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Jesus Christ Second Coming – Lesson 18

Tribulation 12

Judgement seat of Christ

The Judgment Seat (Bema) of Christ

The New Testament has many judgements but one of prominent doctrines is the Doctrine of Rewards or known as Judgement Seat of Christ.

Unfortunately, its often referred as judgement so it brings kind of negative vibes to the hearer.

Subjects: Believers Only

2 Corinthians 5:10, *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.*

Time: At the rapture.

Place: In heaven after the rapture.

Romans 14:10, *Butt 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**.*

Result: To the believer - rewards or loss of rewards - but he himself shall be saved.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15, *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each 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. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

Apostle Paul was motivated by the fact of rewards at the return of the Lord for the church, which he mentions in every chapter in this epistle and becomes the primary subject of 2 Thessalonians. The Lord's return is to us a very prominent subject of the New Testament.

Salvation is a gift we can't earn it but there are rewards given for faithfulness in the Christian life. Loss of rewards for unfaithfulness in Christian walk.

Rewards become one of the great motives of the Christian's life. But we need to understand the nature of these rewards to understand the nature of the motivation. Some people are troubled by the doctrine of rewards because this seems to suggest "merit" instead of "grace," and because, it is pointed out, we should only serve the Lord out of love and for God's glory.

Word **Judgement** seat of Christ.

Both Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:9 speak of the "judgment seat."

This a translation of one Greek word, the word '**bema**'. While bema is used in the gospels and Acts, as "*the raised platform where a Roman magistrate or ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence*" (Matthew 27:19; John 19:13). Paul uses this word as allusions to the Greek athletic contests.

This word was taken from 'Isthmian games' where the contestants would compete for the prize under the scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every rule of the contest was obeyed (2 Timothy 2:5).

The one who wins the event who participated according to the rules was led by the judge to the platform called the Bema. There the winner is crowned with an olive or

oak wreath was placed on his head as a symbol of victory (1 Corinthians 9:24-25). Remember we did watch the Olympic games which was held in Athens, Greece in 2004.

Paul was picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual context. As the victorious Grecian athlete appeared before the Bema to receive his perishable award, so the Christian will appear before Christ's Bema to receive his imperishable award.

The judge at the Bema bestowed rewards to all those finish the race. Here in Christianity everybody is a winner, there are no losers at all.

Where is 'bema'?

John 14:3, And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Jesus said He is coming back and take us to Father's House.

So, the 'bema' for us is in Heaven.

Who is the Judge?

Judge is our Lord Jesus Christ, we meet Him half way in the sky and then we go over to be with Him, always.

1 Thessalonians 4:17, *Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.*

All the judgment has been given to Jesus.

John 5:22, *For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,*

The rewards are with Him.

Revelation 22:12, *“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

There is not going to be classes in reward system. Like all those who have scored above 60% marks stand at the right etc. But every one of us are going to receive our rewards personally.

Who will be there?

We all will be there. The word "we" is used 26 times in this chapter, and always refers to believers. Further, since no one at this judgment goes to hell, it has to be for believers only, 1 Corinthians 3:14-15; Galatians 6:8; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:24.

2 Corinthians 5:5-9, ⁵*Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.* ⁶*So we are always confident, knowing that while 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, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.* ⁹*Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*

V5, only a believer can say

V7, only a believer in Christ walk by faith.

Purpose of this Judgement

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

Every believer is going to give account of himself to God. God knows everything and the humankind better than humankind know themselves. And God knows that we respond to motivation and one of the greatest factors in motivation is the factor of authority and accountability.

As we all drive around in cars. When you drive closer to speed camera how do you drive but then when you don't see a speed camera how do you drive?

Judgment seat of Christ every one of us, no exception, to give account of himself to God.

This modern-day grace preaching gives a false hope of that we can be very free and easy about this accountability. But someday we are going to stand face to face with Jesus Christ and we are going to have to talk about the issue of our life.

I don't know how we got this story of Apostle Peter is standing at the gate to look at your name in a register and letting you inside the pearly gate. Which is absolute nonsense.

This judgement is not deciding whether you are going into heaven or not rather it's for your rewards.

Say if you have come to this judgement seat that means you have already been raptured, translated and glorified. If you are already raptured, translated and glorified then what else is there for you to do to get into heaven?

Romans 8:30, *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

God called you then justified you then only He has glorified you. So, if you are already glorified means then you don't need to worry about getting into heaven you are already in heaven at that time.

View in the Christian circle thinking that God is going to punish believers for ***all the sins they did after they were saved.***

When Jesus died on the cross every sin was in the future anyway, every one of mine, all are paid fully on the cross on Calvary. There is nothing more to pay. If you still think that some more need to be paid then you are only mocking the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no way that any sin in the life of a Christian is unforgiven.

Hebrews 8:12, *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

Colossians 2:12, *buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

Ephesians 1:7, *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace*

According to His riches, not according to us...

1 John 2:12, *I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.*

Isaiah 38:17, *Indeed it was for my own peace That I had great bitterness; But You have lovingly delivered my soul from the pit of corruption, For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.*

King Hezekiah after his sin was forgiven and his life was extended for 15 years he sings to the Lord.

Saying God had put the sins of us behind His back. The Hebrew word literal translation is that it's in between the shoulder blades. One place in a man's body he can't see

is the centre of his shoulder blade. What a wonderful symbolism God had shown.

Romans 8:1, *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus*

Romans 8:33-34,³³ *Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.* ³⁴ *Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.*

What a glorious promise from our Lord.

