas of Roman life. Paul borrows this term and applies it to the day when Christians will be judged for their living and service for the Lord.

II. The Person Giving the Examination

This final examination is conducted before the presence of the Son of God. The Bible says that we are going “to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is going to be our Judge. John 5:22 says, “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.” John 5:27 also states: “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”

In this coming day Jesus is going to be our “righteous judge” (2 Tim. 4:8) and whatever grade we have earned we will receive. As the righteous Judge, Christ is not going to grade us on a curve scale. We will receive exactly what we have earned. One thing is certain, Jesus (God’s Son) will be the person giving the examination. Someday we will all stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to face Him as our judge (“behold, the judge standeth before the door” – James 5:9). The doors of Heaven are opened, and the Judge (Jesus Christ) is pictured as ready to return for His Bride (the Church) in the Rapture and bring us before His judgment seat. In the next twinkling or blink of an eye (1 Cor. 15:52) we could be standing before the Judge! Friend, are prepared for the coming of the Lord? Are you loving Him, living for Him, and serving Him? Are you faithful to what He has called you to do? The Judge is coming!

III. The Participants at the Examination

The Bema looks forward to the time when the Church (God’s New Testament saints) are examined and judged for the way they have lived out their lives on earth. Paul identified himself with the other believers when he said that “we must all appear before the judgment seat” (2 Cor. 5:10). This judgment is not a judgment designed to seal the fate of unbelievers since no unbelievers will stand at this judgment.

The Order of God's Reward & Judgment Program



There is no such thing as a general judgment and evaluation of the saved with the unsaved at the end of time. The Scriptures do not teach a universal judgment of the saved and unsaved at the same time. Unbelievers will be judged separately at the Great White Throne Judgment which follows the Millennium (Rev. 20:11-15). The Bible also teaches that different groups of God's saints (Old and New Testament saints, Tribulation martyrs) will be judged separately and at different times. In this particular judgment the Church age saints will be examined by the Lord and rewarded accordingly. Only Church age saints will be at this judgment seat for it's only those "in Christ" who are resurrected and raptured (1 Thess. 4:16).

1 Thessalonians 4:16

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

1 Corinthians 15:22

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

The term “in Christ” refers to a unique spiritual position that only New Testament or Church age saints possess (1 Cor. 1:2). Therefore, this special phraseology is given only to New Testament saints – not Old Testament saints. The Bible tells us that Old Testament saints will be resurrected and rewarded at a different time in God’s prophetic timeline (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19). This will be following the seven-year Tribulation Period. The Church will be rewarded following the Rapture when they stand before the Bema (Rev. 22:12). So, God’s people within the New Testament Church will be the participants at this judgment seat and none of us are going to miss this final examination. We will all be there.

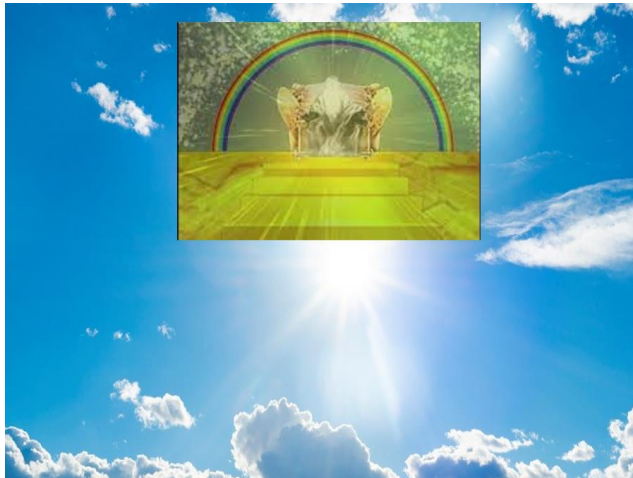
No unbelievers will be at this judgment and meeting in the sky. However, no believer in Christ will miss this judgment since the Bible clearly reveals that “we must all appear” (2 Cor. 5:10) before this judgment seat. You will be there! This judgment is obligatory and unavoidable, so believers should be wise in preparing for it. Every person must give account for himself (Rom. 14:10). You cannot give account for your children or for anyone else. You are on your own at this judgment. You will have to sing your own song! There will be no comparison with others, no one to cover for us, no opportunity to point out that we have more to show than someone else. Each one of us will be individually examined for how we have lived and served the Lord.

Beloved, there is coming a time of accountability for every individual believer. There will be a time of reckoning. There will be no hiding and no opportunity to put a better spin on what you did or how you lived. There will be no attorney to represent you – only Judge Jesus. Maybe you had hoped you could slip into Heaven after the Rapture and sit in the back row so that you will not have to face your dismal performance on earth. This will not be the case. We must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Although we will “all appear” before the Bema (2 Cor. 5:10) at the same time in this public gathering, none of us will point fingers at others. This is because there will be some good and bad in all of us. Furthermore, when we look into the eyes of Jesus we will not care what others think about us or how we compare with them. In the presence of Christ, we will be

oblivious to the others around us. In this final examination our focus will be on Jesus and how we have honored Him with our lives.

IV. The Place of the Examination



The prophetic event of the Bema, or Judgment Seat of Christ for Christians occurs immediately after the Rapture. It apparently takes place in the atmospheric heavens which is the place where we will meet the Lord. Although some have suggested that this judgment seat and examination for Christians is going to occur over

a long period of time in Heaven, while the Tribulation Period is unfolding on earth, it seems much better to conclude that it will occur in the atmospheric heaven (second heaven). This is because the Bible states that this is where the Church will meet the Lord (“meet the Lord in the air” - 1 Thess. 4:17). This is significant.

Dr. Dwight Pentecost has said:

“It is scarcely necessary to point out that this examination must take place in the sphere of the heavenlies ... Since the bema follows the translation, the ‘air’ must be the scene of it.”

This event takes place immediately after the New Testament saints are resurrected and raptured or translated from earth.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:8:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Take note that Paul said he would receive his crown on “that day” (the specific day of Christ’s return). He would not be rewarded later in Heaven

or within the next seven years while the Tribulation Period is taking place on earth. Paul also taught in 1 Corinthians 4:5, “judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come ... and then shall every man have praise of God.” There is a specific day and time for this examination. It will not be a prolonged event. The Scriptures always associate the reward of the Church as occurring in conjunction with the actual return of the Lord (Rev. 22:12). The implication is that we will immediately be examined and receive our reward when Christ returns.

James M. Gray correctly taught that the Bema occurs in the atmospheric heaven: “It was stated that this judgment is scheduled for the time when we shall meet the Lord in the air, but this is not to say that he and she shall remain there in the air. That is our meeting place with the Lord, but not necessarily our abiding place. It serves as the location of the judgment and for the adjudication of our regards of our places in the coming kingdom.”

So, the meeting will not only be a wonderful day of blessing when we see Jesus, but it will also be a day of investigation and examination. In this future day the Lord Jesus Christ may very well be sitting upon a bema seat within the atmospheric heaven above to meet His resurrected and translated saints. And it's within the atmospheric heaven above that we will be immediately judged and receive our rewards for eternity. Apparently when we gaze upon the face of our blessed Lord, we will know in a moment's time where we stand in relationship to our service, faithfulness, and over all commitment to Him. The examination will not be long and drawn out. It will be rather brief. We will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and within a very short period of time will know what our rewards will be and how we have scored on this final examination of our lives.

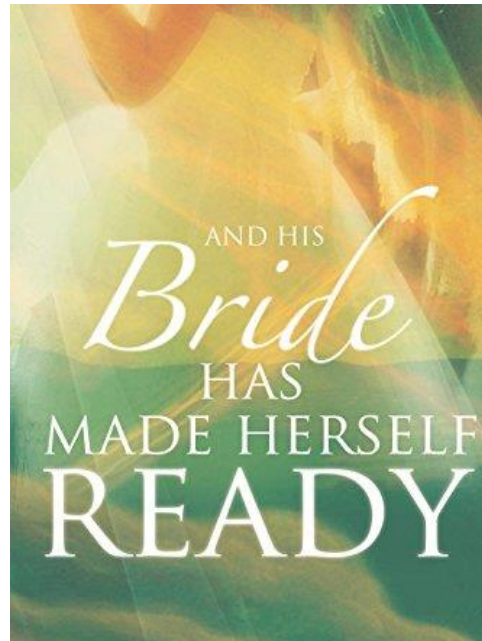
It's likely that in a moment's time we will know what we were and what we will receive (2 Cor. 5:10). Everything will come out in that soul-searching light. The needed information of our lives will be downloaded to our minds in a moment's time. Again, it will not be shown on a giant screen in Heaven that everyone can see. This judgment will be as detailed to our mind as it needs to be. One thing is certain, the hidden things of today will in some general way be brought to our attention in this day. A day of report is

coming. A time of examination is ahead for the Church. How will you do on the final examine?

V. The Preparation for the Examination

This Judgment Seat of Christ will result in the preparation of the Church to consummate her marriage to Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:7-8 is a heavenly scene that occurs after the Rapture: “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife (*the New Testament Church who is betrothed to Christ – 2 Cor. 11:2*) hath made herself ready (*through the final examination at the Judgment Seat of Christ*). And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (*displaying the righteous deeds or acts of the saints in view of their eternal reward*).



After being rewarded in the atmospheric Heaven the Church (God’s New Testament saints) will be ready to return to the Father’s house (John 14:1-3) and consummate her marriage with the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be a soul-thrilling occasion that occurs sometime before Jesus returns to earth in His Second Coming. Today the Church is betrothed to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2) but someday she is going to be presented to Christ as His beloved bride to consummate the marriage in the Bride Chamber of the Father’s House (Rev. 19:7) and then the Church will return to planet earth for the wedding feast.

After the Rapture has occurred, the Church is seen already rewarded in Heaven at the official consummation of her marriage with Christ. She is seen clothed or garbed in her glistening gowns which represent her righteous deeds. This marriage ceremony sets the stage for the Church’s

return to earth with Christ (the Second Coming) where a wedding feast will occur.

This is what we see prophetically occurring in Revelation 19. Following this event (the Church's marriage to Christ) there will be a time of celebration on earth. After the Tribulation Period the Church will return to earth with Christ for the wedding feast according to the prophetic imagery of various Scriptures (Rev. 19:9-11; Matt. 22:1-14; Isa. 25:26). So, our marriage to Christ occurs in Heaven at one point after the Rapture with the wedding feast occurring on earth during the Millennium which follows the Second Coming.

Here is an important point for this study. The eternal reward of the Church is depicted as "fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness (righteous deeds) of saints" (Revelation 19:8). Please note that this is the righteousness of the saints and not the righteousness of Jesus Christ that is in view. While some think this refers to the fact that the saints are justified by faith, the plural expression "the righteous acts" seems to refer to the righteous deeds wrought by the saints through the grace of God.

Christ has made us fit for Heaven through imputed righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) but we must make ourselves ready for this marriage ceremony by the way we live right now on earth. What kind of garment are you sowing for the wedding day? We are actually sewing today the garments that we will someday wear at this marriage. In one sense, we are preparing today the person we will be for eternity!

The word "white" (Rev. 19:8) is the Greek word "lampros" which indicates shining and radiance. The rewards of God's saints seem to be associated with this shining, radiant, white wedding gown. In fact, other Bible texts associate shining, radiance, and brilliance with our eternal reward. This gleaming white and shining garb of Church age saints will in some way reflect and depict the eternal reward that has been given to them (1 Pet. 5:4). God's saints will shine in direct proportion to the way they have lived and served God while living on earth (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43).

The late Bible teacher and professor J. Dwight Pentecost wrote:

“Inasmuch as reward is associated with brightness and shining in many passages of Scripture (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; 1 Cor. 15:40-41, 49), it may be that the reward given to the believer is a capacity to manifest the glory of Christ throughout eternity. The greater the reward, the greater the bestowed capacity to bring glory to God... Capacities to radiate the glory will differ, but there will be no personal sense of lack in that each believer will be filled to the limit of his capacity.”

Mark Hitchcock comments in this way:

“All of God’s people together in eternity will be like a dazzling chandelier with many lightbulbs—some twenty-five watts, some fifty watts, and some one hundred watts or more. The lightbulbs, as a whole, will shine light in the room. They will all contribute, with some shining brighter than others. That’s the way it will be in heaven. Some of us will contribute twenty-five watts, others fifty, and still others one hundred or even more. We will be vessels of God’s glory. No one will feel slighted or insignificant. We will all shine. The question is, ‘How much of God’s light do you want to shine through you?’”

“No one will experience a lack of fullness or feel incomplete. One way to express this thought is that everyone’s cup in heaven will be full, but some cups will be larger than others. Some will possess a greater capacity and capability to glorify the Lord.”

VI. The Problem Related to the Examination



Some people have seen the Judgment Seat of Christ as a problem for Christians. It’s assumed that since this is a judgment Christians will be actually judged for their sins with the possibility of facing God’s wrath. But this is surely not the case.

The problem is in the mind of man but not the mind of God. This is because the Judgment Seat of Christ is an examination based upon grace – not wrath. We can be sure that the Judgment Seat of Christ is not a judgment in relationship to our sins which will determine our eternal destinies for “There is therefore now no commendation to them which are in Christ Jesus ...” - Rom. 8:1). This is because Christ already endured the wrath of God and our judgment for our sins (Isa. 53:5). We will never face the wrath of God’s judgment for our sins! When a person accepts the death of Jesus Christ as the payment for the penalty of their sins they will never be bought again into judgment for any of their sins (John 3:36).

Praise God the judgment has already occurred. Jesus was judged in our place. The penalty of a believer’s sins was borne by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary (Gal. 3:10) and this matter has been settled once for all. Whenever the word “condemned” or “judgment” is used in relation to the Judgment Seat of Christ (James 3:1; 5:9; 2 Cor. 5:10) it means that we will be judged as servants - not sinners experiencing God’s wrath, rebuke, disfavor, or chastisement.

So, the alleged problem associated with this judgment is an imaginary problem that does not exist. This is because the believer’s salvation is not at all in question at the Judgment Seat of Christ; rather it is a matter of his sanctification and service.

Years ago, I heard Dr. Lehman Strauss say, “The Bema is not a place of condemnation but a place of commendation.” This is true in the sense that we will not be judged for our actual sins and experiencing God’s wrath and eternal punishment for these sins. However, to get to the commendation and our reward there must be a general inspection and sweep of our life and service. All of our deeds (good and bad) will be examined in relationship to our Christian living and faithfulness to the Lord – not in respect to our salvation, judgment, and punishment.

