

LESSON 12: THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST “LOSS OR REWARDS?”

Will there be a judgment day for believers, and for what things will we be held accountable?

Salvation is a gift that we can't buy or obtain by our own merits. But, as believers, we should never neglect works in our service to God, since the Bible teaches that everything we do on this earth will have consequences in eternity. If, when you are judged, you are found to be a good servant, having been faithful to God in the little of this life, He will surely put you over much for all eternity.

For us, being judged by Jesus Christ should be a motive of joy and not fear, since God assures us that *“there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”* Nevertheless, we should understand that we as believers will be submitted to a judgment or thorough evaluation of our life. God has promised that He will reward or condemn what we have done while we were in this body and He gives us every hour of our existence so that we will prepare for that day.

This judgment is called “The Judgment Seat of Christ”, and will take place immediately after the rapture of the church. In that day, God will give rewards to those that have worked for Him, taking into account the attitudes of our heart and our willingness to deny ourselves demonstrated when we ministered.

The purpose of this lesson is to challenge you to wisely invest your resources, talents, and energy in what remains of your life. Minister so that eternity reaps the benefits that the Word of God promises to those that serve Our Lord with faithfulness.

I. Will God judge humanity?

- A. **Hebrews 9:27** assures us that every one of us will be judged by God at some moment after our death.
- B. Let's remember that God doesn't judge us to “decide” our eternal destination. Salvation or condemnation is decided by everyone during his or her life, when they receive or reject Christ. The judgment only pronounces the sentence.
 1. He that doesn't believe in Jesus Christ has already been condemned. **John 3:18** says it: *“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*
 2. But if we have the Son, God has declared us just, and we don't have to fear being judged for our sins since Christ was already judged in our place. **2 Corinthians 5:21** says: *“For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

- C. God will judge believers and the lost during different events.

II. How will God judge the lost?

- A. Every one who doesn't receive Christ during his life, as good as a person as he might be, will stand before what the Bible describes as the "*The Great White Throne Judgment*". **Revelation 20:11**.
- B. In that occasion, various important events will occur:
 - 1. Works, that's to say the conduct of the people present there, will be judged comparing them with "the books". **Revelation 20:12**
 - 2. In this same passage, it tells us that also, "The Book of Life" will be opened, to verify the eternal destination of those who will face condemnation.
 - 3. That destination unfortunately will be Hell and is described here as the Lake of Fire. **Revelation 20:15**
 - 4. God will judge the lost by their works since they lived their life believing that they would save them. As believers, we will not be judged based on our works but on the basis of Christ's perfect work on the cross since that is where we placed our trust. **Mark 4:22-24**.

III. How will the believers be judged?

- A. Even though our salvation doesn't depend upon our works, God will judge everyone of them and the motivation by which we did them, so that "every man shall have praise of God".
 - 1. All of us as believers will be judged in what the Bible calls "The Judgment Seat of Christ". **2 Corinthians 5:10** assures it: "*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.*"
 - 2. In that judgment every one of us will account for everything that happened in his or her life beginning after his or her conversion. **Romans 14:10-12**
 - 3. In this judgment God will not only judge the quantity but also the quality of our works.
 - a. God will demonstrate to us that not all the works we did in our life counted. He will test out their spiritual consistency. **1 Corinthians 3:12-13**

- b. For Him, what counts are the motives behind the works and not the works themselves. **1 Corinthians 4:5**
 - c. That's why it's important that our motive to serve God in everything we do is that He receives the glory. If you live in the power of your flesh and work to receive the credit and increase your personal prestige, then, in that day, "you will suffer loss", even though you will be saved by fire. **1 Corinthians 3:14-15**
- B. The purpose of God's judgment in the Judgment Seat of Christ is to reward us.
- 1. In the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will be rewarded by means of "crowns". These remind us of the crowns given centuries ago to the winners in athletic events or of the public recognition to those who were considered worthy because of their service.
 - 2. But, different from those crowns which were perishable, ours will be incorruptible. Let's look at what **1 Corinthians 9:25** says about this: *"And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."*
 - 3. It's important to understand that God doesn't reward us for isolated, once in a while activities during our Christian life. In heaven, the great ones will be those that have had a servant's heart on the earth and that consistently have shown a humble heart during their whole walk with Christ. **Matthew 20:25-28**
 - 4. These rewards are not only earned, *once you have them, you can lose them*. That's why it's important to watch constantly, to keep our heart focused on God. **Revelation 3:11**. Let's consider also the exhortation made by **2 John 1:8**: *"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."*
- C. The Bible mentions at least four kinds of crowns with which we will be rewarded:
- 1. The Crown of Joy
 - a. This crown has to do with leading others to know Christ. Paul points out the people that he had won to Christ as his "crown". **1 Thessalonians 2:19-20**. In **Philippians 4:1** it says: *"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, [my] dearly beloved."*
 - b. Note that the joy and conversion of people are closely related. There is a lot of joy in heaven when a sinner repents before God. **Luke 15:3-7**

