

# The Judgment Seat of Christ

5.5.19

**Romans 14:10 NASB** But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

**2 Corinthians 5:6-10 NLT** So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. <sup>7</sup> For we live by believing and not by seeing. <sup>8</sup> Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup> So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

**1 Corinthians 3:1-15 NASB** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup> for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? <sup>4</sup> For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? <sup>5</sup> What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. <sup>6</sup> I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. <sup>7</sup> So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. <sup>8</sup> Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. <sup>14</sup> If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

**1 Corinthians 3:12-15 NLT** Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. <sup>13</sup> But on the judgment day, fire will reveal what kind of work each builder has done. The fire will show if a person's work has any value. <sup>14</sup> If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

## Introduction

1. Every Believer is facing three judgments:

- As a sinner - I appeal to the Cross (John 3:16-17).
- As a son - I am subject to chastisement (Hebrews 12).

- As a servant - I will appear at the Bema in order to have my life evaluated and rewarded. The Great White Throne is another word (*thronos*).
2. This speaks of a judgment. An evaluation. A very special time and place concerning a very special group of people. The Judge is Jesus. The ones being evaluated are His people — the lost will not be present as far as we can tell.
  3. We are not sure of the time, but some have placed it in Heaven during the Great Tribulation. Others at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. The time is not an issue except as we look at events from earth's perspective. There is no time in eternity, so we aren't sure about where to place this on God's prophetic calendar except to say it would be at "the end" if all of God's people are judged and rewarded at the same event. Note: Some have wondered if this is something experienced shortly after an individual's death. However, it seems to speak of recognition, culmination, and honor, which would tend to make us think of this as a great cosmic collective event as.
  4. This is known as the BEMA. The image is a recollection of the Pan Isthmian Games (like our Olympics). At the winner's ceremony, a platform celebrated accomplishment, not failure. Therefore, we see the Judgment Seat of Christ as a place of celebration and congratulations. It is not a judgment for sin, for our transgressions have been dealt with at the Cross.
    - Our lives are viewed as a building - as the Temple of God in particular.
    - We are saved, but the question is what kind of building are we constructing? Verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 3 says a day is coming when every person's work shall be made manifest. Will it be splendid, or will it be shabby? Will your life represent that which fire cannot destroy, or are you building with materials that will be consumed in a moment?
  5. Now, a word about works and grace. Remember: We are saved by Grace, through faith. But we are rewarded according to our works. **Ephesians 2:8-10 NASB** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
  6. Grace doesn't mean every Believer is the same. Grace means every Believer comes to Christ the same way. But our reward is based on works.
    - Grace: I get what I don't deserve.
    - Mercy: I don't get what I do deserve.
    - Works: The foundation of reward in Heaven or punishment in Hell.

## I. What will the Bema be like?

### A. A Place of Review

1. **Attitude** - Do I really have a servant's heart?
  - a) What attitude marks your service to God?
  - b) "The problem pastor is that he has a servant's job but he doesn't have a servant's heart."
  - c) What do you leave in your wake? Redeemed lives or a body count?
  - d) Spiritual gifts do not trump spiritual fruit.
2. **Authority** - Have I lived life in submission and obedience to God's Word?
3. **Ability** - Have I been an effective steward of God's gifts?
  - a) Did I waste my life, spend my life, or invest my life?
  - b) It is a measure of quality, not quantity.
4. **Aspiration** - What was in my heart to accomplish?
  - a) 1 Kings 8:17-18 - David and the Temple; handed off to his son after doing everything he could.
  - b) Jim Elliot, Missionary to Ecuador - "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep (his life) in order to gain what he cannot lose (his reward)."
  - c) Many of Heaven's treasures will be awarded to people who thought they had failed.

### B. A Place of Reward

1. Revelation 22:12-13 NIV "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.
2. Five Crowns

- a) The Crown of Life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
- b) The Imperishable Crown (1 Corinthians 9:25)
- c) The Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8)
- d) The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:2-4)
- e) The Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19; Philipians 4:1)

**C. A Place of Regret**

- 1. "He shall suffer loss, though he himself shall be saved — but as one jumping through a wall of flames."
- 2. **Luke 12:47-48 NIV** "The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. <sup>48</sup> But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

**II. What are the surprises we are likely to encounter?**

**A. The goodness and severity of God**

- 1. **1 Corinthians 9:16 NIV** For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

**B. The Justice of God**

- 1. God is not unjust.

**C. How God really sees things**

- 1. Eliab - 1 Samuel 16:7
- 2. **Isaiah 1:11-15 NIV** "The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says he Lord. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. <sup>12</sup> When you

come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?  
<sup>13</sup>Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your worthless assemblies. <sup>14</sup>Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup>When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood!

3. **Luke 16:15 NIV** He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.”
4. “God doesn’t look so much at the amount of the check as the balance on the stub.”  
—Adrian Rogers
5. Capacity and Fulfillment

#### D. What really touches the heart of God

1. I love the way Jesus defended Mary of Bethany — “You leave her alone. She has done what she could. And wherever the Gospel is preached, the story of her act of love will be told.”
2. I believe that day will see Jesus defend those who have been maligned.
3. The Rich Young Ruler — “Jesus looked at him, and loved him.”
4. Four quarters and a bouquet of weeds
5. Remember **Matthew 6:19-21 NIV** “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup>But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”