

THE DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Part XIV: The Future Work Of The Son Of God

B. The Judgment Seat Of Christ For The Christian

I. Introduction

- A. When one puts his faith in Christ for salvation, he passes out of condemnation unto eternal life, John 5:24.
- B. However, the Apostle Paul states that "we (Christians) must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." (2 Cor. 5:10). Some fear this event is a "Protestant purgatory", Walvoord, Jesus Christ Our Lord, 270.
- C. Well, since it will involve every believer, we examine the Scriptures to understand (1) WHAT it is, (2) HOW we will be examined by God and (3) WHAT to do **now** to prepare for it!

II. The Judgment Seat Of Christ For The Christian

- A. WHAT The Judgment Seat Of Christ Involves
 1. The "Judgment Seat of Christ" is **different from** the "Great White Throne Judgment" of Rev. 20:11-15:
 - a. The Great White Throne judgment deals with **unbelievers** and results in **negative eternal damnation** for all who are not written in the Lamb's book of (eternal) life, Rev. 20:12-15.
 - b. The "Judgment Seat" of Christ uses the Greek term *bema* in 2 Cor. 5:8-10, Rom. 14:10-12 and 1 Cor. 3:11-15. This was a raised platform where athletic judges would pass out rewards or where city assemblies were held, Liddell & Scott, Greek-Eng. Lex., p. 314. This judgment is about the believer's works where **NO** one examined, not even the **WORST** of them, go to hell, 1 Cor. 3:15a,b!
 2. Thus, the Judgment Seat of Christ involves only rewards for Christian godliness where the Great White Throne determines the fate of the souls of those who never became believers in earthly history!
- B. HOW We Will Be Judged At The Judgment Seat of Christ
 1. Every believer's Christian life's work will pass through the examining fire of God to see if it has **quality**, cf. 1 Cor. 3:13b with the KJV's "of what **sort** (quality = *hopoios*, Ibid., p. 1241)" it is.
 2. According to the 1 Cor. 3:13 **context**, the **quality** work to which Paul refers is his work of (1) using the spiritual gift God entrusted to him as an Apostle (2) to disciple the Corinthian believers (3) God's way (4) to be Christ-centered, cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-11. In other words, doing the will of God produces spiritually **quality** workmanship in Christian living where violating that will in action or method of operation produces useless wood, hay and stubble that God's fire will consume, 1 Cor. 3:12.
 3. Two of Christ's parables on rewards in the Gospels offer additional insight into judgment criteria: (1) Matt. 25:14-30, the Parable of the Talents has a varying number of talents assigned to each servant with each one receiving equal reward based on faithful use of his assigned talents. (2) Lu. 19:11-27, the Parable of the Pounds has each servant assigned the same number of pounds being rewarded according to the returns on investing his pound due to investment opportunities utilized. Thus, we are to use to the fullest what **abilities** God assigns us as well as utilize the **opportunities** we get in life to serve Him.
 4. The believer's rewards will make up his clothing in eternity, Rev. 19:8! **Among** the rewards will be: (a) a crown of life for overcoming testings or temptations (Jas. 1:12); (b) a crown of righteousness for loving Christ's return, 2 Tim. 4:8; (c) a crown of joy for discipling, Phil. 4:1; (d) a crown of glory for overseers who do well, 1 Pet. 5:1-4; (e) an incorruptible crown for not being sidelined from Christian service due to sin, 1 Cor. 9:24-27 and (f) a crown for staying theologically sound, Rev. 3:10-11.
- C. WHAT To Do **Now** To Prepare For The Judgment Seat Of Christ
 1. We mustn't prejudge others or ourselves by our **own** criteria; we are inadequate judges to do so, 1 Co. 4:3-5. Rather, examine our lives in light of **Scripture** and **repent** if convicted by **God**, 1 Jn. 1:8-10!
 2. Then, depend on the Spirit's enabling (Gal. 5:16-23) to (a) obey Scripture (1 Jn. 2:3-6), (b) using our spiritual gift to serve God (Ro. 12:1-8) in (c) the way He wants it done (2 Tim. 2:5) (d) by maximizing our abilities and time to the fullest for Christ's glory (Parables of the Pounds and Talents respectively)!
 3. Knowing we are accountable to God, we press forward earnestly to obey Him, 2 Cor. 5:10-11. This includes letting go of past failures while using their valuable lessons learned for the future, Phil. 3:13-14.

Lesson: The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a purgatory for believers. Rather, it is an awards assembly where only what has been done in godliness will survive God's critical evaluation. Knowing that we will give an account to God, we should press ever forward to do the will of God!