

The Judgment Seat of Christ – Rewards or Rebukes

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. [[2 Corinthians 5:10](#)]

Life has a 100% mortality rate. Yes, that's a morbid yet sobering thought – one each person will face one day.

Without Jesus Christ, eternity is a place of hopelessness, unrest, and judgment. He clearly identified the only alternative to heaven. Actually, He warned about Hell more than He inspired about Heaven. He invites everyone to spend eternity with Him in Heaven and sacrificed His life to make that possible. Yet, He leaves the choice to each individual. He invites, but doesn't coerce; He offers, yet is the perfect Gentleman while awaiting the response.

The Reality

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment [[Hebrews 9:27](#)].

Along with the certainty of death, [everyone faces the reality of judgment in the hereafter](#). For unbelievers, that occurs at the Great White Throne [[Revelation 20:11-15](#)]. “They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” [[1 Peter 4:5](#)]. For Christ followers, it takes place at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

At this point you may protest, “We're in the dispensation of grace! God's grace covers everything! Why disrupt my comfort zone with a disturbing message of judgment?”

Yes, we are currently in the church age, a dispensation of God's matchless and boundless grace. Call it a “time out” of

sorts with God restraining His judgment against sin. But Scripture plainly confirms each believer faces a personal accounting before the Lord Jesus Christ.

- “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” [[Romans 14:10](#)].
- “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” [2 Corinthians 5:10].
- And unless we forget, even here on earth, God’s judgment begins with believers [[1 Peter 4:17](#)].

The Reason

No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier [[2 Timothy 2:4](#)].

Far from intending to scare us into working like crazy to receive His favor, God outlines a love story. He loves us beyond all comprehension. As our Eternal Lover, He offers His salvation and lovingly works to conform us to His likeness. In return, we love and serve Him with gratitude and the passion deserving of such an intimate relationship. Then, on top of everything else, He rewards our faithful, loving service!

As in any relationship, there is a personal accountability for our walk of faith. In the business world, annual performance reviews sometimes include 360-feedback where managers solicit input about a person’s performance. In a marriage relationship, soliciting and giving feedback promotes greater communication and intimacy.

Just the same, the Christian life includes a performance review – with subsequent rewards and rebukes. God requires an accounting of what is past [[Ecclesiastes 3:15](#)]. Jesus confirmed its seriousness by saying even “idle words” will be examined [[Matthew 12:36](#)]. If more people kept this in mind,

social media sites would have much less activity!

Many of Jesus' parables correlate our earthly walk with heavenly rewards or rebukes. If we are faithful in little, we'll be trusted with little. Inversely, faithful in much, trusted with much [[Matthew 25:14-30](#)]. Increased opportunity involves increased responsibility. "To whom much is given, from him much will be required" [[Luke 12:48](#)]. For those wishing to argue the Old / New Testament difference, both consistently reflect the theme of God rendering to each man according to his deeds [[Romans 2:6](#); [Proverbs 24:12](#)].

The Rendering

Our God is a consuming fire [[Hebrews 12:29](#)].

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever [[Hebrews 13:8](#)]. He never changes [[Malachi 3:6](#)]. Yes, God is love [[1 John 4:7-8](#)], but He is also holy and a consuming fire. That same holy fire judges and purifies. Judgment fire falls on sin. Purifying fire refines me and my works [[Job 23:10](#)].

When I stand before Him, He will review, evaluate, and reward (or rebuke) my entire life as a believer. My repentance and His forgiveness erase my *confessed* sin. However, any *unconfessed* sin remains for His judgment. Ultimately, His consuming fire tests my works as a believer.

"Now if anyone builds on this foundation (Jesus) with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear...because it will be **revealed by fire**; and **the fire will test each one's work**, of what sort it is. If anyone's work...**endures**, he will receive a **reward**. If anyone's work is **burned**, he will **suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as **through fire** [[1 Corinthians 3:12-15](#), parenthesis and bold type added for emphasis].

I will be rewarded for whatever survives His consuming fire. If I pursue His purpose for my life and maximize the

opportunities He gives me (with the right heart attitude and motives), He promises rewards. However, if I spend my life on personal, worthless efforts, I will stand before Him empty handed. Sadly, I'll have no reward to offer back to the One who gave so much to me.

May the reality of the Judgment Seat of Christ challenge me to joyfully and lovingly be about my Father's business! May my love for my Savior and Lord Jesus Christ compel me to please Him who has called me to His side!

The Reflection

1. How am I pursuing my God-given purpose?
2. What am I doing with the opportunities God gives me?
3. Am I investing in earthly treasures (wood, hay, straw) or heavenly treasures (gold, silver, precious stones)?
[\[Matthew 6:19-21\]](#)
4. Will I hear "Well done, faithful servant" or a rebuke?