- c. Rest assured that a crown will be given to those whose passion has been the conversion of lost souls.
2. The Crown of Life.
- a. This crown is given to those who resist trials and temptations.
James 1:12
 - b. Never be afraid to be tested. Temptations, testing, and persecution have always been part of the life of those who serve God.
Revelation 2:10 reads: *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast [some] of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”* The list of believers who have suffered because of their faith is never-ending, some examples are:
 - i. Stephen, the first martyr of the church, was stoned to death for preaching the Gospel with boldness. **Acts 7:59-60**. It’s interesting that his name means “crown”.
 - ii. James, the brother of the apostle John died by the sword. **Acts 12:1-2** explains it: *“Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.”*
 - iii. John, the apostle and writer of the Gospel that bears his name died as a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos. In **Revelation 1:9** we read: *“I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”*
 - c. We can be sure that those who live a lifestyle characterized by constantly resisting temptations and enduring tribulations will be rewarded with the crown of life. Yearn to be one of them.
3. The Crown of Righteousness.
- a. This crown will be given to those that loved the second coming of Christ. **2 Timothy 4:8**
 - b. You can confirm that you love the second coming of our Lord:
 - i. If you seek things that are above and not those of the earth. It’s to say that you live to invest your talents, resources, and energies in the eternal and not in the temporary. **Colossians 3:1-4**

- ii. If you renounce ungodliness and worldly lusts and live soberly, righteously, and godly. Make **Titus 2:12-13** the goal of your life: *“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;”*
- iii. If you seek to live a life of holiness and purity. **1 John 3:2-3**

4. The Crown of Glory

- a. This crown will be given to those that have pastored Christians. **1 Peter 5:1-4**
 - b. It isn't necessary to be an “ordained pastor” to get this crown nor will all those who pastor necessarily receive it.
 - c. To pastor is to feed, take care of, and guide the sheep of God in their walk through this life. That's why it will be given to those that with a pure heart minister according to the requirements established in the passage we just read:
 - i. Ministry should be done voluntarily.
 - ii. The ministry must not be done with the goal of receiving dishonest earnings.
 - iii. The ministry must not be done to obtain a position of lordship over the flock of God.
 - d. Those that receive the Crown of Glory will be those that guided others with the authority of the Word of God and the power of their example. Therefore, to aspire to receive this crown, we should first be willing to feed others with the Word of God, and to shepherd them with the correct attitude.
- D. Let's finish this long series of study together considering one of the main points of Discipleship I: God saved us so that we would serve Him.
- 1. If going to heaven were the only objective of Christ for us, then it would have been better to die right after conversion.
 - 2. That's why, if you die “in a ripe old age, full of days, riches, and honour”, but without having ministered the Word of God, you will have totally missed out on God's goal for you.

Our sincere desire is that this program of discipleship, among other things, has challenged you to involve yourself in the ministry of your church. Just do it! The satisfaction is never-ending.

SOME POPULAR BELIEFS

1. The final judgment and the end of the world are fairy tales.
2. The final judgment serves for God to determine if we will spend eternity in Heaven or in Hell.
3. As Christians, we will be judged by our works without considering the intentions that motivated them.
4. There is only one judgment in which all humanity will be judged.

From what we have studied in this lesson, we should understand the reason these teachings are completely false.

Write in your own words the spiritual principle from this lesson that has made the biggest impact on you.

PUTTING IN PRACTICE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

1. If you still aren't ministering, make the decision before God and your discipler to begin to do it and start right now.
2. Ask your discipler to guide you to get involved in one of the ministries of your church.

HOW MUCH HAVE WE LEARNED?

- 1 What's important isn't the quantity of our works but the quality of them.
T F
- 2 He that has a more important position in the church will receive more crowns. **T F**
- 3 Only ordained pastors can receive the crown of Glory.
T F
- 4 We can lose the crowns that we have already accumulated.
T F
- 5 The crown of righteousness is for those who, because of the second coming of Christ, live a holy and righteous life. **T F**
- 6 If we live a mediocre spiritual life, but do a few great things, God will reward us with crowns anyway. **T F**

**Before beginning Discipleship II, memorize
2 Corinthians 5:10**

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad.”

And 1 Corinthians 4:5

“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.”