What is at issue at the Judgment Seat of Christ is not our *position* in Christ but our *performance* in the family of God. The believer will not be judged as a *sinner* under God’s wrath in this day but as a *servant under God’s examination*. The New Covenant promises that God will never again

remember our sins to bring judgment against us (Heb. 10:17). Therefore, this judgment will not determine our destiny but our rewards in view of our living and service rendered unto God. Simply stated, the object of the judgment seat is to review and to reward – not to penalize and pound us as sinners. Nevertheless, one of the mistaken ideas is the belief that there cannot be a serious review of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ because as believers our sins are forgiven and “cast ... into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).

Doesn't Calvary cover it all? Yes, thank God it does! Praise the Lord! For this reason, some believers do not understand the Judgment Seat of Christ as a real judgment that relates to the true nature of “good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10) deeds and “the hidden things of darkness” (1 Cor. 4:5) as the Bible clearly reveals. They do not view this judgment as an overview of the unsanctified and carnal deeds verses the good deeds that were related to the believer's days upon earth. We must be careful of passing off this judgment as having no serious review of our lives. Remember that there would be no need for any judgment if it only relates to our good works. There must be a judgment that separates the good from the bad (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

In other words, we will someday be examined as the Church (Christians) in relation to how we have lived our lives. Our holiness, faithfulness, good deeds, services rendered unto the Lord will all be considered and in one sweeping judgment we will receive and lose reward in relation or proportion to how we have lived our lives on earth. The record and score we receive at this final exam will reveal to us the level of our faithfulness in relation to our “good” (worthy) and “bad” (worthless) deeds (2 Cor. 5:10) for Paul wrote elsewhere, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:5). Remember that there would be no need for any judgment if it only relates to our good works. There must be a judgment that separates the good from the bad so only the good remains (1 Cor. 3:13-15).

Here is the good news! We are promised that we possess a position of grace and acceptance before God's throne that does not involve wrath,

condemnation, retaliation, and rebuke for our sins (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:1). But how can God remember our sins no more under the New Covenant (Heb. 8:12; 10:17) and still review our lives? How can both be true? The same way it is true today. God can review our lives without condemning us as sinners (“I know thy works” - Rev. 2:9,13,19) because of our position in grace (Rom. 5:1-2). Grace does not condemn us as sinners in this life nor will this occur before the Bema as we enter the next life. The blessed truth about God remembering our sins no more means that He does not *view* us as sinners in Christ nor *treat* us as sinners before His throne (Rom. 3:24; Jude 24).

This is true in this life as well as the next life when we stand before the Bema in the very presence of Christ. Never again will we be sinners within the throne room of God’s presence for we have been declared legally righteous (Rom. 3:24). Remembering our sins no more also means God’s wrath and judgment will not be brought against us for our sins and we will not be condemned as sinners since there is no condemnation in Christ (Rom. 8:1; John 3:18).

Our judicial forgiveness before God is sealed and final. Of course, this does not mean there cannot be a general review of how we have lived and served as Christians. We will never be judged for our sins and threatened with judgment (hell) as *sinners*, but this does not exclude the fact that we will be examined as *servants* to determine what was “bad” or unworthy (2 Cor. 5:10) in relation to our sanctification and service, so that the Lord can reward us for the “good” that we have done.

To confirm in our minds and hearts what was “good” (2 Cor. 5:10) there needs to be a revelation of the true nature of our sanctification and service during this life. At the Bema, we will in some measure experience a revelation to our minds and hearts of the true nature of our sanctification and service while living on earth. We cannot wiggle out of this! As the “righteous Judge” (2 Tim. 4:8) Christ must give a general scan of our lives to accurately assess and reward us for the “good” we have accomplished. As a result, we will know where we stand in relation to the way we have lived and served Christ. God not remembering our sins does not mean we will

not remember our past and wasted opportunities to live for Christ and serve Him faithfully while on earth.

The good news is that Christ can perform this scanning judgment upon our lives at the Bema without hounding and haunting us for our fleshly deeds and sins, bringing them against us, and condemning us for them as sinners before His throne. The nature of grace is to pass over sin and not bring condemnation against His people for their sins (Ex. 12:13; 23; 1 Cor. 5:7). This will be what occurs at the Bema. It is true that the Bema is a judgment seat or place of condemnation (James 3:1; 5:9); however, it is condemnation that relates to our service as a Christian – not condemnation for our actual sins. The condemnation aspect of this judgment has to do with our *service* – not our *sins*. Because of our grace relationship with Christ, we will be judged as *servants* – not *sinners*!

We will also “give account” (Rom. 14:12; 1 Pet. 4:5; Heb. 13:17) of our entire lives as it relates to our sanctification and service for the Lord, but this accountability before God does not mean our sins will be counted against us as sinners (Micah 7:19; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12; 10:17). God truly remembers our sins no more! They will never be held against us! What this means is that we will be accountable to Christ as a servant (not a sinner) and be judged accordingly with reward or loss of reward (2 Cor. 5:10).

We are not standing before the Bema as sinners but justified saints (Rom. 3:28) to be rewarded as God’s servants (2 John 1:8; Rev. 22:12; 1 Cor. 15:58). In assessing our lives as God’s saints and servants He is not recalling our sins before us to judge and harass us. The Bema will be a time of *commendation* for our good works – not *condemnation* for our sins. It is a time of *reward* – not *retribution*. This means we will never answer for our sins, be rebuked, disciplined, and lose our justified position before God (Rom. 5:9) because of our sins. We will simply lose reward which we otherwise could have received because of our lack of sanctification and commitment to Christ’s cause and the Christian life (2 John 8).

The focus and primary purpose of this judgment is to distribute rewards to God’s saints (1 Cor. 3:8; 9:27; Phil. 3:14; 2 Tim. 4:8). It involves the expression of Christ’s love and goodness toward His Church in rewarding

His people for eternity (Ps. 34:8). For this reason, the focus and experience will not be upon confession of sins, Christ's rebuke, verbal disciplinary judgment, and chastisement for a misspent life. Nevertheless, to accurately reward us for the good He will in some general way reveal to us the true nature of our sanctification and service while living on earth, both good and bad. This general judgment and assessment of our lives reminds us that the way we have lived will have a ripple effect that will go on for eternity. It will be an awesome revelation of God's righteous judgment upon our sanctification and service as a Christian.

**How we live today will have a rippling
Effect that will last forever!**



When I was a boy I used to throw stones in the ponds that I would be fishing at. I often wondered why I did not catch many fish! Well, when you would throw a stone in the water a rippling effect would begin to travel across the entire pond. It is amazing how one little stone could have such a far-reaching effect upon that large body of water. In the

same way, the way we live our lives today will have a rippling effect that will go on for eternity! The things that we do and say today will affect our eternal reward.

Earl Radmacher said:

“The person I am becoming today, is preparing me for the person I shall be for all of eternity.”

This is true in that we will gain reward or lose reward and privileges in direct relationship to how we live today. We cannot escape the fact that our entire life as a Christian is going to be reviewed someday when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Redemption is by belief, but rewards are by behavior. Or as someone has said, “Salvation is by grace...graduation is by works.” Salvation comes through Christ's work for us (Ephesians 2:8-9). Rewards are based on our works for Christ. Salvation and eternal are a free gift (Rom. 6:23) but

rewards are earned. Salvation is through faith, but rewards are by faithfulness. Salvation is without merit, but rewards are meritorious.

C.S. Lovett once stated:

“Blood-washed believers will be spotless in God’s sight, but not all will have the same service record. God is after obedience. Salvation gets us to heaven, but works determine what we do after we get there.”

Here is the point. Our salvation is not under judicial review at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but our life and service will be under God’s scrutiny. God will not pass a sentence of condemnation upon us for our sins, but He will pass judgment upon our sanctification in relation to our overall living, faithfulness, and service.

Erwin Lutzer wrote:

“Even if our sins are represented as forgiven, we cannot escape the conclusion that our lifestyle is under judicial review, with appropriate rewards and penalties.”

This is a true Biblical assessment of what is going to occur at the Judgment Seat of Christ for Christians.

- ✓ What will be your score on the final exam for God’s saints?
- ✓ Will you pass the test?
- ✓ How serious are you about living a sanctified life for Jesus Christ?
- ✓ Have you been living with eternities values in view?

I like the story about the frustrated basketball coach, who came up with an idea to motivate his beleaguered team. Before one game, he gave them a rousing speech that focused on the word pretend. “Gentlemen, when you go out there tonight, instead of remembering that we are in last place, pretend we are in first place; instead of being in a losing streak, pretend we are in a winning streak; instead of this being a regular game, pretend this is a playoff game!”

With renewed inspiration, the team went onto the basketball court and was pounded by the Boston Celtics. Coach was visibly upset about the loss.

But one of the star players slapped him on the back and said, “Cheer up, Coach. Pretend we won!”

Commenting on this story, Bible teacher Erwin Lutzer says:

“Many of us appear to be winning in the race of life, but perhaps it is all ‘pretend.’ Standing before Christ we will soon see the difference between an actual victory and wishful thinking. We will see what it took to win and what it took to lose. We’ll discover that we were playing for keeps. The day is coming when every believer in Jesus Christ will stand before the Lord, and we’ll discover what was pretend and what was pleasing to Him.

VII. The Purpose of the Final Examination

The purpose for this final examination is to judge the believer’s life or bring his entire life and service to the Lord under review.

The judgment will cover three vital areas.

➤ **This is a judgment related to general living (sanctification).**

A very broad and panoramic sweep of our lives will take place at this judgment (2 Cor. 5:10-15). Since this is a judgment for only believers we will be examined for the time revolving around our Christian life. One thing is certain, we will *not* be judged on what we did from the time of our first birth, but what we did since the time of our second birth (John 3:7). We will be examined for our post-conversion living but not our pre-conversion days. At this judgment each believer will be examined for the kind of life they have lived on earth and their specific service rendered to the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:10 once again reveals this all-encompassing sweeping judgment of our post-conversion days on earth: “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive (to receive back, recompensed, receive payment in relation to obtaining or losing reward) the things done in (through by means of) his body (*the way we have used our bodies during our earthly living and service*) according (pertaining to, in relation to, in proportion) to that he hath done, whether it be good (non-fleshly and worthy) or bad” (fleshly and worthless).

Paul speaks of this judgment in relation to our overall living as a Christian. He mentions “*that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15). He mentions this all-encompassing judgment in relation to those “which glory in appearance, and not in heart” (2 Cor. 3:12). So, our entire lives will be examined. The conduct and character of each Christian will be examined on this day and we will be rewarded accordingly. Now let’s study about the nature of this judgment in more detail.

1. The revelational nature of this judgment.

The word “appear” (phaneroo from phaneros) in 2 Corinthians 5:10 means much more than just showing up in a geographical sense at the judgment seat. It means “to be made manifest, make visible, make clear.” The Lord will in one sense turn us inside out at the judgment seat. Christ will reveal the true person that



we were. The character and service of every believer will be revealed to us. Every hidden motive, thought, and deed we have done in relation to our Christian life and service will in some sense be exposed as our life is scanned. No, there will not be some kind of giant heavenly screen with checks and x marks on it regarding our personal living and service.

To be sure, we will not be reprimanded, chastised, and punished for every individual fleshly deed we have done in our Christian life. As already explained, this is not the nature of our grace relationship with Christ and the forgiveness and forgetfulness of our sins (Heb. 8:12; 10:17). If God no longer holds our sins against us, He surely will not punish us for

unconfessed sins of our past, require us to confess all our sins before Him, publicly expose all our sins and humiliate us, chasten us, or single us out as under condemnation at this judgment seat.

Some authors misrepresent what is going to occur at the Judgment Seat of Christ. We are not going to stand before Jesus Christ in some kind of “protestant purgatory” where we will confess all of our sins and find grace to enter Heaven. It’s rather absurd to believe that a person saved on the Day of Pentecost (when the Church began) and died soon afterward will live with Christ in Heaven for several thousand years and then come back to confess certain unconfessed sins which he committed several thousand years prior to this judgment seat. The only confession that we will give at this judgment seat is to confess that His assessment of our lives was correct (Rom. 14:10-12).

The emphasis of this judgment seat is on the bestowing of rewards and not the rejection and punishment of sinners because of their failures. Again, it is a place of commendation – not condemnation. It’s interesting to contemplate that the judge at the earthly Bema Seat bestowed rewards to the victors, He did not whip the losers!

As already determined, the Christian’s judgment regarding his sin is past for this judgment was meted out upon Christ on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24) and therefore he will never be condemned for his sins (John 3:18; 5:24). Nevertheless, the truth cannot be dismissed that we will be fully disclosed at the Bema Seat for what kind of life we have lived without being openly and judicially judged, condemned, and charged as sinners. Christ will do a quick scan of our lives and set the record straight regarding our overall living, service, and faithfulness to Him. We will in a very brief time know our grade on this final exam.

The Bema is not only to be motivational in nature, it must also be understood as revelational. Everything (good and bad) which we have done will be laid open or openly revealed to determine the full and true reality of one’s character. Others may never see the painstaking work and detail of our efforts in living and serving Christ, but God knows, and one day our diligence will “appear” or come to light.

1 Corinthians 4:5

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light (phaneroo) the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”

This is a time of manifestation and evaluation. The entire course of our Christian lives will in some broad and yet brief manner somehow be made known to us, the good, the bad, and the ugly. The light and dark of our Christian lives will somehow be made known to us and the final grade will be given. We will know where we have stood regarding our faithfulness versus fleshliness, our pure motives in service versus impure motives.

I like the story about the burglar who broke into a house late one night. He thought no one was home. As he tiptoed through the living room, he froze when he heard a loud voice say, “Jesus is watching you!” After silence returned, the burglar crept forward again. “Jesus is watching you!” the voice boomed again.

The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. He was frightened. Frantically, he looked all around. In a dark corner he spotted a bird cage, and in the cage was a parrot. He asked the parrot, “Was that you who said Jesus is watching me?”

“Yes,” said the parrot.

The burglar breathed a sigh of relief. Then he asked, “What’s your name?”

“Moses,” said the bird.

