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A0651 – December 17, 2006 – Rev 2, 3, 22:12 – My Reward Is With Me

Let me introduce the doctrine of the judgment today and the rewards mentioned in Revelation; what the rewards are and how they are acquired. Before we get started, dispensationalist Erich Sauer has offered a helpful way to understand the believer's judgments. If you don't understand this you're going to be confused. So, this is very important. There are three judgments of the believer. We are...

1. **Judged as Sinners.** This judgment was borne by our substitute Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Be very careful to understand that this is a judgment that should be born by sinners but was born by our substitute Jesus Christ. This is a judgment for all sinners not just those who believe. Christ died for all sinners and every sinner. So, our judgment as sinners was born by our substitute Jesus Christ. When a person has faith alone in Christ alone he is then justified. We call this phase 1 of salvation. At the moment of faith alone in Christ alone the believer is justified and set free from the penalty of sin which is eternal condemnation in the lake of fire.

2. **Judged as Children.** These judgments are in time in the form of divine discipline and even pre-mature death.

Having been justified the believer enters phase 2 of salvation; sanctification. In phase 2 the believer can be saved from the power of sin if certain conditions are met. The justified believer does not have to sin. He has the

responsibility to reckon himself dead to sin and alive to Christ. Having done this he must realize that victory over sin cannot be won by his flesh. He must learn that victory comes only by the Spirit of God. If we live by the flesh we sin and the Lord disciplines us to correct our behavior. This is in time discipline which the believer can even refuse to heed leading to the sin unto death (premature death). So, we are judged as children for sin within our life.

Hebrews 12:6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom *his* father does not discipline? **8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Only children of God are disciplined and one becomes a child of God by faith alone in Christ alone (John 1:12) so this has to do with phase 2 of salvation

1 Corinthians 11:31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. **32** But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

As believers we should judge ourselves rightly. If we judge ourselves rightly then we can avoid judgments in time. Here you can see that judgment is equivalent to discipline. In the context what is important is the manner in which we eat the bread and drink the cup. The Corinthians were eating out of turn and getting drunk on the cup and this brought about divine judgment or discipline. So, it's important to judge ourselves rightly with respect to the manner in which we go about

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

You can just strike out the words *leading* since they are misleading and not in the Greek text. The point I want to make here is that there is a physical sin unto physical death that the believer can commit. As I've taught on other occasions when this takes place in Scripture the sin always has three characteristics: 1) intentional. The OT makes a distinction between

intentional and unintentional sin. 2) Directly against God. Somehow it is a direct assault on His character. 3) Directly in the sight of God's people. In the midst of the congregation of Israel or the Church. Every time you see the sin unto death in Scripture it has these three characteristics (intentional, directly against God, directly in the sight of God's people).

3. **Judged as Servants.** This judgment is a judgment of deeds that takes place at the judgment seat of Christ.

Now, once you die you get a resurrection body at the pre-Trib Rapture and the next great event is the judgment seat of Christ. It is vital that you understand that this judgment does not have reference to sin. No sin is going to be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ, not even any unconfessed sin you had when you died. And the basic reason is because now you have a glorified resurrection body. That means you've entered phase 3 of salvation; glorification. During phase 3 we are saved from the presence of sin. You're not going to sin anymore once you get a resurrection body so when you arrive at the judgment seat of Christ the issue is not sin. The issue is deeds.

2 Corinthians 5:10 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.

1 Corinthians 3:12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **13** 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. **14** If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. **15** If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

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

"Deeds", "works", "what he has done", these are all the same word in the Greek, *ergon*. These works or deeds are classified in terms of quality, either "good" or "bad". Bad works then are not the equivalent of sin. Sin is not going to be brought up but bad works will be brought up at the judgment seat of

Christ. A bad work is human good. See, there's human good and divine good. Divine good is the only thing worthy of reward. Human good appears good on the outside but the inner heart motive was not good. So, at the judgment seat of Christ we're going to basically be naked before Christ with everything laid bare on the table.

You've got to keep these three believer's judgments in perspective or you're going to be confused on lots of issues. First, we are judged as sinners. This judgment was borne by Christ as our substitute. Second, we are judged as children. This judgment is in time in the form of divine discipline and possibly pre-mature death. Third, we are judged as servants. This is a judgment of our deeds that takes place at the judgment seat of Christ. This final judgment will determine degree of reward at the judgment seat of Christ, positions of authority in the Millennial Kingdom and the new Jerusalem.

