

Subject: *The Judgment Seat of Christ*

Scripture: *Romans 14:9-12*

Judgment is a reality for all people. Both believers and unbelievers will be judged, but it won't be at the same time and it won't be for the same reason.

1. THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT

The Bible teaches that every person is accountable to God. Every person will face God in judgment. The Bible is clear about the certainty of future judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 *And as it is appointed unto men one to die, but after this the judgment.*

This is a general reference to judgment, but the Bible states there will be a judgment of believers and a judgment of unbelievers. The judgment for believers is called the judgment seat of Christ, and the judgment for unbelievers is called the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). The day of judgment will be a day of evaluation and a day of reckoning.

Future judgment reveals some important attributes of God. The fact that all will be judged is evidence of God's justice and His omniscience. The fact that some people are saved is evidence of God's grace. The fact that believers will be rewarded for their good works is evidence of God's goodness and faithfulness.

Jeremiah 17:10 *I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*

The judgment seat of Christ for believers is mentioned by name in two scriptures.

Romans 14:10 *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

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.* From these verses we can draw some conclusions:

This judgment includes all believers. Notice the word "all" in both verses. This judgment is only for believers, but it will include all believers. It is unavoidable. Every believer will stand before Christ as judge. Every believer will give an account of his life. Every believer will be judged for every detail of his life. Every believer will be rewarded for his faithful service to Christ. The only thing that matters is Christ's evaluation and His approval.

According to Romans 14:9, Christ died, rose, and lived again for one purpose...that He might be Lord of all people, both the dead and the living. As Lord of all people, He will judge all people.

2. THE TIME OF THIS JUDGMENT

In one sense, God's judgment has already taken place at various times and in various ways: the judgment of Adam and Eve and all mankind (the curse); the flood; the confusion of languages at the tower of Babel; fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah; the judgment of God upon sin in allowing man to go his own way (the wrath of abandonment, the law of sowing and reaping). But the Bible is clear about a day of future judgment and that is what we're

considering now. Apparently the judgment seat of Christ will take place after the Rapture of the church. Let's look at three other passages that shed light on this judgment (total of 10 verses):

- **1 Corinthians 3:13-15**
- **1 Corinthians 4:1-5**
- **2 Corinthians 5:9-10**

3. THE JUDGE AT THIS JUDGMENT

The judge will be the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the judgment seat of Christ. The Father has given Christ the authority to judge all people.

John 5:22 *For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*

Acts 17:31 *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

2 Timothy 4:8 *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

Christ is qualified to be the Judge since He is omniscient, has all authority, and is impartial. There will be no excuses and no appeal of His decisions. The character of Christ guarantees that every decision will be absolutely right.

4. THE PURPOSE OF THIS JUDGMENT

This judgment is not to determine whether a person is saved or condemned.

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

This is not a judgment of our sins, but a judgment of our service and to reward believers for faithful service. God's judgment on our sin has already taken place.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *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.*

This is a judgment of our works. We are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). We should expect Him to examine our works. **1 Corinthians 15:58** *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.* Our labor is not worthless. It is important and Christ will inspect it. These are three ways that God deals with us:

In the past God dealt with us as *sinners*. In the present God deals with us as *sons*. In the future God will deal with us as *servants* and *stewards*.

This future judgment will be how we lived our Christian life. The word "judgment seat" is *bema*, the place where an umpire sat at athletic contests. From this raised platform he watched

the games and awarded the winners. The *bema* or judgment seat is associated with prominence, dignity, authority, honor, and reward. It is not associated with justice, punishment, or fear.

5. THE BASIS OF THIS JUDGMENT

A. Our service (1 Cor. 3:10-15)

We will be judged on the basis of what we did, (vs. 13) “every man’s work of what sort it is.” The issue not what size it is (quantity), but what sort it is (quality). There are two possibilities: gold, silver, precious stones or wood, hay, stubble. Our lives will be tested by fire to see what they were made of. See *2 Cor. 5:10*, “good or bad” means worthwhile or worthless.

B. Our motive (1 Cor. 4:5)

We will be judged on the basis of why we did what we did. Nothing will be overlooked or hidden in that day. The Lord will examine the motives of our heart. Was our service for the glory of God or the praise of other? He knows.

C. Our gifts and abilities (Matt. 25:14-19)

We will be judged on the basis of what we did with what we had (our time, talent, treasure, our opportunities). We are not owners, but stewards (managers). The Lord will reward us for being faithful. That is the key. To whom much is given, much is also required (Lk. 12:48).

6. THE RESULTS OF THIS JUDGMENT

A. Reward or regret (loss) – It will be a time of reward for some and a time of regret (loss) for others. This is not loss of salvation, but loss of rewards.

1 Corinthians 3:13-15 *Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

B. Greater responsibility for eternal service

Matthew 25:21 *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

C. Specific rewards or crowns (Scripture mentions five crowns)

- The incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25-27) – for those who master the old sinful nature
- The crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19) – for soul-winners
- The crown of life (Jas. 1:12) – for those who endure trials and tests for Christ
- The crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8) – for those who eagerly wait for Christ’s return. Loving the Lord’s appearing assumes a life of obedience. Those who are not living in obedience will be ashamed at His coming.
- The crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:2-4) – for those who are faithful shepherds of God’s flock.

It will be our privilege to lay all our crowns at Jesus' feet. **Revelation 4:10** *The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne.*

7. THE PREPARATION FOR THIS JUDGMENT

A. Be sure of your salvation

2 Corinthians 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

B. Work out your own salvation

Philippians 2:12-13 ¹² *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. ¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Know how God has wired you and gifted you and use your abilities to the max.*

C. Don't compare yourself with others

2 Corinthians 10:12 *For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*

D. Ask God to check your motives

Psalms 139:23-24 ²³ *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: ²⁴ And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

E. Live to please Christ and honor Him above all

Romans 14:12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

If we please Him it doesn't matter whom we displease and if we displease Him it doesn't matter whom we please. We are all accountable to God.