“That’s a dumb name for a parrot,” sneered the burglar. “What idiot named you Moses?”

The parrot responded, “The same idiot who named the Rottweiler Jesus. Sic ‘em, Jesus!”

The parrot was right. Jesus is watching you! And He’s watching me. He sees us. He knows us. And remember this. God doesn’t judge the book of our life by its cover; He reads the pages and the footnotes! And somehow He will make known to us what we were in relation to Christian living and service.

One of my teachers in college wanted us to always pay attention to footnotes. In fact, he would sometime quiz us on what a specific footnote said. Christ knows all the footnotes in our book of life, and we will be exposed for who and what we really were in our essentially character and living.

2. The personal nature of this judgment.

You will notice that Paul spoke of “all” Christians corporately standing before this judgment seat but then it gets very personal when he talks about “every one” and “his body” (2 Cor. 5:10). I take it that this will be a personal and private encounter with the Lord when Paul talks about “his body.” Paul moves from the plural to the singular to remind us that we are going to be judged individually. In fact, Vine suggests that the adjective “every” “is used of every number separately.”

Robert Gromacki states:

“Although Christians will stand as a corporate group before Christ, they will not be judged as a group but as individuals. Notice the change from ‘we’ and ‘all’ to ‘ever one.’ I will not give an account for you, and you will not give and account for me. I will be judged for my, and you will be judged for your experience.”

This is referring individually to all the members of the Church Age saints. In other words, each one of us will have to sing sola before the Lord on this final examination day. The Bible also says that the Church will “meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:17). The Rapture will be our graduation day and each graduate will be evaluated and rewarded on an individual basis. Although we will corporately be together in a public way, this meeting within the air, apparently we will be individually judged and examined. The examination will private and pertain to our individual hearts.

Romans 14:10-12

“But why dost thou judge thy brother? (*judgment based upon unscriptural, insignificant, and invalid matters*), or why dost thou set at nought (*despise, scorn*) thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and

every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

This is individuality and personal judgment – not a judgment reviewed by millions of other Christians down through the ages of time.

Woodrow Kroll suggests:

“Besides, a private evaluation of our life and work is only natural. It is really nobody else’s business what we have done for the Lord or why we have done it. This is a matter that concerns just you and your Judge (see John 2:20-23).”

Our eyes will be fixed upon the Lord, like everyone else’s eyes, and the Lord will personally reveal to each one of us individually what kind of life we have lived.

Erwin Lutzer captures something of the drama of this scene:

“Imagine staring into the face of Christ. Just the two of you, one-on-one! Your entire life is present before you. In a flash you see what He sees. No hiding. No opportunity to put a better spin on what you did. No attorney to represent you. The look in His eyes says it all. Like or to not, that is precisely where you and I shall be someday... In the presence of Christ, we will be oblivious to those around us. The expression on His face will tell it all.”

3. The descriptive nature of this judgment.

Paul goes on in 2 Corinthians 5:10 to describe the good and bad works related to this judgment. Apparently rewards are a big deal to God, and they should be a big deal to us as well. Our rewards will be the tangible evidence that God was pleased with our lives. For this reason, they should be important to us now for it’s only in this life that we can earn them.

Someday we are going to stand before the Lord, and we will get what we have earned. We will receive a return on our spiritual and eternal investments. We will get what is coming to us. The “good” (worthy and rewardable deeds) things that we have done (righteous and holy deeds done in our bodies) will stand the test and we will receive a reward for

them. The “bad” (worthless and non-rewardable deeds) things that we have done (unrighteous and unholy deeds done in our bodies) will yield no eternal dividends. We will not receive any reward for them. In fact, the ratio of the good to the bad will determine how much payment or reward we will receive (“that every one may receive the things done in his body” - 2 Cor. 5:10).

There’s an old poem titled “Who Does God’s Work Will Get God’s Pay.” Meditate on these words and let them motivate you to sacrifice for the Lord in light of the coming day when you will stand before Him.

“Who does God’s work will get God’s pay,
However long may be the day.
He does not pay as others pay,
In gold, or land, or raiment gay,
In goods that perish or decay;
But God’s high wisdom knows the way,
And this is sure, let come what may—
Who does God’s work will get God’s pay.”

Once again, we know that the issue at the judgment seat will not be a judicial judgment for our sins. In other words, we need not fear the wrath of God at this judgment seat. For this reason, some expositors have totally avoided the idea of any fleshly deeds being exposed at this judgment. In fact, one author termed what is “bad” as referring to “bad” good works, works done merely with a wrong motive. But this makes no sense. Bad good works sound like a “word salad” or mixed-up words that do not make sense!

What is a wrong motive? It’s sin! What is unfaithful stewardship? It’s a sin (“to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” - James 4:17). Some expositors are so concerned about believers being judged for their sins that they attempt to assign a different meaning to the word “bad” (kakos) which is the Greek Received Text reading. It is translated elsewhere as “evil” (1 Cor. 15:33; James 3:8; 1 Pet. 3:10; 3 John 11; Rev. 2:2). It refers to something that is intrinsically worthless because it is morally evil in nature.

Even if one follows the other Greek text the word “phaulon” also has the connotation of something flawed and worthless because it is evil in a moral sense and is therefore translated as “evil” elsewhere (John 3:20; 5:29; Rom. 9:11; Titus 2:8. James 3:16). This word actually refers to something that was “foul” smelling like garbage. If you put some food out in the garage and you have a couple of 90-degree days, you can be sure it is going to be foul smelling. Garbage is garbage. There is nothing good about it. All of our fleshly deeds and lack of sanctification and stewardship will be something that is totally worthless and foul smelling when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

My point is this. We cannot run away from the truth that in the process of this examination there will be fleshly and evil works brought out into the light which can be deemed as worthless. However, a general scan and exposure of our entire lives, including our fleshly and non-rewardable deeds, does not mean the believer will actually be judged for his sins and face God’s wrath in any way. Nor does it mean we will be harassed and reprimanded by God for our sins. What it means is that our whole life can be broadly examined to determine what is good (non-fleshly and worthy) and bad (fleshly and worthless) without the believer being condemned as a sinner or rebuked by Christ.

So, we cannot dodge the fact that there will be fleshly and evil works in some general way revealed to us at the Judgment Seat of Christ which can be deemed as worthless. The Bible says that the Lord will in some way “make manifest the hidden things of darkness” (1 Cor. 4:5). This general revelation of our lives is not designed to judge us for our sins but to set the record straight regarding our sanctification and service for Christ and which is deemed worthy or good (2 Cor. 5:10).

In revealing to our hearts the record of our lives, God will not be judging Christians for their sins, and as sinners, but judging them as saints to reward them for their sanctification and service.

Nevertheless, in revealing to our hearts the record of our lives, God will not be judging Christians for their sins, and as sinners, but judging them as saints to reward them for their sanctification and service. A general scan and exposure of our entire lives

as Christians, including our fleshly and non-rewardable deeds, does not mean the believer will be judged for his sins and face God's wrath in any way. Nor does it mean we will be harassed and reprimanded by God for our sins. What it means is that our whole life can be broadly examined to determine our rewards. The nature of grace is to withhold judgment for our bad deeds while at the same time reward us for our good deeds.

The point is this. If everything in our lives is only good, there would be no need for a judgment. Therefore, our grace relationship with Christ does not override the fact that the Lord will expose who we really were and how we lived our lives on earth as Christians. At the same time, because of our positional standing in Christ and grace (Rom. 5:1-2), we will not be judged for our sins, nor will we possess fear in our hearts that God's wrath will be meted against us in any way.

Judgment Seat of Christ and the Sins of Christians

"I will remember their sins no more"

(Heb. 8:12; 10:17; Micah 7:9)

This is true in this life and the next life

"no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1; John 3:18)

In never remembering our sins God means He will not judge us for our sins. Christians will NEVER experience God's wrath because of their position in Christ (Rom. 5:1-2). But God will allow Christians to remember the way they have lived by performing a general scan or overview of their lives and reveal the results to them (1 Cor. 4:5).

The RECORD of our sins is erased (Eph. 1:7) but the RESULTS of our sins and fleshly deeds (loss of reward) will be on the table at the Bema (2 Jn. 8).

The Bema is not a place of RETRIBUTION but REWARD. The WORKS of Christians are judged – not the CHRISTIANS ("try every man's work" & "a man's work shall be burned" - 1 Cor. 3:13, 15).

Our GRACE relationship with Christ means we will not be rebuked by Christ, shamed by Christ, hounded for our sins, nor confess our sins before the Bema and within Christ's presence (Jude 24).

"I know thy works"

(Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19)

"whether it be good or bad"

(2 Cor. 5:10)

"the hidden things of darkness"

(1 Cor. 4:5)

"lest ye be condemned"

(James 5:9)

Christians will NOT be judged or condemned as SINNERS but as faithful versus unfaithful SERVANTS. Grace burns the worthless *works* of believers (1 Cor. 3:15) illustrating that God's wrath passes over His people, resulting in their *reward!*

To prove Christ is the "righteous judge" (2 Tim. 4:8), He must judge our entire Christian life and service (good and bad works). There would be no need for a judgment if nothing was bad in our lives. A general agreement and word of acknowledgement of the Lord's assessment of our lives will take place (Rom. 14:10-12).

The Bema is not a place of CONDEMNATION for our sins but COMMENDATION for our service and life lived for the Lord (1 Cor. 4:5).

The scanning of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ is not to bring judicial judgment against us as God's saints (Romans 8:1, 33-39) but to simply set the record straight regarding our sanctification, faithfulness, and service.

At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will not experience God's chastening and chastisement for our sins, since we are standing in the presence of the very One who was judged for our sins! The scanning of our lives at this judgment is not to bring judicial judgment against us as God's saints but to simply set the record straight regarding our sanctification, faithfulness, and service.

Let's be honest with what the Bible is teaching here. Payday is coming! We will get what is coming to us as it pertains to the area of rewards.

Concerning money, we've all heard the saying, "You can't take it with you!" You may have also heard someone say, "You never see a U-Haul behind a hearse." While it is true you can't take it with you, Jesus did say, "You can send it on ahead."

Matthew 6:19-21

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (*the transient or temporal things*), where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven (*timeless and treasures of reward*), where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Mark Hitchcock states:

"You can't take it with you,' people say. This is not true. You can take it with you. But first you must convert it into the currency of Heaven and that currency is good works."

One way we lay up treasure in Heaven is by being generous with our earthly treasure or money.

First Timothy 6:17-19 has this to say:

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute (*share*), willing to communicate (*give*); Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation (*of eternal dividends – reward*) against the time to come (*the Judgment Seat of Christ and eternity*), that they may lay hold on eternal life” (*experience the true meaning and importance of eternal life by living for eternal reward - 1 Tim. 6:12*).

Receiving rewards will be a sign of God’s pleasure and approval of our lives here on earth. God will evaluate our entire lives, our ministries, opportunities, and motives. The Bible teaches that believers will get what we have earned at this final exam. Galatians 6:7 reveals “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” and “we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). This speaks of our eternal reward. For Christians who have committed their lives there will be much reward but for those Christian which have not fervently lived for Christ will experience the law of diminishing returns. Someone mentioned that our good and bad works are like tin cans tied to a dog’s tail. We can’t get away from them. We can’t shake them. They will follow us to the Bema Seat of Christ.

In the context of our giving, 2 Corinthians 9:6 adds, “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” In other words, we will receive payment or recompense for how we have lived out our lives on earth. We will be rewarded or compensated in proportion to our living for Jesus Christ and giving to the cause of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:8 declares:

“Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.”

We will receive reward or lose reward on this day according to how we have lived out our lives and what we have invested. Our entire lives as Christians will be examined and judged based on our overall commitment

and testimony for Christ. The times of spiritual victories will be assessed along with our failures. God will be generous and find more good in our lives than we have realized (1 Cor. 4:5). However, everything in our lives that was not connected with godliness, truth, righteousness, holiness, and faithful service to the Lord will be deemed as worthless (BAD).

All those things that we have done that reflect godliness, truth, righteousness, holiness, and faithful service to the Lord will be deemed as worthy and acceptable (GOOD).

Mark Hitchcock again writes:

“The life that we live today will determine your life in eternity!”

We have all been in grocery stores where we use scanners in checking out all our items. The items are scanned in a moment’s time and it’s all over with. At this judgment our entire life will be scanned in a moment’s time, and we will know exactly how we have lived. We will know where we stand in relationship to holy, righteous, and faithful living and the appropriate payment or reward that we will receive. We do reap what we sow. This is the law of rewards.

The text in 2 Corinthians 5:10 says that we will receive “according” (in relation and reference to and in proportion) to what we have done or how we have lived and served the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:8

“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.”

Christians today who live more worldly and carnal lives and who serve the Lord in compromising ways will be examined accordingly or in relation to these fleshly works.

Alexander Maclaren wrote:

“The Judgment seat is meant for us professing Christians, real and imperfect Christians; and it tells us that there are degrees in that future blessedness proportioned to present faithfulness.”

Revelation 22:12

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Revelation 2:23 also conveys this same truth when it states: “and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.” All of us will be examined according to how we have lived out our individual lives on earth. How will God reward Christians for the good that they do in light of their compromise? How does a life of twenty years of faithful service compare to one or two years of unfaithful living as a Christian? How will the failures and sins of one day stack up against the victories of the next day? Only the Lord Jesus will be able to balance it all out in the Day of Judgment!

The famed Buffalo Bill Wild West Show performed throughout Europe during the final years of the nineteenth century and landed in Berlin, Germany, in 1899. The German people, like others in Europe, turned out by the thousands to see the Wild West Show. A smashing hit wherever it went, the show featured several entertainers with star power, but none was more compelling than Annie Oakley. Standing less than five feet tall, Oakley was known as “Little Sure Shot,” a name she was given by Sitting Bull. She beat any male sharpshooter who dared to challenge her.

Oakley had many amazing sharpshooting tricks as part of her act. These included shooting through playing cards she had tossed up in the air. Another was to shoot a metal coin tossed into the air about twenty-seven yards away. Another Oakley staple act was to look into a mirror to shoot an apple placed behind her. With her Colt 45 she also shot the ashes off a man’s cigar who was named Kaiser.

