

REWARDS (or LOSS OF) CEREMONY FOR BELIEVERS

(Commonly known as *The Judgment Seat of Christ* or *The Bema Seat*)

The judgment of believers has **nothing to do with salvation, nor with punishment** - that was all taken care of **at the cross**. Nor does it have to do with what **I** as a Christian can do **for** God. God does not need anything I can do. Rewards will be based on the **fruit that I have allowed the Holy Spirit to produce** through my life here on earth, as I by **faith** in His promises, have abided in fellowship with Him. I **cannot compare** heavenly rewards with earthly rewards, but I need to understand that they will somehow affect the **quality** of my life in eternity. A Christian should not conclude that rewards are unimportant because there is no associated punishment. If God says they're important, they are!

1. **Every Christian is going to appear at the judgment seat of Christ.**

Rom. 14:10-12 *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. For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." So then **each one** of us **will give an account of himself to God**.*

2 Cor. 5:9-10 (Paul wrote) *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must **all** appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that **each one** may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

2 Tim. 4:7-8 (Paul wrote) *I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to **all who have loved His appearing**.*

Rev. 22:12 (Jesus said) *"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My **reward** is with Me, to render to **every man** according to what he has done.*

2. **What will be the nature of the judgment seat of Christ?**

1 Cor. 3:8-15 (Paul wrote) *Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but **each will receive his own reward according to his own labor**. ... I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But **each man must be careful how he builds on it**. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw**, 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. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a **reward**. If any man's work is burned up, he will **suffer loss**; (see note below) **but he himself will be saved**, yet so as through fire.*

1 Cor. 4:5 ... *wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then **each man's praise will come to him from God**.*

(NOTE: "loss" refers to the forfeiture of God's intended rewards for the believer)

3. When will the judgment seat of Christ take place?

Matt. 16:27 (Jesus said) “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds.

Luke 14:13-14 (Jesus said) “But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

1 Peter 5:1-4 (Peter wrote) ... I exhort the elders ... shepherd the flock of God ... And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Rev. 11:18 “And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, ...

4. There will be no punishment for a believer.

John 5:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Rom. 4:8 “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

Rom. 8:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Heb. 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Heb. 10:17-18 “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” ...

Rev. 21:4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

5. But each one needs to be aware of the potential for “loss” of rewards.

Loss is not punishment. (See also Lesson 3-14, pages 217-219)

John 15:16 (Jesus said) “... I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, ...

1 Cor. 3:14-15 ... If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, ...

1 Cor. 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Gal. 6:9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

2 Tim. 2:5 Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules.

2 John 1:8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

Rev. 3:11-12 (Jesus said) ‘I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ...

6. For what will believers be rewarded? These are but a sampling of fruit that we should expect to see, as the Holy Spirit is allowed to work.

- 1 Sam. 26:23 *“The Lord will repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; ...*
Prov. 19:17 *One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed.*
- Matt. 5:11-12 *“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; ...*
- Matt. 5:44-46 (Jesus said) *“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ... “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?”*
- Luke 6:35 *“But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.*
- Matt. 10:42 *“And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.”*
- Matt. 19:27-30 *Then Peter said to Him, “Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?” And Jesus said to them, ... “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life. “But many who are first will be last; and the last, first.*
- Rom. 8:17-18 *... heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*
- Eph. 6:5-8 *Slaves (employees?), be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.*
- Col. 3:22-24 *Slaves (employees?), in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*
- Phil. 4:1 (Paul wrote) *Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.*
- 1 Thess. 2:19-20 *For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and joy.*
- James 1:12 *Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*
- Rev. 2:10 *‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:20)
- is not a “suggestion”.

7. We should seek “eternal” rewards, not rewards of an “earthly” nature.

- Matt. 6:1-6 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ... “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.
- Matt. 6:16-21 ... “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- Luke 14:12-14 ... “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. “But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”
- John 5:44 “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?
- John 12:42-43 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.
- 2 Cor. 4:17-18 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- Phil. 3:7-16 ... I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish ... forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect (mature), have this attitude; ...
- Col. 3:1-3 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ...
- 1 Tim. 4:8 for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.
- 1 Tim. 6:17-19 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.
- 1 Peter 1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. (NIV) (See also 1 Peter 1:1 and 2:11)

“for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)

8. His rewards are eternal (forever). (Note: Daniel references may refer just to Old Testament saints.)

Dan. 7:18 ... *the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, ...*

Dan. 7:27 *'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'*

1 Cor. 9:24-27 ... *Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.*

2 Cor. 4:17-18 *For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

1 Pet. 1:3-7 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

9. Although much religious activity appears spiritual, only that which is motivated by the Holy Spirit will be rewarded. (the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Gal. 5:22-23)

Ecclesiastes 3:14 *I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is nothing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, ...*

John 15:5 *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. (See note below)*

1 Cor. 13:1-3 *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. (See note)*

Gal. 6:7-10 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ...*

1 John 4:16-17 ... *God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.*

(NOTE: "nothing" refers to that which does not have eternal value as determined by God)

10. Old Testament believers will also be rewarded.

Hebrews 11

:1-2 Now **faith** is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For **by it** the men of old gained approval.

:8-11 By **faith** Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By **faith** he lived as an **alien** in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for **he was looking for the city which has foundations**, whose architect and builder is God. By **faith** even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she **considered Him faithful** who had promised.

:13-16 All these died in **faith, without receiving** the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were **strangers** and **exiles** on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are **seeking a country of their own**. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a **heavenly one**. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for **He has prepared a city** for them.

:24-27 By **faith** Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ **greater riches** than the treasures of Egypt; for he was **looking to the reward**. By **faith** he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as **seeing Him** who is unseen.

:32-40 ... Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a **better** resurrection; and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated ... And all these, having gained approval through their **faith, did not receive** what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, **so that apart from us they would not be made perfect**.

***And without faith it is impossible to please Him,
for he who comes to God must believe that He is and
that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.***

Hebrews 11:6

We each have three resources: Time, Energy, and Possessions.

As I allow the Holy Spirit freedom to manage and use my resources, He is building for me eternal rewards, using gold, silver and precious stones.

As I deny the Holy Spirit use of my resources, I am using those resources to build for myself a temporary investment of wood, hay and straw.