Today we are focusing on the third judgment of the believer where we will be judged as servants. I want to ask and answer four questions about this judgment. First, who will be at the judgment seat of Christ? Second, when will the judgment seat of Christ take place? Third, where will the rewards be enjoyed? and four, why does Christ reward us?

Who will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

The answer to this question is all who are justified by faith alone in Christ alone. No unbeliever will be present and no believer will be absent. When the roll is called up yonder all justified by faith alone in Christ alone will be present and will attend this judgment.

2 Corinthians 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. **10** 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.

Romans 14:10 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.

All believers must make this appearance. No believer is going to automatically advance their token to the nearest railroad and collect \$200 if they pass go. All must appear. Now, according to Rom 14:12, when you appear at this judgment seat you're going to have to make a verbal statement about yourself, your going to have to give an account for your deeds. If this scares you then you need to do something about it now so that you will have confidence before Him then because this is going to happen (1 John 2:28). It's more certain than death and taxes!

Now, it's very popular to say that nothing "bad" is going to be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ, it's all going to be positive but that's not what 2 Cor 5:10 says. The problem is that people think that if the deeds are bad that means they are sin and certainly sin can't be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ. Well, certainly no sin will be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ because our judgment as sinners was borne by our substitute Jesus Christ. So, sin is not the issue at the judgment seat of Christ. Deeds are the issue. Our deeds were not judged by Jesus Christ on the cross and so, what you have to understand is that believers have good and bad deeds and bad deeds are distinct from sin and will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. Good deeds are those done by the Spirit and bad deeds are those done by the flesh. So, you can do what appears to be good before men but if the motivation is not of the Spirit then of course it won't qualify as a good deed. So, both good and bad deeds done in the body will be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ and we will be recompensed.

When will the Judgment Seat of Christ take place?

It will take place after He appears at the pre-Trib Rapture but before the Second Coming.

2 Timothy 4:6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. **7** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; **8** 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.

It does not happen the moment you die. At that time the believer's spirit and soul go to be with the Lord and their body remains here on earth. We have to be resurrected before we go to the judgment seat of Christ and all church saints will be resurrected on the day of the pre-Trib Rapture and then, following that, but before the Second Coming we will all have our time at the judgment seat of Christ. Now, we don't know when He will appear. The rapture is often associated with this word "appear". It can happen at-any-moment and every generation since Paul and the apostles has thought it would be their generation. And God set it up this way so it would serve as a motivation to be ready at all times.

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

The point is get ready now so you will have confidence then. There will be some who are not ready and shrink away in shame when He comes because they know what's next, the judgment seat of Christ and they have to give a speech and they don't really have any viable excuses. You're there, you're naked, the things hidden in the dark crevices of your life are brought to light your motives are disclosed (1 Cor 4:5). So, get ready now, learn doctrine, abide in Him, have a living vital relationship with God. Don't put this off till tomorrow.

Where will the Rewards be Enjoyed?

Well, they will be enjoyed on the renovated earth during the Millennium and on the new earth afterward, particularly in the new Jerusalem. We should be storing up treasure in heaven (Matt 6:19ff) and there's debate about exactly what this treasure is, whether it really is monetary value to be used in a future economy to glorify God or whether it is a metaphor for increased quality of life in the future. Either way heaven is where you store up the treasure earth is where you will enjoy it. So, heaven is like a bank where you deposit money and get the greatest return on whatever you deposit there. But you have to deposit it in the here and now (e.g. helping Phillip Neel's platoon by sending all those gifts, giving a cup of water, etc...). Once we die or get raptured there's no more opportunity to store up treasure in heaven and so whatever is there will be what you have to work with for all eternity. And, of

course, if it is greater then you will have a greater capacity to glorify God in the Millennium and the new earth.

Why does Christ Reward Us?

You know, He doesn't have to. When you become a child of God by faith alone in Christ alone He tells us what is expected of us as His children. And when we do what is expected of us He doesn't have to say, "Well done good and faithful servant." He doesn't have to give us any kind of reward. An example of this is given in Luke 17:9-10. If we do all that is commanded we have only done what we ought to have done. However, even though He doesn't have to reward us He wants to reward us. It brings Him joy in the same way that it brings an earthly father joy to reward an obedient son. Heb 12:2 says Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him. He loves to lavish gifts upon His faithful servants because it brings Him great joy. These rewards can then be used by His servants to glorify Him in new and exciting ways that are not a part of our present capacity.

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