15 years later, Annie Oakley sent Kaiser a letter, asking for the opportunity to take a second shot. She never received a reply! Like Annie Oakley, when it comes to our lives here on earth, we get only one shot. There are no dress rehearsals. No do-overs. We must take dead aim with our one shot and make it count because when this life is over we will have no more opportunity to gain reward. Although life here on earth is brief, it counts for all eternity.

Someone said:

“Our life is but a moment, a breath. It’s a tick of the clock. A blink of an eye. A click of the fingers. You get one life, one chance. And there’s no replay, no rewind. Don’t live for the moment. Live for eternity.”

Let’s once again be honest with what the Bible is teaching. Payday is coming!

Since there will be good and bad personally revealed to us or brought out into the light, it’s very likely that all of us will lose some reward at this judgment. The Scriptures teach that we can lose reward by embracing what is “bad” or fleshly and worthless. For instance, the Bible teaches that following false teaching, which causes us to live our lives in a manner that is contrary to God’s holy will result in the loss of reward.

Revelation 3:10-11

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience (*PROOF OF SALVATION - maintaining endurance and obedience to God’s truth*), I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation (*PROMISED DELIVERANCE from the Tribulation Period*), which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (*POSSIBLE LOSS OF REWARD by not enduring as we should in obedience to the truth*).

The beloved Harry Ironside wrote:

“No one can rob me of my salvation. Of this there is abundant evidence in Scripture. But another may take my crown if I prove faithless to the trust committed to me... If I do not exercise the ministry allotted to me, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit that I may fulfill it faithfully, I may be set aside as a servant, and another may be called to complete my work. And so I will lose my crown.”

2 John 1:8

“Look to yourselves (*watch out, be vigilant, and do not compromise with false teaching*), that we lose not those things which we have wrought (*the great truths of Scripture which were taught among the saints by the*

apostles), but that we receive a full reward” (a reward that does not lack because of our faithful and uncompromising stand for the truth).

The Bible is clear that rewards (not salvation) can be lost or forfeited. Losing truth means loss of reward! If we “stick to the stuff” we won’t lose reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If we don’t move away from the truth we can be sure of greater reward. John seems to be talking about receiving reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ – not merely reward or blessing in this life. Every believer has the potential of receiving a full reward. However, whenever we follow false teaching and stray from God’s holy purposes for our lives we will lose reward. When we don’t do what is right or disobey the truth we can lose reward. This is reward we otherwise could have received if we had lived and served Christ differently.

We should not think that the loss of rewards means that Christ takes from us something we once had. Rather, it means that we lose out on what we could have received if we would have been more discerning and faithful.

Woodrow Kroll observes:

“We should never conceive of the loss of rewards as a repossession. God does not take back something he has already awarded to us. At the heavenly bema, we do not suddenly have a quantity of rewards ripped from our hands by the righteous Judge. We are not stripped of rewards as an erring soldier is stripped of his stripes. Not at all... Loss or reward is not like handing back a trophy that was mistakenly given to you. It’s not returning something you earned. It’s forfeiting a reward that you could have earned but failed to do so.”

We cannot lose reward that we have gained but we can certainly lose reward that we could have gained.

Let’s summarize the teaching on loss of reward in a simple way. We can lose our heavenly rewards by DEFAULT when failing to follow the truth, being led astray, not maintain the truth we have learned (Rev. 3:11; 2 John 1:8). We can also lose reward by DEFECT by not properly living for the Lord and disciplining our life (1 Cor. 9:24-26). Finally, we can also lose reward by DISQUALIFICATION (1 Cor. 9:27).

The word “castaway” or disqualified” in 1 Corinthians 9:27 is a translation of the Greek word *adokimos*, which means “declared unfit” or “rejected.” Of course, the believer’s salvation cannot be rejected since we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). We cannot lose eternal life, or it could not be eternal (John 3:16). In this background and context, it refers to being disqualified or denied participation in an athletic event and not gaining a reward we otherwise could have received had we not broken the rules.

Similar imagery is given by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:5: “And if a man also strive for masteries (compete in a contest), yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.” Striving lawfully means we play by the rules and the rules are revealed in God’s Word. Disqualification and loss of reward comes when we fail to keep the instructions of sanctification and obedience set forth in God’s Word. The Bible says that “we shall suffer loss” (1 Cor. 3:15) of reward on this day. It will be a loss that is very real to us. Many of us will probably say, “I wish I had given Him more.” Others will say, “I wish I had been in right relationship with others at the Rapture.”

James 5:9 declares:

“Grudge not one against another (*do not groan and complain about other Christians, possess resentment toward others because of conflicts*), brethren, lest ye be condemned (*judged for being a groaner and holding grudges against other Christians*): behold, the judge standeth before the door.”

“To live above, with saints we love, that will be glory.
To live below, with the saints we know,
Well, that’s a different story!”

As children in a school classroom look out for their teacher’s soon return, God’s children should be on guard for Christ’s return. In so doing, good behavior and mutual harmony with fellow believers are essential. This is because Judge Jesus is going to return and evaluate the overall behavior and conduct of our lives. Our motto must be: “Here comes the Judge.” This speaks of the imminence of Christ’s return. He could return at any moment. We might be seconds away from standing before this judgment seat.

This text, among many others, reveals that there will be an overall examination of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Of course, the condemnation or judgment we receive at the final examination is not a judgment related to the penalty for our sins which condemns us to hell, but a judgment related to God's purpose for sanctification and service in relation to our Christian life. Again, in some broad and universal way there will be a revelation of the "bad" at this judgment seat for Christians which is ultimately designed to confirm what was actually "good" so Christ can reward us "according" to the exact nature of our sanctification and service to the Lord (2 Cor. 5:10).

This verse reveals that we will be examined for our interpersonal relationships with other Christians. Were we holding grudges against other Christians at Christ's return? Did we possess an unforgiving heart toward them? Were we over critical and defaming or gossiping about other Christians?

The Bible also reveals that pastors and teachers of God's Word will receive a more severe examination and judgment in this day for *what* they have taught and *how* they have handled the Bible.

James 3:1

"My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (judgment).

The idea of "greater condemnation" (great judgment) means that pastor/teachers will be judged more severely at the Bema because of the seriousness of their profession and greater responsibilities they were given. To whom much is given much is required (Luke 12:48). They will be examined for their doctrinal teaching or integrity and receive appropriate judgment. False teaching and the spreading of blatant error will mean loss of reward and recognition at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Pet. 5:4).

Someone once commented:

"If you are standing in line at the judgment seat of Christ and you see a line with a bunch of preachers in it, get in another line. It will go faster."

I don't think it will be this way, but it is true that the teachers and pastors of God's Word will be held to a higher standard.

There can be great reward for right teaching but also loss of reward for wrong and watered-down teaching. However, all of us can lose reward when we live in such a way that dishonors the Lord. We won't receive reward for the "bad" (2 Cor. 5:10) and "hidden things of darkness" (1 Cor. 4:5) that related to our carnal living on earth.

Over the triple doorways of the Cathedral of Milan there are three inscriptions spanning the splendid arches. Over one is carved a beautiful wreath of roses, and underneath is the legend, "All that which pleases is but for a moment." Over the other is sculptured a cross, and there are the words, "All that which troubles us is but for a moment." But underneath the great central entrance to the main aisle is the inscription, "That only is important which is eternal." If we realize these three truths, we will not let trifles (things of little importance) trouble us, nor will we be overcome by the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Rather, we will focus on living for the permanent and eternal! Why? It's because we want to maximize our gains and minimize our losses at the final examination.

➤ **This is a judgment related to faithfulness (stewardship).**

1 Corinthians 4:2 declares:

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

To be found at the Rapture as a faithful steward and not a shameful steward (1 John 2:28) is an important motivational factor for faithful Christian living and service. This statement in 1 Corinthians 4:2 was made in the context of the Bema Seat of Christ and our examination day when we stand before Him (1 Cor. 4:5). Will you be found as a faithful steward when Jesus returns? It's certain that our faithful living and service rendered unto the Lord will be an important part of this examination day. Were we faithful in using our time for the Lord's work? Did we use our gifts for the Lord? Did we give our money to the work and ministry of God? Did we use our body for holy purposes? In other words, we are going to be examined for our life

of stewardship as it relates to our overall living, service, giving and commitment to the Lord.

One thing we can be sure about is that all our fleshly and non-fleshly deeds will come under the Lord's scrutiny and examination, not to determine our eternal destiny but to demonstrate how faithful and dedicated we have been to Him. Romans 14:12 declares, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We will be held responsible for the way we have lived. There is a day of reckoning coming. Again, a broad sweep of our lives will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Believers will be examined for their faithfulness in the area of good versus bad deeds. It is possible that our life will be more of a failure than faithful. We might have been more devoted to earthly things than heavenly things.

Apparently we will be accountable as stewards for how we use our God-given gifts and abilities (2 Tim. 1:6; 1 Pet. 4:10), how we spend our time (Eh. 5:15-16; Col. 4:5), how we treat others (James 5:9), and how we handle our money (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Were we too busy or lazy to be a good steward? Did we follow God's will or our own selfish will? Were we primarily carnal in our living or were we committed to Christ and His ways? Were we careless or really concerned about the way we lived and served the Lord?

If we have spent much of our lives living for ourselves and ignoring God's will and purpose for our lives, then we will be judged primarily as an unfaithful steward and servant. If we have spent our lives as believers toying with all kinds of sin and worldly living, then we will be seen as a less faithful servant. If we have been selfish and have put the Lord in the back seat of our lives, we will be judged as an unprofitable servant. In the coming exam the Lord Jesus will review our stewardship.

What kind of steward have you been? How have you been managing your life in relation to your service for the Lord and faithfulness to Him? How much time do you give to the Lord during a week? How much money do you give to the Lord's work? How much do you give of yourself in acts of service and commitment? One thing is certain, we are going to be examined in relation to our faithful living and stewardship. It really does pay to serve

Jesus! How much we have served the Lord and dedicated our lives to Him will count for eternity!

We must also remember that faithfulness not only means we are committed to good deeds (righteous living) but that we also seek to live free of evil deeds or unrighteous living (Col. 3:8-9; 2 Cor. 7:1). In this day of examination, the Lord Jesus will balance out our years of faithful service with time of unfaithful or moral failure.

As we have seen, we will be examined in relation to both “good” and “bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). If a person’s Christian life was more carnal and characterized by sin (1 Cor. 3:1-3) than it was committed to righteousness they will suffer greater loss of reward (1 Cor. 3:15). Our carnal and careless living will greatly affect the outcome of this judgment. If we have wasted our lives we will suffer great loss of reward. The more consistently we judge ourselves and stop yielding to sin the greater our reward and the less severe our judgment will be in this day.

Our faithfulness will also be measured by how often and consistently we have refused to participate with evil and sinful deeds. The faithfulness of our lives will be rewarded in direct proportion to our desire to forsake sin and do what is right. Jesus taught about the importance of consistent faithfulness in following Christ, even at great cost (Luke 14:26-29). Faithfulness will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

What Christ will be looking for at this judgment is our faithfulness to the truth, forsaking sin, following the right path, and how we used our gifts for the Lord. To squander away these things means to lack faithfulness in relationship to our stewardship and we will forfeit reward which we could have gained or received (1 Cor. 9:27). “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (1Cor. 4:2).

The matter of our faithful church attendance, commitment to Christ’s cause, and overall concern for spiritual living will be considered at this judgment. Someday we will stand before the Lord as stewards. Judge Jesus will determine what we did with what He gave us! Jesus taught that all of God’s saints will be judged based on their loyalty to Christ with the time,

talents, and treasures that were at our disposal (Matthew 25:20-21). May Jesus be able to say to us in the coming examination of His Church, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Dear friend, the Lord is not going to reward us for being famous but remaining faithful. Rewards are not based on results or size. They are based on faithfulness, loyalty, and following the calling of God for one's life. We will be judged for the opportunities that are given to us personally. All believers have the potential to receive generous reward but also lose reward.

Charles Wesley wrote:

"A charge to keep I have, A God to glorify
A never-dying soul to save, And fit it for the sky.
To serve the present age, My calling to fulfill;
O may it all my powers engage,
To do my Master's will!"

There are many ways to fail in the Christian life. However, all of them begin with a lack of discipline and a conscious decision to take the easy and compromising path.

We need to return to 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 which talks about discipline in view of the Rapture and Judgment Seat of Christ. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly (*in an obscure or uncertain manner*); so fight I, not as one that beateth the air (*throwing punches but missing the target*): But I keep under my body (*to give oneself a bruised or black eye*), and bring it into subjection (*metaphorically we are to have spiritual discipline*): lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (*disapproved of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ*)."

Paul uses the sports analogies of running and fighting to illustrate what it means to live the Christian life.

✓ **Run to win**

Running the Race of the Christian Life



1 Corinthians 9:24, “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.”

Running involves perseverance and discipline. We are to run with a specific goal in mind to be victorious in life and win the race (1 Cor. 9:24-26). Running to win! Running to receive reward at the Rapture and Judgment Seat of Christ. We must strive and stay on the right course, pace ourselves, and make sure we finish the race.

✓ **Fight to win**

We must also to fight to win. 1 Corinthians 9:26. “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.” Fighting also involves intense discipline. The Christian life is not all fun and games. We are involved in a battle or war against principalities and powers (Eph. 6:10-18). The world (1 John 2:15-17), the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), and the Devil (1 Pet. 5:8) are out to disrupt and destroy our spiritual life. If you are like a boxer throwing punches that are missing the mark, then you are wasting your energy and time. Like a runner and boxer, we must be disciplined to win! We must learn to discipline our lives to do what is right and live victoriously. Living right is a choice – not a feeling. We must take charge of our bodies for it will determine how much reward we receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Once again, the word “castaway” (adokimos) in 1 Corinthians 9:27 means to not pass the test. It speaks of being unfit and in the end disapproved. As already observed, Paul was not talking about losing His justified position before God but losing His reward before God, missing God’s approval at the Judgment Seat of Christ. In the day of our final examination, we might fail to pass the test because we have performed so badly in our Christian walk and life.

To put it in classroom terminology, it means we will receive a failing grade even though we have gotten some of the answers correct. When plugging this analogy into the time when we stand before the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ, it means we will still receive reward, but it will be very minimal. Our final exam will not result in us possessing much eternal reward or dividends. In one sense, we will be a saved soul with a lost life!

