

Eternal Rewards

Hebrews 6:1-2 – “elementary doctrine of Christ”

Matthew 5:12 – “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.”

1 Corinthians 3:8 – “Each will receive his wages according to his labor.”

Majority of Paul’s reference to judgment are to believers. The minority of refer to non-believers.

Unbelievers’ judgment and punishment:

- Loss of worthwhile existence described as separated from God (spiritual)
- Actual mental and physical punishment (soul and body)

Believers’ judgment and reward:

- No wrath as in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 -
“**For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,**”
- No condemnation as in Romans 8:1 -
“**There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**”
- Justification by faith, not by works. This is by Grace
 - There is no danger of losing justification since this would be based in works, not grace.
- Judgment Seat of Christ to receive what is due us:
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10 – “**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.**”
 - Romans 14:10 – “**For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.**”
 - Romans 14:12 – “**Each of us will give an account of himself to God.**”
 - There will be degrees of rewards

Do Rewards Exist?

- Some question the existence of rewards for the believer.
- Some feel it is selfish or materialistic to work for or expect rewards.
- Do rewards mean some people will have them and others will not?
- Do rewards set levels or graduations in heaven where one believer will outrank another?
- Are there qualities to eternal life?
- Can someone have a better standing and position in eternity?
- Isn’t the kingdom of God all about equality?
- Isn’t heaven supposed to be perfect?
If someone else has something I want, won’t I be miserable.
- If I don’t get any rewards I will feel like a second-rate believer for all of eternity?
- What are the rewards?
- How do I get rewards?
- How do rewards compare with grace?
- Aren’t rewards simply a way of God, or men, bribing us to do good?
- Are not all our righteous deeds being like filthy rags before God?
- Some people consider it humble not to seek rewards from God.
- There are differing thoughts about judgment and reward after death:
 - Is it true believers will never be judged by God?
 - Is it true we will be judged after death for our sins and properly punished?

The Foundational Principles

Rewards are available to the believer from God as recognition of that believer's faithfulness in service to the Lord.

Points To Consider:

1. The believer who has been saved for many years and lives a faithful life will have more opportunity to build up rewards in heaven than one who was saved at the last minute or one who was saved early but never walked in obedience.
2. Rewards are not given out when you die but after the rapture at the reward seat of Christ. The reason for this is that a person's work is not completed at their death. The apostle Paul is dead but his rewards are still building as his work in the earth continues through his writings and the deposit he made here. The same as Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary. He has passed on into eternity but the work he established, the people he influenced, and the books that he wrote are still being used in the church today.
3. It is possible to spend your life thinking you are serving the Lord but to get no rewards.
 - a. 1 Cor.3:14-15 – **"If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."**
 - b. 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 – **"Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."**
4. Receiving rewards is based on actions, attitude and Truth:
 - a. Pure or sincere motivation.
 - i. To do the right thing for the wrong reason is zero
 - b. Serving God in the truth
 - i. To be sincere and pure in motives but to do the wrong thing is a zero.
 - ii. Rewards are a matter of the heart AND the head.
 - c. Rewards are based on knowledge of God's will and a heart committed to that will.

The Issue of Salvation vs Rewards

1. Obtaining salvation and obtaining rewards are two different avenues.
 - a. The believer will go through judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor.5:10), but this will not be a judgment for sin.
2 Corinthians 5:10 – **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."**

3588 [e]	1063 [e]	3956 [e]	1473 [e]	5319 [e]	1163 [e]	1715 [e]	3588 [e]	968 [e]	3588 [e]	5547 [e]	2443 [e]	2865 [e]	1538 [e]
tous	gar	pantas	hēmas	phanerōthēnai	dei	emprosthen	tou	bēmatos	tou	Christou	hina	komisētai	hekastos
10 τοὺς	γὰρ	πάντας	ἡμᾶς	φανερωθῆναι	δεῖ	ἔμπροσθεν	τοῦ	βήματος	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ	ἵνα	κομίσηται	ἕκαστος
-	indeed	all	we	be revealed	must	before	the	judgment seat	-	of Christ	that	might receive	each
Art-AMP	Conj	Adj-AMP	PPro-A1P	V-ANP	V-PIA-3S	Prep	Art-GNS	N-GNS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Conj	V-ASM-3S	Adj-NMS

"make manifest, show",
"make visible", "illumine"

βῆμα = Bema /BAY-mah/ - a platform to which someone walked up to receive judgment; (fig.) the administration of justice; (literal) "a tribunal chair" or "throne" where rewards/punishment are handed out.

