

Lesson 16: The Judgment Seat of Christ

“Is There a Judgement Day for Christians and What Will I be Accountable for?”

The Christian life is a series of paradoxical truths. The Bible says God’s ways are not our ways, because man looks on outward physical matters, while God looks at the heart attitude and operates in the spiritual realm. If you are going to serve God effectively, you must take your focus off of physical matters and concentrate on the spiritual. Your life will only make sense and have purpose and meaning as you live in the spiritual realm, focused on eternal matters.

This lesson is designed to keep you focus on these eternal matters by detailing your final accountability to the Lord Jesus Christ as His servant.

I. What is the “Judgment Seat of Christ?”

- A. God will judge every human being who has ever lived.

Proverbs 29:26 Many seek the ruler's favour; but every man's judgment cometh from the LORD.

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

- B. By placing your faith in Jesus Christ, you do not have to fear judgment of your sins because He took your judgment upon Himself at Calvary.

I Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

II 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.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

- C. Your Judgment will be for your service to the Lord Jesus Christ after you salvation. This event is called the “Judgment Seat of Christ.”

II 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.

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.

II. What will I be judged for at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

- A. You will be judged for your work as a servant of Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 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. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

- B. Your work will be judged for the MOTIVE behind it and the quality as opposed to the quantity.

1. “of what sort (what kind) it is.”

I Corinthians 3:13 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.

2. Heart attitudes will be more important than actual works. If the proper attitudes are developed, the proper works will come naturally.

I Thessalonians 2:4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Ephesians 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

III. What are the negative consequences of this judgment?

- A. Some Christians will be found:

1. Suffering loss because their works were temporal and not eternal.

I Corinthians 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

2. Losing rewards because they lived in sin rather than for Jesus Christ.

II 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.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

B. Remember that appearances are many times very deceiving.

1. Don't be fooled by outward appearances, in your own life as well as the lives of others. Many people only APPEAR to be servants of the Lord.

Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

I Corinthians 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

2. Be sure to invest in heavenly rewards instead of earthly rewards. The real servants of the Lord will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Matthew 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

IV. What rewards are obtainable?

The rewards obtainable at the Judgment Seat of Christ can be seen by studying the five crowns in the New Testament:

- A. Crown of Righteousness – II Timothy 4:8 – given to those who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The Bible closes with “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Revelation 22:20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

2. Your overriding desire should be at all times, to be with the Lord

Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

B. Crown of Life – Revelation 2:10 – The martyr’s crown.

1. Also seen in James 1:12 as given to those who endure temptation.
2. This is the same as the martyr’s crown because you overcome temptation by dying to self.

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C. Incorruptible Crown – I Corinthians 9:25 – given for temperance or moderation.

1. The context of I Corinthians 9:18-27 deals with temperance or moderation in all matters (physical, spiritual and mental) to be a testimony to others.
2. This is balanced by remembering that some have infirmities for the purpose of glorifying God. Paul is a great example.

II Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in

persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

D. Crown of Rejoicing – I Thessalonians 2:19 – The soul winner's crown.

1. Given to those who win people to Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.

2. Called the crown of rejoicing because it produces rejoicing in heaven when someone gets saved.

Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

E. Crown of Glory – I Peter 5:4 – the shepherd's crown. Given to those who pastor or shepherd people in the Word of God.

1. The New Testament is very clear that ALL saved people are to be actively teaching someone the Word of God, not just preachers.

Ephesians 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

2. It requires great wisdom that can only be obtained through the Word of God.

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. 8 Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. 9 She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

V. Basic Questions.

A. Why should I be concerned about the Judgement Seat of Christ?

1. The focus of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the most practical doctrines for everyday living in the Bible. Notice in the following verses how many practical character qualities are produced by focusing on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

a. Patience – *James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

II Thessalonians 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

b. Peace – *I Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

c. Joy – *I Thessalonians 2:19 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

d. Holiness – *I Thessalonians 3:13 To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.*

I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

- e. Confidence – *Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

- f. Diligence in Service – *II Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. 5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 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.*

- g. Righteous Living – *Titus 2:11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

- h. Faith even in difficult times – *I Peter 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

2. The rewards you receive on earth are all temporal and will perish. The rewards you receive at the Judgement Seat of Christ are eternal and will never perish.

II Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

II Corinthians 5:4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

3. By constantly focusing on the Judgement Seat of Christ, you will naturally develop a desire to please God rather than men. Developing this attitude is the surest way to handle criticism and opposition.

II Corinthians 5:6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

I Corinthians 7:23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

QUESTIONS

1. What group of people will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ?
2. What will you be judged for at the Judgment Seat of Christ?
 - A.
 - B.
3. There are some things which you should beware of regarding the Judgment Seat of Christ. List them below.
 - A.
 - B.
4. The real servants of Jesus Christ will be revealed and the less sincere will be exposed. What are two principles to remember concerning this? Give a scripture reference or each.
 - A.
 - B.
5. There will be rewards available for those who are found to be faithful in their service to the Lord Jesus Christ. List the five crowns and describe briefly what they are given for.
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.

E.

6. When a Christian focuses his attention on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, he tends to develop some proper character qualities. List them.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

G.

H.

7. What is the difference between the rewards you receive on earth and the ones received at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

8. What is the greatest benefit in your life of constantly focusing on the return of the Lord Jesus Christ?

9. Briefly explain the purpose of this lesson.

NOTE: In many churches today, some popular teachings are:

- God is going to judge Christians for sin.
- Christians will be judged for what they have done, without regard for their motives.
- Our rewards and losses are all received in this life.

From the Bible principles taught in this lesson, you should understand that these teachings are false, and why.