Did you know that a person's value system will determine their priorities and how they live? If your value system is right, then your priorities will be right. You will seek to live right, do right, and be right. In the end you will be rewarded for disciplining your life. But you need to plow a straight furrow if you are going to end up right. We must have determination and discipline if we are going to be rewarded on this day. We must run and fight to win! If we discipline our lives today we will not be sorry tomorrow, ten years from now, or when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Imagine you're in a high school classroom on a sunny Friday afternoon. You are daydreaming as you gaze out the window. Suddenly you snap back to reality as the teacher reminds the class that a major exam is on the schedule for Monday. The students let out a collective groan, but then everyone is elated when the teacher says she will give everyone the questions that will be on the test. Knowing the questions ahead of time will cut down the amount of time you'll need to study over the weekend. You get a pencil and, as the teacher states the questions, you write them down. What a great advantage! You know that you will have no excuse for doing poorly on the big test.

As we've seen so far in this study, the Scriptures teach that there's a final exam on God's prophetic calendar for believers. It's not a pop quiz. The Lord has clearly announced that it's coming. None of us should be caught by surprise when it arrives. In fact, not only has the Lord told us about the test, but He has also graciously given us the test questions ahead of time. No believer will be left to wonder what's on the test. There's no mystery about what we need to know. The Lord has told us what He's looking for in our lives in the final evaluation.

Robert Moffatt said:

"We'll have all eternity to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour before sunset to win them."

➤ **This is a judgment related to our motives (service).**

Our examination will also be directly related to how we have served Christ. Paul teaches that our motives in serving Christ will be brought out into the light. Have we served Christ to glorify Him and not ourselves?

1 Corinthians 4:4-5

“For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified (*Paul was hesitant to trust his own self judgment for it might be an improper assessment of his life, he may be too easy on himself*): **but he that judgeth me is the Lord** (*who understands our hearts and true motives*). **Therefore judge nothing before the time** (*speaking of foolish and unwarranted judgment of one’s motives and heart*), **until the Lord come** (*the Rapture and Judgment Seat of Christ*), **who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness** (*our hidden desires of carnality in our service for Christ and overall living*), **and will make manifest** (*bring out into the light*) **the counsels** (*the will, intent, and purpose*) **of the hearts** (*in our Christian service and living*): **and then shall every man have praise of God**” (*praise for everyone means that rewards will be handed out to all Christians*).

As we have seen, this is placed within the context of our stewardship (1 Cor. 4:2). Paul takes this examination a step further in 1 Corinthians chapter four. He tells us that not only *what* was done but *why* it was done will be important. Did we serve the Lord selfish reasons, to promote self-display and self-glory or did you truly serve the Lord to glorify Him? Not only will the *quantity* and *quality* of our stewardship or service be examined but also the *motives* behind the stewardship and service. The *direction* of our life will be considered but also the *desires* of our hearts. Some were wrongly judging Paul. They were trying to judge his heart and determine that he was serving the Lord out of a wrong motive. But this was an unworthy type of judgment. We can be fruit inspectors but not heart inspectors.

In replying to their improper form of judgment, he reminds us that Jesus Christ will examine the motives of our hearts in relation to our service and living rendered unto Him (1 Cor. 4:3-5). Did we serve Christ for His glory or for our own glory? Did we serve Christ for fleshly and personal reasons but not truly for only His glory?

John 12:43 says:

“For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

There are many corrupt motives that can taint our actions and service for the Lord. We might serve God and others for personal gain and attention.

We might serve from a spirit of self-promotion and praise. Only Christ can judge the hearts and determine the actual motive and intent behind a person's service rendered unto God. Someday when Christians stand before the Lord at the Bema their hearts will be examined for what they truly were in all their living and service rendered unto the Lord.

All of us have had our motives misinterpreted at certain times in life. We have been misjudged in our service to the Lord. Let us remember that Jesus will vindicate the true motives of our hearts when we stand before Him someday. Christ will vindicate the false accusations leveled against us, the cruel words, gossip, and the misunderstandings and misstatements will be cleared up. In this day it will be the whole truth and nothing but the truth! One thing is certain, only what was done for God's glory will pass the test. To pass "the glory of God" test it means that our works or services must properly represent His character and ways and we must make sure that we do not receive praise but that the Lord gets all the honor and glory.

The Bema Seat should motivate us to serve Christ with a right motive which means will serve Christ out of thankfulness, love, and appreciation for what He has done for us (1 John 4:19; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 7:4; 2 Tim. 4:6) and serve to bring glory to Him alone (1 Cor. 1:31).

Sincerity in our everyday Christian living and service for Christ will be evaluated at this final exam.

Philippians 1:10-11 says:

"That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ (*another eschatological designation for the Rapture*); Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

The concept behind "approve things that are *excellent*" (*Gk. diaphero*) means to discern a difference and points to something superior in nature. Literally, the word means "to carry in different directions." It was used of people who were constantly being carried in ships to different destinations. Through discernment we distinguish between the good and the bad and even the better and the best.

The idea of being “without offence” is living a blameless life, a life that is above reproach and a life that would not cause anyone else to stumble.

The word “sincere” (elikrines) means to literally be judged by the sunlight and connotes the idea of being tested and found to be true, pure, and sincere and that we are truly living “unto the glory and praise of God.” We must pass the test of sincerity and genuineness when we stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Rapture. We will be examined for what we truly were. The veil will be taken away. The sincerity has to do with how serious we were about living the Christian life, doing what is right in God’s eyes, and serving the Lord.

In view of the Judgment Seat of Christ believers should strive to approve through discernment only excellent or superior things that will stand the test. Whenever we add compromise and carnality into our living, service, and worship we move away from the excellent or superior things and bring the prospect of more judgment to our lives. We must remember that Jesus will only reward us for “the fruits of righteousness” that we do.

Jesus Christ will be a just Judge in the coming day (2 Tim. 4:8; John 5:22, 27). As we have seen, Christ will sort out the good from the bad (2 Cor. 5:10). Each of us will get exactly what we deserve by way of reward and eternal recognition as Christ’s servant. This is because Jesus Christ knows all about us.

Hebrews 4:13 once again states:

“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”

This another way of saying that God knows “the hidden things of darkness” (wrong and fleshly motives) and “the counsels of the hearts” (the true intent and purpose) of all our living and service rendered unto Him (1 Cor. 4:5). The motivation of the heart will be examined at this judgment.

Why did I serve Jesus? Was it for His glory alone? Did I do it joyfully? Did I do it with a thankful heart? Why did I pick up elderly people and bring them to church? Why did I help set up chairs and hand out literature? Why did I

give my money to the church? Why did I sing in the choir? Why did I bake that cake for my neighbor? In this day the motivations and truth of our stewardship and work for Christ will be examined. What a person does for Christ out of love, sincerity, and joyfulness does count. It will count for eternity! The purpose and motivation of the heart will play an important role at this time of judgment.

On a broader scale it will be equally true that “the hidden things of darkness” and “the counsels of the hearts” will be revealed and known to us as they relate to our carnal living, selfish pursuits, and secret sins. The hidden secrets of our hearts which we thought no other person knew about, and which we might have fooled ourselves about, will be brought out into the light. We will discover in this day that Jesus knew all about us!

“The eyes of God are upon me,
He sees everything I do.
The arms of God are around me,
They keep me safe and secure.
And He knows where I am
Every hour of every day
He knows each thought I think
He knows each word that I might say.
And although there've been times
I've been out of His will
I've never been out of His care.”

Oscar Hammerstein, the famous composer, told a story about the time “he saw a picture of the top of the head of the Statue of Liberty, taken from a helicopter.” Hammerstein was stunned by the amount of detail and painstaking effort that was put into the lady’s coiffure (head or hairdo). It occurred to Hammerstein that the sculptor could have never imagined, even in his wildest dreams, that people would one day be able to fly over the statue and look down on a rather hidden part of his creation.

Nevertheless, he gave as much attention to detail at the top of the head as he did to the face, arms, and legs. In his book *Lyrics*, he wrote, “When you are creating a work of art, or any other kind of work, finish the job off

perfectly. You never know when a helicopter, or some other instrument not at the moment invented may come along and find you out.”

The Lord doesn't need a helicopter. He sees everything, the big and the small, the hidden and the unseen things we can hide from others. God is watching. He's keeping track. Nothing is veiled from His sight. He looks down every day on what we do, think, and say. In some personal way and on an individual basis, Jesus will expose what we thought and what kind of heart we really possessed in relationship to our overall living and service. Nothing will be hidden in this day. A final examination day is coming!

Theodore Epp said it best:

“There is a day coming when our Lord is going to turn on the spiritual X-ray machine and will reveal the true motives or realities of the heart.”



Jesus highlighted the importance of our motives when it comes to receiving eternal rewards.

Matthew 6:1-2

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

Matthew 6:5

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

Matthew 6:16

“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.”

Of course, the reward these unsaved hypocrites will receive is God's future wrath. However, for the believer, no works of service done for self-glory, for personal gain and attention, or for any other underlying motive will receive God's approval and reward.

God still has a "book of remembrance" (Malachi 3:16). The old spiritual says, "My Lord is constantly writing all the time." God has His own vast information and internet network. Like a website He knows how many hits we have had in relationship to right living and how many hits we have had in relationship to ungodly and useless living. He will not forget what kind of *heart* you had when serving Him and what kind of *holiness* you maintained while serving and living out your life for Him.

If you don't believe in the Judgment Seat of Christ, then I have only one question to ask. What are you trying to hide? What are you unwilling to face? The Scriptures are abundantly clear about this prophetic event. We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be examined regarding our overall faithfulness and commitment to the Lord (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Lord who is acting as the "righteous judge" (2 Tim. 4:8) on this day cannot get to the good without the revelation of the bad so all God's saints will know that His evaluation and rewards are just and righteous.

In the coming day, the good, the bad, and the ugly will come out! As we have mentioned, the righteous judge (2 Tim. 4:8) must reveal the bad so we will know His evaluation is just and righteous. Some Christians are more holy and righteous than others. Some Christians are much more carnal in their living than others. The

righteous judge will sort all of this out and reward us accordingly. We have seen that we will be examined for our overall manner of living and conduct, faithfulness in stewardship, and our sincerity in serving and living the Christian life. What we did is important to God, how we did it is important to God, and why we did is important to God. All will be examined in this future day of judgment. One thing is certain. All roads lead to the Judgment Seat of Christ!

Interstate I-4 in Florida reminds us of this. No matter where you drive in the state of Florida, eventually all roads seem to lead back to I-4 (the primary road that leads through central Florida. In a similar way, all roads and directions within our lives leads back to the Judgment Seat of Christ.

The Bible now gives us in summary format what is going to take place at this judgment seat for Christians. Our works (deeds of our lives and services rendered unto God) which are worthwhile will result in reward but those works which are carnal will not be rewarded.

Speaking of the context of teaching, ministry, and service, Paul gives us a summary of what it will be like on this final examination day. This is very revealing and reminds us that this will be a solemn event.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ *(the foundation of the person and work of Christ upon which the Church is built – Matt. 16:18; Christ and the Gospel is the foundation of our salvation – Acts 4:12)*. **Now if any man build upon this foundation** *(in his teaching, ministry, and service rendered unto the Lord)* **gold, silver, precious stones** *(valuable teaching, service, and ministry)*, **wood, hay, stubble** *(fleshly and worthless teaching, service, and ministry)*; **Every man's work shall be made manifest** *(revealed, brought out into the open – before our minds and hearts)*: **for the day** *(Judgment Seat of Christ)* **shall declare it** *(make it known, disclose to each one of us)*, **because it shall be revealed by fire** *(the fire of God's omniscience who knows everything about us)*; **and the fire shall try** *(test)* **every man's work of what sort it is** *(good or bad as in 2 Cor. 5:10)*. **If any man's work** *(service)* **abide which he hath built thereupon** *(the foundation of Christ)*, **he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by** *(through)* **fire.”**

At the coming Judgment Seat of Christ, when you stand before the Lord, your eternal destination won't be tested. Here, Paul reveals what will be tested are our works or services rendered unto the Lord. The context of this passage looks back to Paul's work in Corinth during his eighteen months there on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:11). Paul had laid the

foundation of the church at Corinth, teaching the Gospel and God's Word. He was concerned about what would happen after his departure. While he was absent, he wanted those who would lead the church to build on the foundation he laid by using quality spiritual materials that would last. He told them that someday the Lord, at the judgment seat, would evaluate their work of building the church.

So, technically, this is placed within the context of leaders or pastors building up the local church using the truth and proper methods related to ministry. This should raise the eyebrows of many today. When I look at the evangelical landscape with all the pragmatism and worldliness within the local churches, I can only conclude that there are many combustible materials being used today in church ministries. They consist of what the Bible terms as wood, hay, and stubble and will go up in smoke at this judgment seat.

Robert Gromacki correctly states:

“When Christ returns, an accurate assessment of men, methods, and motivations will take place.”

The so-called holy rock, holy hip hop, and holy rap music is combustible material. The cancer of worldly pragmatism is a combustible material. This is because the quality of the work or services rendered unto the Lord can be downright unholy and the Christians performing these acts of service may not honestly be doing them for the glory of God but for selfish gain. Any service that does properly glory God (represent His holy and righteous character) is comparable to combustible materials that will not last at this judgment seat. In other words, there will be no reward for the works of service that do not properly represent God's character and ways.

Of course, by extension and application, this text would also apply to all our individual lives as believers. In one sense, every believer is to be a careful builder – not just leaders or pastors. The numerous references to “any man” or “every man” and “no man” seems indicate that every believer needs to take this into consideration. We all have the same responsibility to build a foundation of ministry and service rendered unto the Lord that is pleasing to Him and which will in the end yield eternal reward.

When using the expression of a believer's "work" (1 Cor. 3:13) Paul is in this context relating these works to our overall ministry and service rendered to Christ. However, by extension and application the description of our "works" can also relate to all of our deeds and overall manner of living on earth since our entire lives will be examined (2 Cor. 5:10). This judgment will not only include our acts of service rendered to Christ but also the entire Christian lives, how we conducted ourselves before others and when we were all alone. God knows who we are in the dark!

The entire conduct, behavior, and services rendered to Christ will be examined at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul seems to be emphasizing our specific works rendered to the Lord in this passage. The different types of works or services rendered unto the Lord are outlined in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.

a. The works that are represented (1 Cor. 3:12).