Another view that ***God will punish you for all the unconfessed sins.***

If you didn't confess it doesn't get forgiven, do you think this way?

I have preached many times forgiveness of sin has nothing to do with confession in the life of a Christian. Confession is for fellowship not for forgiveness.

When you are saved all your sins are forgiven. When you confess them you merely maintain the pure fellowship with the Father.

You could sin and have in your life and not confessed it and it does not violate your salvation. But do you know what it does?

It spoils your pure fellowship with the Father. Unconfessed sin is an issue of fellowship. Confession is only for fellowship.

1 John 1:9, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

From 1 Joh chapter 1 we can see these three principles of our fellowship with God very clearly,

- it's eternal,
- we always walk in the light and
- the blood of Christ always cleanses all our sin.

Rewards:

1. The Promise of Crowns.

This promise of crown is as a symbol of victory, authority, and responsibility.

a) **'Stephanos':**

This was the **victor's crown**, the wreath given to the victorious athlete before the judge at the Bema. It is the word used of the crowns promised to **believers for faithfulness in the Christian life**.

b) **'Diadem':**

This was **the royal crown**, the crown of a king. It is used of the seven diadems of the Beast in Revelation 12:3 and 13:1. But Christ is the King of Kings, this word is also used of the many diadems the Lord will wear at His return (Revelation 19:12).

c) **The Incorruptible Crown:** 1 Corinthians 9:25.

This describes all the crowns. It is also a special crown given for faithfulness in running the race and exercising self-control in order to serve the Lord and finish the race.

d) **The Crown of Triumph or Rejoicing** 1 Thessalonians 2:19; Phillipian 4:1.

This crown is a **reward given for witnessing**, follow-up, and ministry to others. In one sense, the Thessalonians will be Paul's crown, and the effect at the Bema and throughout eternity will be rejoicing or triumph over their presence in heaven.

- e) **The Crown of Life** James 1:12; Revelation 2:10
This crown is given for **enduring trials and temptation**. The crown is not eternal life which is a gift through faith alone in Christ alone but a reward for enduring trials and overcoming temptation.
- f) **The Crown of Righteousness** 2 Timothy 4:8.
This crown is a reward given for **faithfulness to use our gifts and opportunities** in the service of the Lord and for loving His appearing. Note that these two things go together. To love His appearing is to live in the light of it.
- g) **The Crown of Glory** 1 Peter 5:4
This crown is a reward promised to **Elders for faithfulness** in the discharge of their responsibilities in shepherding the people.

The Casting of Crowns

Revelation 4:10-11, *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ¹¹“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”*

Because Christ alone is worthy and because we can only be fruitful when we abide in Him. Allowing His life to fill ours and we will all cast our crowns before Him in recognition that all we have done is by His grace alone!

2. The Promise of Heavenly Treasure

Stresses their eternal value and security.

Matthew 6:20, *but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.*

1 Peter 1:4, *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

3. The Promise of Tributes or Commendations.

This is praised by our Lord Himself when we stand before Him saying “*well done good and faithful*” Greatest achievement one can have when the Lord appreciate your faithfulness in being a good steward of what He had entrusted you with. Matthew 25:21; Luke 19:17

4. The Promises to Overcomers.

Revelation 2:7, ⁷ *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him **who overcomes** I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”*

Revelation 2:11, ¹¹ *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He **who overcomes** shall not be hurt by the second death.”*

Revelation 2:17, ¹⁷ *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him **who overcomes** I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”*

Revelation 2:26, ²⁶ *And he **who overcomes**, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.*

These could refer to special blessing of rewards to those believers who overcomer special trials and tests rather than a general promise to all believers.

Our rewards seem to primarily be a matter of responsibility and maybe opportunities, but they will not be like badges or medals we wear as in the military.

Remember that all of our crowns will be cast at the feet of Christ, for only He is worthy. Revelation 4:10-11.

Also, Matthew 25:21- 23 and Luke 19:17-19 show us our rewards consist of authority over either many things or many cities. They may include galaxies of the universe. All believers will live in the millennium and in eternity with the Lord. Some will reign with Him, but, because of loss of rewards, evidently some will not.

A word of Caution:

1 Corinthians 3:14-15, *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.*

There are the two things.

1. There's the promise that awaits,
2. There is a warning that some may lose their rewards.

You may not be going to receive the full reward that you could have received.

Why?

Because you haven't lived the kind of life you should have lived. You haven't set your priorities right and lived them.

2 John 8, *Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.*

We can understand from the above that there are things that you do either you can earn or you may not receive full rewards.

Apostle Paul had the same fear that there are things that I do please God but then I may lose or forfeit my crown because of some sin in my life.

Revelation 3:11, *Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.*

what? "Take your crown."

Paul said in **Colossians 2:18**, *"Don't let anybody rob you of your prize."*

With some people it's going to be a day of shame.

How do we know that?

1 John 2:28, *"Little children, abide in Him that when He shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."*

We know it's possible that a Christian is going to be at that judgment seat and deep in his heart there's going to be a loss.

The Bible clearly says, "suffer loss." And the Bible does indicate the possibility of shame.

There will be some works very definitely worthless. I don't know about you but I want my life to count in that day and then I want the joy of giving those crowns to Jesus Christ who makes it all possible.

So my beloved, I am excited to live this Christian life... eagerly looking forward to stand before Him in the Judgement seat of Christ to hear Him say "well done good and faithful" and handing me many crowns to me. And to lay them down at His feet and worship and live in His glory for eternity!!