

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:10

Introduction

There have been several requests for the pastor to furnish a scriptural outline for the basis of his sermon on the judgment seat of Christ. Feeling that perhaps many would like to study this matter more thoroughly in their own homes and on their knees, the pastor furnishes the Bible study herewith. Scripture lists seven distinct and separate judgments:

Message

1. The judgment of the believer's sins (John 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).

The Christian has already gone through this judgment in the person of his crucified Savior when He died 1900 years ago. As Jesus said, "He that ... believeth ... shall not come into condemnation [the judgment of death; see Revelation 20:12–15]; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

2. The believer's self-judgment (1 Corinthians 11:31; 1 John 1:9).

This is for sins committed since salvation.

Time of this judgment: during our earthly life.

Place: in our hearts (1 John 3:19–22).

The Christian should be undergoing this judgment daily during the entire span of his earthly life. He examines his own heart, confesses his sins to his great Advocate and High Priest, and gets forgiveness and ever-present cleansing. (Study carefully 2 Samuel 7:14,15 and 12:13,14 and compare with 1 Corinthians 11:30–32.)

3. The judgment of believers for their work (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11–15).

Time: immediately after the Rapture (Matthew 16:27; Luke 14:14; Revelation 22:12).

Place: heaven, before the judgment seat of Christ.

This is not the judgment before the great white throne described in Revelation 20:12. It is the judgment of the saved, not the judgment of the unsaved, and takes place before the bema or judgment seat of Christ.

If you carefully study Revelation 19:7, you will discover that the marriage of the Bride to the Bridegroom (the Church to Christ) takes place not immediately after the rapture of the Church but just before the revelation of Jesus Christ; that is, the time when He comes forth in full revelation to rule over the earth. If we interpret the Scriptures correctly, this is 7 years after the actual Rapture.

During this 7-year period the Church, the Body, the Bride (all three terms mean one and the same) will be judged for the individual deeds done by her members; the members shall be assigned their reward or loss of reward, and shall be appointed to their permanent setting and office work which they shall be doing for God throughout eternity.

4. The judgment of Israel for their national disobedience (Jeremiah 30:7,11; Ezekiel 20:37,38).

Time: during the Great Tribulation.

Place: on earth, principally Palestine.

The Jews, God's earthly people, shall be judged on earth while the Church, God's heavenly people, is being judged in the heavens.

5. The judgment of the nations (Matthew 25:31,32).

Time: at the end of the Great Tribulation.

Place: on earth. Compare Matthew 25:31,32 and Joel 3:2.

6. The judgment of the rebellious angels, including Satan (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:10).

Time: a thousand years after the judgment of Christian believers (Revelation 20:7).

Place: in the heavens before God's great, white throne.

Note: Believers will assist Jesus Christ in judging the rebellious angels (number 6) and in judging the nations (number 5). (Compare 1 Corinthians 6:2,3.)

7. The judgment of the unsaved (Revelation 20:12–15).

Time: a thousand years after the judgment of believers (number 3). (Compare Revelation 20:5,6.)

Place: the great white throne in the heavens.

Referring back now to judgment number 3, notice that the Christian believer will be judged for:

1. His words (Matthew 12:35,36).
2. His obedience to the revealed will of God (Matthew 7:21).
3. His honesty in serving his earthly employers (Ephesians 6:5–9).
4. His honesty as an employer toward his employees.
5. "Whatsoever" he does (Colossians 3:23,24).

6. All his work (Revelation 22:12).
7. His faithfulness as a soul winner (Ezekiel 3:17–21).
8. His stewardship (Luke 19:11–26; Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 12:42–48).

That there will be discipline and suffering at this judgment seat for Christian believers is indicated by the following verses of Scripture:

Luke 12:47—“Beaten with many stripes.” Notice this is the very same steward who in verse 42 is a candidate for rulership through faithful service.

Matthew 25:30—“Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.” Sinners or the unsaved are not meant here, for such never were called servants and stewards.

1 Corinthians 3:15—“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss.” Some Christians would like to interpret this verse to mean their works shall be judged and burned if they are unprofitable, but they shall not suffer personally. But the Scripture says our work shall be burned and we “shall suffer.” Suffer loss. Suffer many stripes. Suffer weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Suffer disciplinary correction.

2 Corinthians 5:11—“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord.” There will be terror at that judgment seat for unfaithful service; hence the gnashing of teeth in terror. Remember our God is a consuming fire. A surgeon cannot cut the unprofitable tumor away from a sick one without inflicting suffering upon the patient while he destroys the disease. When God burns away from us in that day our worldly excrescences and unprofitable works which are a part of us, we will suffer, though we shall be saved so as by fire.

Colossians 3:25—“He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done.”

There will also be blessed rewards given in that day. If we are faithful to our Lord, we shall be appointed:

To judge (1 Corinthians 6:2,3).

To rule (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10).

To sit with Jesus in His throne (Revelation 3:21).

Remember His words of warning and of promise: “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

J. Roswell Flower