Although we will never face judgment for our sins we can sense the solemn nature of this examination and our need to be effectively living and serving the Lord while we can (Rom. 12:11). The worthy or good works that we have done or "good" deeds of 2 Corinthians 5:10 are represented or illustrated as "gold, silver, precious stones" (the permanent gems). These good works will result in reward. They will be deemed worthy and respectable to God and therefore the Christian servant will earn reward for these particular deeds.

Gold, Silver, Precious Stones = Reward



Wood, Hay, and Stubble =
Loss of Reward



Of course, the worthless works that won't last are illustrated as "wood, hay, stubble" (the perishable junk). They are labeled as the "bad" works in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and will result in the loss of reward.

All the fleshly deeds and service that we have committed as a Christian will simply be bypassed as worthless rubble. Our carnal deeds which we have done in relationship to our overall living and service to Christ will yield no eternal dividends for they were not done in the spirit or manner of holiness, righteousness, and godliness (1 Thess. 4:4). The coming day will reveal the ratio of gems to junk, the perishable versus imperishable.

Imagine if all the deeds of your life were turned into these materials and then torched. The kind of life we lived would become evident by the size of the fire, but the real question would be this: What was left when the flames died out? This is the soul-searching question for all of us to contemplate.

Think of it this way. Every day we live is either a loss or a gain at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Nevertheless, even amid our failures there will be grace. Paul said that at the end of the examination Christ would find something to praise us for which will result in some reward ("and then shall every man have praise of God" - 1 Cor. 4:5). Of course, the praise correlates or is connected to the reward that is given all believers as this judgment. There could be no praise without reward.

Some suggest that "every man" refers only to faithful workers who will be praised after being rewarded. But the text seems to be teaching that even though some of the saints will be greatly rewarded for their faithful service, in the end, all Christians will receive some reward which will result in their praise. For some saints there will be greater gains than losses while for others there may be greater losses than gains. But at the end of the examination God will find something to reward and praise every believer for as they lived out their lives on earth. Everyone will have some gold, silver, and precious stones but not in equal amount.

What about those who have been saved on death beds or what about babies who died in a state of infancy? Will they be praised and rewarded? The Bible says they also will be given the praise and reward of God as well for something. The secret things belong unto the Lord (Deut. 29:29) but we can believe what God's Word reveals to us here. All of God's Church Age saints will be rewarded in the coming day of examination.

Yes, Jesus will find something to reward every one of us. Knowing this should excite and encourage us. You won't be left out! Rewards will not merely be for a "few of us" (the achievers – the cream of the crop) but "all of us."

Randy Alcorn states:

"God will reward the child who gave to the missions offering the money she'd saved for a softball mitt. He'll reward the teenager who kept himself pure despite all the temptations. He'll reward the man who tenderly cared for his wife with Alzheimer's, the mother who raised the child with cerebral palsy, the child who rejoiced despite his handicap. He'll reward the parent who modeled Christ to their children and the children who followed him despite their parents' bad example. He'll reward those who suffered while trusting him, and those who hold the ones who were suffering. He'll reward the couple who downsized, selling their large house to live in a small one to give all the money away to missions."

Matthew 19:30

"But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first."

Jesus taught that there will be some surprises regarding those who will be greatly rewarded and recognized during the Millennial kingdom. The same will be true for Church Age saints. Those who were well-known and in the spotlight may not receive reward and recognition as others who were not well-known but who served and lived for God faithfully. The believers' payday will be filled with surprises. The rewarding of God's people will be filled with surprising revelations and reversals.

Leslie Flynn stated:

"At the judgment seat of Christ when awards are given, some will receive real prizes, and some will get surprises."

There's a story that is not theologically precise, but it drives home a powerful point. After a preacher died and went to heaven, he noticed that a New York cabdriver had been given a greater reward than he had. "I don't understand," he complained to Peter. "I devoted my entire life to my

congregation.” Peter said, “Our policy is to reward results. Whenever you preached, people fell asleep. When people rode in his taxi, they prayed.”

Well, God’s payday will be filled with many shockers!

b. The works that are revealed (1 Cor. 3:13).

In this day every man’s work will be revealed or “manifest.” We’ve talked about this word in 2 Corinthians 5:10 where it states we shall all “appear” before this judgment seat. Here the Greek word “phaneros” means “shining, to be made manifest, make visible, make clear.”

Because of the inward ability of Christ to make clear what was previously unclear, we will discover “what sort” (quality) our works consisted of in relation to living for Christ and more specifically serving Christ (1 Cor. 3:13). Jesus is concerned with the *quality* of our work and not merely the *quantity*. Was our work holy? Was it righteous? Was it done for the glory of God? Was it done out of a right motive and heart? The quality of our service will definitely be revealed when we stand before the Bema Seat.

We must continually ask ourselves if our manner of living and service to Christ is holy, righteous, genuine, and truly glorifying to God. Let us never forget that the quantity, quality, and the questioning of our motive will all be part of this judgment. In the coming day it will not be who had the biggest church crowds but who served Christ faithfully, in a righteous and respectful manner, and with a proper motive. It will not merely be about outward numbers, but inward motives and the type of service rendered unto God.

The epitaph that George Whitefield desired for his tombstone was this:

“Here lies George Whitefield;
What sort of man he was
The great day will discover.”

Every believer has one shot at life, and our one shot will someday be reviewed and rewarded by the Lord. We should seek to live it well and

honor God with our lives. In fact, everything you do today matters forever when one contemplates the Judgment Seat of Christ.

When the famous pastor H.A. Ironside was a boy, he worked for a shoe repairman named Dan MacKay. Dan was a devoted believer in Christ who desired to bring glory to God through his work. Young Harry's job was the monotonous task of pounding the water out of soaked pieces of cowhide for shoe soles. One of MacKay's unscrupulous competitors down the street eliminated the process of pounding the water out of the soles. This saved time during the shoemaking process, but it also meant the customer would have to come back sooner for a repair. Harry didn't understand why MacKay went to all the trouble of removing water out of the soles, but MacKay's response was unwavering.

"Harry," he said, "I do not cobble shoes just for the [money] I get from my customers. I am doing this for the glory of God. I expect to see every shoe I have ever repaired in a big pile at the judgment seat of Christ, and I do not want the Lord to say to me on that day, 'Dan, this was a poor job, you did not do your best here.' I want Him to be able to say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Then MacKay went on to explain that just as some men are called to preach, so he was called to fix shoes, and that only as he did this well would his testimony count for God.

Reflecting on those words, Ironside said:

"It was a lesson I have never been able to forget. Often when I have been tempted to carelessness, and to slipshod effort, I have thought of dear, devoted Dan MacKay, and it has stirred me up to seek to do all for Him who died to redeem me."

The old saying of C.T. Studd is still true:

"Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before his judgment seat;
Only one life twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last."

Randy Alcorn is also on record as writing:

“At death we put the signature on our life’s portrait. The paint dries. The portrait’s done. Ready or not.”

Dearly beloved, it really does pay to serve Jesus and live a life that is honoring to Him. It will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

c. The works that remain (1 Cor. 3:14).

In the context of our Christian living and service for the Lord we will be examined for *how* we have lived and *what* we have done. Those works or deeds that stand the fiery test (“If any man’s work abide”) will be deeds that were done in purity, holiness, and righteousness. These works will result in a certain amount of reward (“he shall receive a reward”). The nature of this reward is not eternal life since this is a gift (Rom. 6:23). However, the reward that we will receive will be directly related to how we have lived out our lives and served Christ while on earth. Those things that we do which are honorable and holy will stand the fiery test and result in eternal reward (1 Cor. 9:24; 2 Tim. 4:7-8) and recognition in the earthly Millennial Kingdom (1 Pet. 1:10-11; 2 Tim. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:4-5; Luke 9:26). There seems to be a direct link to our rewards and privileges we receive in the earthly kingdom or Millennium.

This should provide us with great incentive to keep our lives pure and serve Christ. It should motivate us to live in such a manner that our actions and lifestyle will be approved and rewarded when Christ returns lest “I myself should be a castaway” (find the Lord’s disapproval) at His coming (1 Cor. 9:27). We want the Lord’s approval and should desire to hear those words, “Well done thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21). This well-known phrase covers the quality of work (“well”), a completed task (“done”), personal integrity (“good”) and constant effort (“faithful”).

The recognition and approval of the Lord will thrill our hearts throughout eternity. To know that we have lived to please Him will bring great joy and satisfaction to our lives.

Frederick Lorz was first over the line and received the applause as the winner of the 1904 Olympic race. A wonderful, wonderful feat. A feat that should be well rewarded. Well, I guess if you were trying to be a little picky, some could argue there was one small problem with his race that could be mentioned. It's very minor. Looking a bit closer at his 42 km race it was found that he totally ran himself out in the first 14km. So, his manager took him to the next 18km in his car. Having got his breath and strength back, he then ran the remaining 10km on foot not surprisingly finishing the Olympic marathon in first place! Well done Fred! Or not? Jesus will have the final say on all of our service and living rendered unto Him.

We hear much preaching about the rewards (crowns) that Christians will receive at this judgment and rightly so. This is a glorious prospect for faithful believers. There are special rewards that will be given to God's saints. Bible says there is reward (*crown of life*) for remaining faithful through trials or enduring hardships (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10). There is a reward (*the crown of righteousness*) reserved for faithful commitment and service to Christ prior to the Rapture (2 Tim. 4:6-8). There is a reward (*crown of glory*) for properly shepherding the flock of God (1 Pet. 5:2-4), a reward (*crown of rejoicing*) for winning the lost (1 Thess. 2:19-20), and reward (*incorruptible crown*) for living a disciplined life of purity or mastery over the old nature (1 Cor. 9:25-27).

Make no mistake. Our heavenly rewards will be great. Whatever we must sacrifice here to receive those rewards will be well worthwhile. There will be general rewards given to the saints. Everything will be taken into consideration on this examination day, even a cup of cold water that was given in his name will apparently count for eternity.

Matthew 10:42

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (meaning that you will gain reward).

Hebrews 6:10 again reminds us:

"For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

God will remember how you served and loved the saints at the Bema Seat. Let's lovingly minister to the needs of God's people. He will never forget our labor of love!

In summary, how we treat others will result in reward (Heb. 6:10), how we use our money (2 Cor. 9:6-7), how we spend our time (1 Pet. 1:17), how much we suffer for Christ (2 Tim. 2:12; Matt. 5:11-12), how many souls we win to Christ (1 Thess. 2:19-20; Dan. 12:3), how we have exercised authority over others (Heb. 13:17), how faithful we have been in feeding the truth of God's Word to the flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4), how we react to temptation (James 1:2-3; Rev. 2:10), how much the doctrine of the Rapture means to us (2 Tim. 4:8), how we have dealt with our God-given stewardship (1 Cor. 4:2-5; 1 Pet. 4:10), how we have committed ourselves to discipleship (Mark 10:29-30), and how we have disciplined ourselves and lived the Christian race (1 Cor. 9:24). Therefore, every day is important when it comes to eternity. In fact, every minute is important.

“Just a tiny little minute
Only sixty seconds in it.
Forced upon me
Can't refuse it
Didn't seek it
Didn't choose it.
But it's up to me to use it
Give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute
But eternity is in it!”

d. The works that are refused (1 Cor. 3:15).

1 Corinthians 3:15

“If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

Paul now paints the picture and imagery of a fiery scene at this judgment seat. What does



this mean? No, it is not the fire of Hell for no believer will face literal Hell fire since Jesus was judged in their place on the cross (John 3:16-18). But there is another type of nonliteral fire, the fiery eyes of Christ's omniscience, which will expose and in one sense burn away our fleshly deeds and works which again are represented as perishable rubble ("wood, hay, and stubble" - 1 Cor. 3:12) but maintain our righteous and holy deeds represented as imperishable reward ("gold, silver, precious stones"). In the coming day Jesus will get rid of the junk and keep the gems!

The wasted years, our lack of commitment to the Lord, and our sinful patterns of living are all works that we have done which will not stand the test. They are portrayed as being "burned" (1 Cor. 3:15) and lost forever. It's important to understand that the WORKS of Christians are judged – not the CHRISTIANS ("try every man's work" & "a man's work shall be burned" - 1 Cor. 3:13, 15). Our examination in relationship to faithful living and service will weed out those actions and works that were done out of the energy of the flesh. All the extras that we do in life, which have kept us from doing what God wants us to do and which did not promote God's glory, will be thrown into the fire. All of our earthly activities that we have done outside of God's will and for our own glory will not stand the final examine.

Such things as wasted time and talents, squandered opportunities, neglect of spiritual things, ignorance or indifference to God's Word and God's will, prayerlessness, worldliness, and carnality will be burned up. These types of decisions and deeds will not stand the test. However, our purity of living, the right things that we have done, our commitment to the Lord, and the quality of service for the Lord will stand the test and we "shall receive a reward" (1 Cor. 3:14). It's as simple as this. Only the good will last. The bad and the ugly will not last. When God reviews our lives the dross will be burned off and only the pure will remain. Once again, grace passes over the bad to confirm the good and demonstrate the righteous judgment of the Lord.

Although the RECORD of our sins is erased and gone forever (Eph. 1:7), the RESULTS of our sins and wayward living in our Christian life will still be on the table and considered at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). In other words, the selfish and carnal aspects of our Christian life will in a

broad way be reviewed at the Bema Seat of Christ. This review is not the judgment of a sinner waiting a verdict of “guilty or not guilty” but the judgment of a saint waiting the review of his life and being rewarded accordingly.

It should be noted that grace burns the worthless works of believers (1 Cor. 3:15) illustrating that God’s wrath passes over His people, resulting in their reward! Again, this means we will not be brought under any kind of condemnation for our sins at the Bema. Nevertheless, there will be regrets at the Judgment Seat of Christ for wasted living. We will regret that we have not done more. We will regret the wasted years and how we squandered away so many opportunities to serve the Lord. There are some things we can never change! The Bible says that “we shall suffer loss” (1 Cor. 3:15) and this will be true throughout eternity. It will be too late to say at the Judgment Seat of Christ, “I’m sorry! I wish I hadn’t done that. I wish I hadn’t said that. I wish I had taken more seriously my responsibility to serve Christ and be involved in Christian living and service.

