

3. Understanding the Judgments of God

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Subtitle: The Judgment Seat of Christ

- We are currently studying God's Word concerning God's Judgments, to help us understand what will happen in the future (end-times & beyond)
- Many believers tend to lump all the Judgments of God together into one single event & end up quite confused
- Every believer should know about the future Judgments of God & gain greater boldness, confidence & urgency in reaching spiritually lost people

John 5:22–24 (NKJV) *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. 24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*

- 2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us that Jesus Christ became sin for us
- Through His sacrificial death on the cross, He has taken God's judgment & penalty on Himself, so that we can receive His righteousness
- All believers in Jesus Christ are now saved from God's future judgment

Main points of last week's message:

- a. God's Judgment of the world during the Great Tribulation
 - I. The opening of seven Seals by Jesus Christ
 - II. The sounding of the seven Trumpets by seven angels
 - III. The pouring out of seven Bowls of God's wrath by seven angels
- b. God has not appointed His children to wrath (rapture)

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Romans 14:10–12 (NKJV) *But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? **For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.** 11 For it is written: “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” 12 **So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.***

- The Judgment Seat of Christ would be better termed “The Reward Seat of Christ”, since Christ will reward believers for their faithful service in God’s Kingdom “in this life” (while on earth)
- This Reward Seat of Christ will take place in heaven:
 - After the Rapture of the church
 - Before the Second Coming of Christ
 - (in other words, during the seven year Great Tribulation period)
- Since the Judgment Seat of Christ will take place in heaven, only believers will appear at this event
- Vs 10 ... *we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ ...*
- “we” – Ap. Paul was referring to “we, the Christians” (vs. 10 brother)
- “all” – meaning, all Christians will appear at this event
- Vs. 12 ... *each of us shall give an account of himself to God...*

2. Rewards in heaven, Judgment on the earth

Revelation 11:15–18 (NKJV) *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: “We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. 18 The nations were angry, and **Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth.”***

- The 7th trumpet is sounded in the middle of the seven year tribulation
- After it is sounded, 24 elders make five statements:
 - We give thanks to God for using His great power to reign
 - The nations are angry
 - The time of God’s wrath is come (concurrently poured out on earth)
 - The time has come to judge the dead (the righteous dead, saints) & to reward the prophets, saints and all who fear God’s name
 - The time to destroy earth’s destroyers
- Vs. 18. judge – to judge, only with view of giving out rewards
- (Judgment for sin & its penalty has already been laid on Jesus Christ)

2 Corinthians 5:10–11 (NKJV) *For we must all appear before the **judgment seat of Christ**, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

- Judgment Seat – Gr. bema – an elevated tribunal seat where an official would recognise & reward military generals or athletes for their achievements
- The “Judgment Seat of Christ” is different from “The Great White Throne Judgement” (Gr. thronos) where wicked people will be judged for their sins (Rev. 20:11)

3. Salvation is purely by God’s grace – rewards are purely by our works

Ephesians 2:8–10 (NKJV) *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **10.. we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.***

- Salvation is a (free) gift from God. It cannot be earned through anything we do, nor can it be paid for. It can only be received through faith in Jesus Christ & His finished work on the cross
- In contrast, rewards are earned & come to us as a direct result of our faithfulness in serving God
 - Much faithfulness in serving God = much rewards
 - Little faithfulness in serving God = little rewards
 - No faithfulness & no serving God = no rewards

4. Each one will receive his own Reward according to his own Labor

1 Corinthians 3:5–8 (NKJV) *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? **6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.** **7** So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. **8** Now **he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.***

- Ap. Paul spoke about his & Appolos’ work in serving the Lord
- Vs. 8. each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor

5. Every believer’s work will be tested / judged & revealed by fire

1 Corinthians 3:9–15 (NKJV) *For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, you are God’s building. **10** According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder **I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.** **11** For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus*

*Christ. 12 Now **if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,** 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

- First of all – Vs. 15 says:...he himself will be saved (Salvation is by grace!)
- (Again) this is not a judgement to determine who is saved and who isn't
- Neither is this judgment about handing our sentences or punishment
- Remember, all sin and it's penalty has already been laid on Jesus Christ
- The judgment seat of Christ is all about determining the quality & quantity of our "works" (our labour of love, our faithfulness to God)
- Gold, silver & precious stones (Figurative terms for "durable materials")
- Wood, hay & straw ("non-durable / combustible materials")
- It will be revealed by fire, to test "what sort" our works are
- Best case scenario – lots of rewards
- Worst case scenario – loss of rewards (suffer loss)

1 John 2:28 (NKJV) *And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

- Lets do our utmost in serving God, because, a day of accounting is coming

Revelation 14:13 (NKJV) *Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: '**Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.**' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "**that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.**"*

- When we arrive in heaven, our "works" follow us

6. Jesus explains rewards through the Parables of the Talents / Minas

- Our rewards will be **announced** in heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and largely **rolled out** at the beginning of the Millennial (1,000 Year) Reign of Christ
- Our rewards will be enjoyed throughout eternity