Friend, it will be too late when we stand before the Lord. It was too late for Achan once he had been found out (Josh. 7:16-26). It was too late for Ananias and Sapphira to confess once they had been exposed (Acts 5:1-10). It was too late for Reuben to confess his sin once he was called before the judgment seat of Jacob (Gen. 49). There comes a time when it is too late to make things right and when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ it will be too late. Our days of opportunity to live right and do right will be gone. Our days of restitution will be over. Our time to serve the Lord on earth will have ended. Our time to witness to the lost and see people saved will have come to an end. It will all be over. The old saying comes to mind, “That’s all she wrote!”

The Judgment Seat of Christ should stir our hearts to get things right today. Not tomorrow but today! We should make things right with others and in our own personal lives lest we experience greater shame and regret at this judgment. Making restitution with others and getting things right today will mean a big difference when we stand before the Lord. The changes and correct decisions we make today will affect our evaluation and examination

at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Don't wait until tomorrow. Today is the day of challenge and change. Today is the first day for the rest of your life!

Please notice again that it will be a man's "work" that is tried and not his salvation (1 Cor. 3:13, 14, 15). Rewards are lost but not the person (1 Cor. 3:15). I cannot lose my salvation at this judgment but there is something I can lose. It's reward. Our eternal life is not in question, but our eternal reward is. The Bible teaches that the "work shall be burned" (not the person). The person will not experience loss of his spiritual life but loss of reward. The ship may be lost but not the sailor. The work is burned but not the believer. But oh, what a great loss it will be when we stand before Him and find ourselves unfaithful and losing reward we otherwise could have gained. In this day the Bible says that the believer will "be saved so as by fire" (literally "through fire").

At the Bema, every believer will be like a stick burning in a fire which is suddenly snatched out and saved. This picture and analogy are used to illustrate how we will pass through God's fiery judgment upon our works. It is not intended to convey how the Christian will barely escape the fires of Hell and be rescued from the eternal burnings. The fire and flames are not a picture of Hell but of the fiery exposure and omniscience of God. I will talk about the fiery omniscience of God in a moment.

One thing is certain, no believer will just barely escape Hell and slip into Heaven based on their earthly performance as some suggest by this verse. This is a simple illustration or picture designed to teach how a believer will pass through the fiery examination of God's omniscience without being scathed or harmed by the fire. Once again, the believer's salvation is not in question since salvation is by grace and not by works (Eph. 2:8-9). What is in question is the believer's works. There is actually a message of assurance here. The believer will be saved while passing through the fire, but his works may not be saved (1 Cor. 5:5). The truth is this, while God gives us unmerited grace and salvation, He never gives us unmerited rewards.

Many years ago, I was traveling the Pa. Turnpike. I was expected to speak at a church in Bedford Pennsylvania. While driving I saw ahead of me a thick cloud of smoke. As I came closer, I could see that a man's truck and trailer

were burning. The flames had already gotten to the wheels and there was no hope for the vehicle or trailer. As I was standing there with the man who was watching his trailer burn, he said to me, "Everything that I own is in that trailer."

As we watched and heard the crackling and popping that goes along with a fire this poor man watched everything that he possessed go up in smoke. You know, it may be like this for some Christians at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If you have basically lived for yourself and sought to do your own thing in life, then the things that you have done in life will not stand the test. They will go up in smoke. They will be burned at the judgment seat and bring no eternal dividends or rewards.

The reward that we lose in this day for our wayward life and worthless deeds will in some way be a noticeable and a real loss to us. Perhaps it will be noticed in the lesser amount of radiant glory that we will be able to reflect from the glory of Christ's own holy presence (Dan. 12:3; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 19:8). Our eternal reward may very well involve the capacity to reflect Christ's righteousness and glory in greater measure. 1 Corinthians 15:40-42 suggests that there will be varying degrees of glory for the saints in the resurrection. Yet in Heaven and throughout eternity there will be no discontentment with one's own reward or envy for another's reward since the old nature will no longer be present in the believer. Remember that we are creating today the person we will be throughout eternity!

Erwin Lutzer once said:

"Much will change about us in eternity, but much shall also remain the same."

How we have lived while on earth will be reflected throughout the eternal ages of time! What a sobering thought and incentive this provides for our lives today. The Judgment Seat of Christ gives us incentive to live a faithful life that is pure and dedicated to the things God wants us to do.

Roy Laurin said:

"Measure your life by the broad sweep of eternity"

We are to live with eternity's values in view!

“With eternity's values in view, Lord,
With eternities values in view,
May I do each day's work for Jesus
With eternity's values in view.”

We must ask ourselves two very important questions. First, “Somewhere within the time frame of the next twenty years, what will you wish you had done for Christ today? Second, “Somewhere within the time frame of the next twenty years, how will you wish you had lived your life today?” These are soul-searching questions that we need to ask ourselves on a daily basis so we might keep our lives in check and remember that we will be evaluated as a servant at the Bema Seat. If you want to know what your life will look like in the future, then stop for a moment and see what your life looks like right now (Gal. 6:7-8). What you sow and how you live today will affect what you are tomorrow and throughout eternity.

Missionary martyr, Jim Elliot, said:

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”

Have you ever watched a barrel fire burn up trash? You place all the trash in the barrel and light it with matches. The fire begins slowly and then quickly spreads to other pieces of combustible materials and in not time at all the entire barrel is burning with trash. In a similar way, someday each one of us are going to pass through a fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It will be a purifying fire that burns off the dross related to our past life (our fleshly works) and only leaves the pure gold (our eternal reward). No, this is not a purgatorial cleansing but a passing judgment on our works which results in the distribution of reward to faithful saints.

Now what does the fire (1 Corinthians 3:13, 15) represent at this judgment? We know that Jeremiah says that God's word is as a fire (Jer. 23:29). Some therefore suggest the truth of God's Word will act as our inward judge. But since we are going to stand in front of the Lord, I would suggest to you that the fire seems to be an expression relating to the Lord's omniscience, discerning judgment, and holiness that will penetrate our hearts and expose our works for what they really were. The “fire” that will try us in this

day may very well be a descriptive term used of the fiery eyes and omniscience of the glorified Christ who we will meet in the air. Revelation 1:14 says this about the glorified Christ who watches over the churches – “his eyes were as a flame of fire.” There seems to be a correlation between the fire of 1 Corinthians 3 that tries our works and Christ’s fiery eyes of omniscience over Church Age saints.



The omniscience of Christ will see through us. The eyes of God’s burning holiness and penetrating omniscience will expose every believer and all their works. Nothing will bypass God’s holy inspection. “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29). He is a God of holy judgment. It will only take one look into the all-piercing and all-knowing eyes of Christ to bring out the good and the bad in a moments time. When we glance upon

Christ for the very first time we will immediately know what our score was on the final examination.

Dr. Frank Logsdon once said:

“It is a solemn engagement indeed to project our thoughts toward this day when, on bended knees before the fiery eyes of Omniscience, we face the record.”

The eyes of Jesus are going to see through all the sham or hypocritical actions that we have ever done. Like a streak of holy lightening His eyes will penetrate through our inward hearts and tell the story of our lives. He is going to spot the worthless carnal actions of our lives and the wasted years of our lives. In one glimpse He is going to run His accurate computer over our lives and investigate what kind of servant we have really been.

How much service and what kind of service we have rendered unto Him will be examined. In what manner we served the Lord and with what motive will come into the picture. What kind of life we have lived for Him will be brought out into the light. Those things that we have done which were not for His glory but for our own carnal living and praise will go up in smoke. We will suffer loss for these things – the loss of reward. But those things that we have done which are holy and which promoted His glory will stand the fiery test and remain as reward. The sinful and selfish actions in our lives will go up in smoke and only those things done for Christ will last.

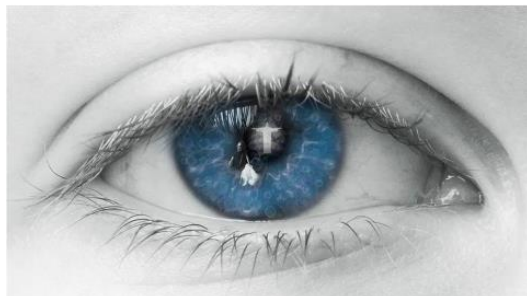
Remember our Lord's wonderful look of love when He gazed upon Peter? Luke 22:61 says, "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." Peter sensed that Jesus could see right through Him. At the same time, He sensed that his Master still loved him despite his failure. This same will be true at the Judgment Seat of Christ. When we see Jesus for the very first time we will know that His eyes are staring right down into our soul, we will sense the same thing Peter sensed. Peter sensed both love and disappointment from the Lord.

"His wonderful look of love, His wonderful look of love;
Made the teardrops start, broke and won my heart;
His wonderful look of love!"

I believe this is the way it will be when we see Jesus for the very first time! We will not look into a face that demonstrates anger and initiates terror in our hearts, where we will experience the fear and dread of Christ's disciplinary judgment and harassment for a misspent life. We will see the face of the very One who loved us and died for us (Gal. 2:20). What a thrilling and awe-inspiring moment it will be!

Face to face! O Blissful Moment!

"Face to face! O blissful moment!
Face to face to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so."



We will experience a soul-searching and yet loving glance of our blessed Lord. Our past failures, fleshly deeds, and unfaithfulness will in some general way be made known to our own life. The soul-searching gaze of His fiery eyes will in a split-second expose us for what we were as a servant. The piercing and probing omniscient eyes of Jesus will see through us! Christ will in some way be able to present our entire life before us in only a moment's time! Christ will simply look at us and we discover what we really were and the reward that we will receive for eternity.

Dr. Erwin Lutzer again comments:

"Christ can cause our entire lives to be present to us in a moment of time. There will be no files to shuffle, no witnesses that must be called to confirm the data."

There will be literally millions upon millions of Christians to judge at this Bema Seat. All the Christians since Pentecost to our own day will be there. For this reason, many prophetic authors suggest that it would conceivably take seven years (Tribulation Period), or more than seven years to judge all of God's saints. But this seems highly unlikely. God will quickly judge His saints by immediately transferring to our hearts and minds all that is necessary in that moment of time, when we "meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17) and gaze upon Christ in the atmospheric heavens (1 John 3:2).

It should be noted that other judgments of untold millions of people are said to occur rather quickly (Matt. 25:32-46). Therefore, it is not out of the question to understand the judgment seat of Christ occurring quickly and ending abruptly as we gaze upon Christ.

Leon Woods also writes:

"It seems logical to let those judged know the results of their judgment sooner than later...First Corinthians 4:5 and Revelation 22:12 indicate that Christ will bestow regards at the time of His coming for His own, with the implication that this will happen at a moment very near that time."

We have already confirmed that it will happen on "that day" (2 Tim. 4:8) which is when the Rapture occurs and at a specific time (1 Cor. 4:5). This

examination will not take years to complete as some suggest but only seconds!

Lehman Strauss suggests that this event could be instantaneous. “However one thing is certain, as Henry W. Frost has said, ‘A divine judgment need not take long.’ It is absurd even to conceive of a problem of space when we think of the vast expanse in the heavens. It is possible that this judgment of the saints will be instantaneous, and that each Christian will rise into the air to enter at once into his proper place and appointed rewarding.”

Beloved, it will only take a few moments to set the record straight. All that needs to be known will be brought before our minds and we will stand rewarded and ready to enter the Father’s house (John 14:1-3).

We would do well to heed the advice of John Wesley’s rule for Christian living. It is a good rule to follow.

“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as you can.”

Dear Christian friend, none of us can afford to be careless and indifferent in our manner of living because it will make a big difference in the end!

In view of this coming judgment and final examination, a reverent fear of God should be in our hearts. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord” (2 Cor. 5:11) follows immediately after Paul’s discussion of the Judgment Seat of Christ. When Paul talks about the “terror of the Lord” following his explanation of the Judgment Seat of Christ, he was not saying that the Bema would be a day of dread and some kind of horrifying or terrifying experience before the presence of the Lord. That is not what this fear means. This concept of fear would distort our grace relationship with Christ.

For the believer, this is not referring to the terror of Hell fire and brimstone. However, this coming judgment should arouse a healthy fear of awe, reverence, and respect in our hearts and lives that is directed toward Christ. It's not the fear that we will be judged for our sins and go to Hell. Rather, it's a healthy fear and a wholesome dread of not pleasing the Lord with our lives and being found sinful and shameful before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28). It's a respectful and healthy sense of accountability to God.

G. Campbell Morgan asserted that once we had the fear that He would hurt us, but now we should fear lest we hurt Him! Paul's point is that a proper and respectful fear expressed toward a holy God, which includes the fear of not pleasing Him, will keep the fire burning in our hearts to speak to others about the Gospel and serve the Lord ("we persuade men" – 2 Cor. 5:11).

Charles Spurgeon declared:

"If God has spoken, listen! If God has recorded his words in a Book, search its pages with a believing heart. If you do not accept it as God's inspired word, I cannot invite you to pay any particular attention to it; but if you regard it as the Book of God, I charge you, as I shall meet you at the judgement seat of Christ, study the Bible daily. Treat not the Eternal God with disrespect, but delight in His Word."

We hear much preaching about the rewards (crowns) that Christians will receive at this judgment and rightly so (Rev. 22:12). There is much to gain at this judgment. However, there is much to lose! Dear friend, none of us can afford to be careless and indifferent to living right and serving the Lord. I must be honest with you. There will be shame, regrets, and tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Our sinful lives, our backsliding, our rebellious ways, our carnality, the wasted years, our lack of surrender, faithfulness, giving, and the church works that we did out of the flesh will all go up in a puff of smoke – "wood, hay, and stubble." And we will be ashamed!

Our witness, our stewardship, and overall living will be brought before our minds and hearts in this day, and we will know what Jesus knows. We will know our final score on the exam. Our lack of service, our wrongs, the mistakes of time, the words we have said, the ways we have lived, sins that

we have rationalized and idolized, the bitterness that we harbor in the heart toward others, and the secret sins (Ps. 90:8) we have in our hearts and lives will in some way affect our reward (Col. 3:25; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:18).

Romans 14:10-12 declares:

“But why dost thou judge (*falsely and inaccurately condemn other Christians over trifles or trivial matters*) thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? (*despise, scorn, show contempt*) for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account (*a spoken word or decree*) of himself to God.”

Bowing, confession, and giving account of our life before Christ at this judgment seat simply means that we will agree with Christ’s conclusions about our living, conduct, and service. We will have no wiggle room and grading on a curve at this final examination.

Essentially, at this final exam or evaluation we will agree with the Lord’s evaluation of our lives. When the fire of God’s omniscience tries our lives for what they really were we will conclude the day of examination by saying, “Yes Lord, it is true.”

Once again, the word “confess” means to openly acknowledge or agree to something. To confess means that we will agree with the Lord’s assessment of our unfaithfulness and those worthless, sinful, and unproductive deeds that we did while living on earth. No, we will not confess all our past sins or somehow verbally answer for every one of our sins at this judgment. This would go against the character of God’s grace and forgiveness that is found in Christ. Christ will not haunt and hound us with our sins but cause us to understand our lack of commitment so that we can see His perfect justice in this final examination.

In this day we will simply acknowledge that all the wood, hay and stubble, which the Lord has revealed in our lives, was a true and righteous judgment on His part (Rev. 16:7). In the final analysis, we will agree with the Lord’s conclusion of our living and service on this day of final examination. “Yes

Lord, it is true.” There will be a general confession that Christ’s examination was fair and accurate.

The Bible says that “every man shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12). The word “account” is the word “logos” which means to speak a word. The idea is that we will give a word of open acknowledgement concerning the way that we have served and lived for Christ. In this day of final examination, all Christians will mentally and verbally confess (agree) that the Lord has faithfully and righteously examined their lives as His servants. We will agree by a simple but true acknowledgment that all that Jesus Christ has revealed about our lives is absolutely true. “Yes Lord, it is true.”

“Every man on earth is given just one life
Every life on earth is but a vapor.
It appears, then it's gone
With a record of what's done
Then we stand alone at the judgment seat of Christ
God's Holy Son.

We must all bow down at the judgment seat of Christ
We must give account for the things we've done with our lives.
I will live my life for Jesus Christ
So that in eternity my life will be
Gold and silver and precious stones.”

1 Corinthians 3:12

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble.”

We need to build an effective life of God-glorifying service and living for in the end and throughout eternity this is all that will matter. Build your life well.

Dr. I. M. Haldeman, the great prophetic preacher of yesteryear, wrote: “According to the Word of God, the testimony of the son of God, and the corroborative and unbroken testimony of the Apostles, there is not the

thickness of tissue paper between us who are Christians and the Judgment Seat of Christ.”

This means that we could be standing before this Judgment Seat in a split second of time since Jesus could come back at any moment and take us up to meet Him in the air (1 Cor. 15:51-52). It is true, there is not the thickness of tissue paper between us who are Christians and the Judgment Seat of Christ. The final exam could be today! We may be only a breath away from the Bema!

When a holy God tests our works of service and overall living, only that which has been done according to the Word of God, the holiness of God, and which was approved of God will be rewarded. All fleshly works will go up in smoke. Much of what is termed as being Christian today will not be Christian in this day! Friend, will you be ready for the coming of the Lord?

“Faithful and true would He find us here
If He should come today?
Watching in gladness and not in fear,
If He should come today?
Signs of His coming multiply,
Morning light breaks in eastern sky,
Watch, for the time is drawing nigh,
What if it were today?”

Philippians 3:14 says:

“I press toward the mark for the prize (reward) of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

2 Timothy 4:8

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

If we are serving the Lord and living faithfully for Him we will love His appearing. We won't be ashamed for the wrong things we were doing when Jesus returns.

Matthew Henry wrote:

“It ought to be the business of every day to prepare for the last day.”

Martin Luther said that He had two days marked on his calendar: “Today and That day!”

Reward is to be a motivating factor for living the Christian life effectively and serving the Lord. Wanting to receive reward is not a selfish endeavor. It is a holy ambition for in receiving rewards we will be able to shine and glorify God in a greater way throughout eternity (Matt. 13:43; 1 Pet. 5:12).

Dear Christian friend do not take this most solemn event lightly! Do not treat the Judgment Seat of Christ as though it were a Sunday School picnic. This will not be the case. There is a day coming when we as believers in Christ will be evaluated for the way they have lived upon planet earth. The secret things of our lives such as self-glory, evil motives, thoughts, words, actions, unforgiveness, and hypocrisy will in some way be brought out into the light and we will know our final score on this exam. Apparently there will be much shame on the part of unfaithful believers who have lived their own carnal and selfish lives.

1 John 2:28 says:

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

Ron Rhodes concludes:

“One of the more sobering realities to ponder is that some Christians live a carnal lifestyle and may subsequently experience a sense of shame at the judgment seat of Christ. Such Christians will forfeit rewards that could have been theirs had they been faithful.”

The Bible clearly teaches that there can be shame and regrets when Jesus returns in the Rapture and Christians stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. There will be a real sense of shame before Christ and at this examination if we are caught with our hand in the cookie jar. In particular, there will be shame if Jesus returns and we are living a life of rebellion against Him and His ways, if we are harboring bitterness in our hearts, and if

we have been unfaithful in our living and service to the Lord. This shame will result from a misspent life in sin, selfishness, and slothfulness (laziness).

It would seem that the element of shame and remorse will not be imposed upon us by Christ at the Bema but will be self-imposed through the realization of the potential rewards we have forfeited for eternity. In other words, reflection upon our past, not the rebuke of Christ will result in shame. Our shame will not arise from Christ shaming us but from realizing our unfaithfulness and neglected opportunities. Furthermore, the shame (the profound regret and remorse) we might experience at this judgment seat will be momentary and temporary for in Heaven and the Eternal State there will be no more remorse and crying. Yes, you heard it right, no more tears in Heaven!

Revelation 21:4 declares:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

David declared long ago in Psalm 16:11:

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.”

This means we will not experience shame and remorse throughout eternity based upon our performance in our service and living. The emotional condition of God’s redeemed throughout eternity will be one of happiness and bliss and overwhelming joyfulness and gratefulness. Living in Heaven and the presence of Christ, experiencing His fellowship, will result in great eternal joy. Furthermore, throughout eternity we will be able to enjoy our rewards that were given to us at the Bema Seat of Christ as we glorify God with the shining brilliance of our reward that “fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:4).

As repeatedly mentioned throughout this study, reflectively shining or radiating a level of God’s glory will be the ultimate way we will express and enjoy our eternal rewards. This means that in eternity all our cups will be full and running over with joy, but some of our cups will be larger than

others! In other words, some of us will experience even greater joy as we reflect God's glory in a greater way because of our life of service and commitment to Christ.

Here is my point. Although there will be shame, remorse and even regrets associated with this judgment seat for losing rewards and blessing, the overall tenor of character of this judgment will be one of rewards and rejoicing. It will not be a judgment related to fear, reprisal, and retribution for sinning.

“We shall see His lovely face some bright golden morning,
When the clouds have rifted and the shades have flown;
Sorrow will be turned to joy, heartaches gone forever;
No more night, only light, when we see His face.”

E. Schuyler English seems to strike a balance between the joy and shame associated with this examination. “Joy will indeed be the predominant emotion of life with the Lord; but I suspect that, when our works are made manifest at the tribunal, some grief will be mixed with the joy, and we shall know shame as we suffer loss. But we shall rejoice also as we realize that the rewards given will be another example of the grace of our Lord; for at best we are unprofitable servants.”

Although 1 John 2:28 declares that Christians who were caught not living for the Lord when the Rapture occurs will experience shame, probably all of us in some measure will experience the elements of remorse, regret, and shame. These things cannot be avoided with an examination that scans our entire Christian (post-conversion) lives.

Samuel Hoyt strikes an excellent balance between the remorse and rejoicing believers will experience at the bema judgment: “The judgment seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what

they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential.”

Mark Hitchcock concludes with these thoughts:

“I believe the primary purpose of the judgment seat is not loss but gain, not defeat but victory. Loss will be present and real, but gain, gratitude, and overwhelming joy will be the dominant emotion. Whatever loss or remorse we may feel at the judgment seat will quickly go away. Any remorse we experience will eventually be washed over by a wave of inexpressible joy. We will stand in our Lord’s presence with great joy.”

In this day of examination, we will know what kind of servant we have been for the Lord. We will in some measure recollect our worthless deeds and unfaithful living while on earth. We will know in a moment’s time what kind of servant we have been for the Lord! Our faithfulness and what we have done for the Lord is all that is going to last. It’s difficult to determine to what extent our lives and failures will be made known to us. But we will likely know where we stand through Christ’s quick scan of our lives and the general revelation given to us. We will know by Christ’s omniscient fiery gaze what we were and how we will be rewarded.

The final examination today should keep us on our spiritual tiptoes and remind us how important it is to live right, be right, and do right.

The words of the songwriter should echo in our hearts:

“Only one life, twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.
Only one chance to do His will.
So give to Jesus every day,
For it’s the only life that pays,
When you recall you have but one life!!”

1 John 2:17

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Those whose love is devoted to the world have placed their confidence in something that cannot last. They are in one sense rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. It's very interesting that the "passeth away" is communicated as an ongoing action (Greek present tense). In other words, the world is already passing away as a result of its own wretchedness and sin. Right now and in the future it's evil and wretched character is in some sense passing out of existence for there is no eternal value in anything related to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.



The Bible teaches that the worldly and worthless works we do in this life will not last. Those things that pertain to our Christian service and overall living which were filled with the lust of the eyes, flesh, and pride of life will not result in any eternal reward. This is because they are passing out of existence even as you engage in them.

This is because there is no eternal value attached to them. However, the believer who practices righteous living and works will abide with reward and recognition throughout eternity. This is the promise of God. I have a picture on my desk which reads: "Everything I do today matters forever."

Revelation 14:13 reveals:

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Everything done for Christ will be richly rewarded - every kindness, sacrificial gift, prayer, tear, word of testimony. Our good works related to our service and Christian living will result in eternal reward. They will follow us for all eternity!

When a school or college student receives a report card it reveals the way he has performed throughout a particular school semester. He can read the report card and know his score. When a young child takes the report card home he must face the record with his parents. Sometimes he finds himself confessing to his parents about his lack of performance! In a similar fashion, when Jesus hands out our final report card, we will confess that His grading system was fair. There will be no need to outwardly resurface any of the past for that will speak for itself. All we will do is give a word of agreement to the Lord. "Yes Lord, it is true." The final grade on this examine cannot be changed. There will no opportunity to improve your grade. No bonus points or retest. You will get what you have earned.

What kind of grade will you receive on the final examination? When you confess, "Yes Lord it is true," what will be your eternal and unchanging grade? Will you agree with the Lord that you have squandered away much of your life and many opportunities to serve Him and do what is right? Will you agree with the Lord that you have bypassed His will and failed to serve and live for Him faithfully? Will it be true that you have wasted your days on earth by your own selfish and carnal living?

I suppose many of us will say, "I'd wish I had given Him more!"

"By and by when I look on His face,
Beautiful face, thorn-shadowed face;
By and by when I look on His face,
I'll wish I had given Him more
More, so much more —
More of my love than I e'er gave before.
By and by when I look on His face,
I'll wish I had given Him more."

John 9:4

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

Yes, there will be more shame, regrets, and tears shed by those Christians who have lived a selfish and carnal life. This will not be a general judgment

where we all receive the same rewards and recognition. Everyone will not receive the same trophy. You will earn your reward.

Many in this day may echo these sad words:

“O the years in sinning wasted,
Could I but recall them now,
I would give them to my savior,
To his will I'd gladly bow.”

One must wonder if some of our hearts will reflect upon our past life in the way Theodore W. Brennan recorded in his revealing poem.



“I looked upon a farm one day.
That once I used to own;
The barn had fallen to the ground.
The fields were overgrown.

The house in which my children grew.
Where we had lived for years --
I turned to see it broken down.
And brushed aside the tears.

I looked upon my soul one day.
To find it too had grown
With thorns and nettles everywhere.
The seeds neglect had sown.

The years had passed while I had cared
For things of lesser worth:
The things of Heaven I let go
When minding things of Earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears.
And cried, "O Lord, forgive!
I haven't much time left for Thee,
Not many years to live."

The wasted years forever gone,
The days I can't recall;
If I could live those days again.
I'd make Him Lord of all."

The final exam is coming. If you know Christ as your Savior, you will be there, and so will I. We can't call in sick. We cannot kick the can down the road. We don't get to repeat the exam. There's no second chance. There's no makeup test. You get only one shot. Now is your opportunity to prepare and get ready.

When we pass through the fire and when all the tears and regrets have been wiped away we will stand rewarded for the good things that we have done. As we have seen in this study, grace will find something in all of us that is worthy of reward and recognition. Christ will find some gems in all our lives for as we have already confirmed, "and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5). Think of it. The praise of God. In the end and throughout eternity this is all that will matter!

Acknowledgments

Bob Shelton, God's Prophetic Blueprint, 1985

Carl G. Johnson, Prophecy Made Plain, Moody Press, 1972

Erwin W. Lutzer, Your Eternal Reward, Moody Press, 1998

E.W. Rogers, Concerning The Future, Moody Press, 1962

Herman A. Hoyt, The End Times, Moody Press, 1969

J Dwight Pentecost, Things To Come, Zondervan Publishing House, 1981

J Dwight Pentecost, Prophecy For Today, Zondervan Publishing House, 1967

John F. Walvoord, The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook, Victor Books, 1990

Lehman Strauss, God's Plan For The Future, Zondervan Publishing House, 1971

Leon Wood, The Bible & Future Events, Academic Books Zondervan Publishing House, 1973

Mark Hitchcock, Heavenly Rewards, Harvest House Publishers, 2018

Merrill F. Unger, Great Neglected Bible Prophecies, Scripture Press, 1955

Paul N. Benware, Understanding End Times Prophecy, Moody Press, 1995

Paul N. Benware, The Believer's Payday, AMG Publishers, 2002

R. Ludwigson, Bible Prophecy Notes, Zondervan Publishing House, 1956

Robert Wilkin, Thomas Schreiner, James Dunn, Michael Barber, Four Views On The Role of Works At The Final Judgment, Zondervan, 2013

Samuel L. Hoyt, The Judgment Seat of Christ, Grace Gospel Press, 2011

Sherman L Hoyt, The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins, Bibliotheca Sacra, 1980

Sherman L. Hoyt, The Negative Aspects of the Christian's Judgment, Bibliotheca Sacra, 1980

William Pettingill, God's Prophecies For Plain People, Van Kampen Press, 1923