3588 [e]	1223 [e]	3588 [e]	4983 [e]	4314 [e]	3739 [e]	4238 [e]	1535 [e]	18 [e]	1535 [e]	5337 [e]	φᾱῦλος = <i>phaulos</i> /FOW-los/
ta	dia	tou	sōmatos	pros	ha	epraxen	eite	agathon	eite	phaulon	- "mediocre, worthless, ordinary, inadequate, bad"
τὰ	διὰ	τοῦ	σώματος	πρὸς	ἃ	ἔπραξεν	εἴτε	ἀγαθὸν	εἴτε	φᾱῦλον	- This is not the word: - κακός (<i>kakos</i>) = bad, evil - πονηρός (<i>ponēros</i>) = toilsome, bad, evil, degeneracy
the things [done]	through	the	body	according to	what	he did	whether	good	or	evil	
Art-ANP	Prep	Art-GNS	N-GNS	Prep	RelPro-ANP	V-AIA-3S	Conj	Adj-ANS	Conj	Adj-ANS	

b. This is stated in:

- i. John 3:18 - "**Whoever believes is not condemned.**"
- ii. John 5:24 - "**I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.**"
- iii. John 6:37- "**All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.**"
- iv. Romans 5:1 - "**Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**"
- v. Romans 8:1 - "**Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**"
- vi. 1 Corinthians 11:32 - "**When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.**"

c. The judgment seat of Christ of deals entirely with service and has nothing to do with sin. Jesus has paid for our sins on the cross.

- i. 1 Peter 2:24 - "**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree.**"

2. Discerning Between Salvation and Rewards

a. If you are alert it is easy to distinguish between verses teaching about salvation and verses discussing rewards for works after salvation.

- i. Salvation is described in the scripture as a free gift:

1. John 4:10, "**If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.**"
2. Romans 6:23, ". . . the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus. . ."
3. Ephesians 2:8, 9 – "**For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**"

- ii. Rewards are earned by works:

1. Matthew 10:42, "**And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.**"
2. 1 Corinthians 9:24,25, "**Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize. Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training.**"

They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.”

3. 2 Timothy 4:7, 8 – **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”**
 4. Revelation 2:10 – **“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**
 5. Revelation 22:12 – **“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.”**
 6. Luke 19:17 – **“And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ ”**
- iii. Salvation is a present possession now in time:
1. Luke 7:50 - **“Your faith has saved you, go in peace.”**
 2. John 3:36 - **“Whoever believes in the Son of God has eternal life.”**
 3. John 5:24 – **“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”**
 4. John 6:47
- iv. Rewards are possessed in the future, given at Lord returns.
1. Matthew 16:27, **“For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”**
 2. 2 Timothy 4:7-8 – **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.”**
 3. Revelation 22:12 – **“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.”**
- v. Salvation cannot be lost.
- vi. Rewards can be lost.
1. 1 Corinthians 9:27, **“No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”**
 - a. “disqualified” is the word “*adokimos*”.
 - i. You may remember the word “*dokimos*” or “*dokimozo*” from James 1.
 - ii. It means to test to approve as one tests metal in a fire.

- iii. The prefix “a-” in the Greek means the opposite or “anti-”.
 - iv. To be “*adokimos*” is to be the opposite of one approved or accepted after the testing.
 - v. “*adokimos*” means to be rejected after the testing.
2. Revelation 3:11, “**I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take you crown.**”
 3. 2 John 8 – “**Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward.**”
 - a. They should have received more rewards but error caused them to lose much of what they had worked for.
- vii. Salvation: God offers the lost salvation through faith in Christ.
 - viii. Rewards: God offers the believer rewards for faithful service.

False Teachings

You can see the confusion in doctrine and life application if any of the above four get turned around by confusing salvation and rewards.

- Salvation is worked for and rewards in heaven are distributed equally.
- We get rewards on earth and our salvation is only obtained in eternity.
- We can lose our salvation that we worked for.
- Rewards can't be lost since God would never give rewards to us for our works.
- God offers salvation to the faithful believer.

The Protestant Problem

The Protestant Reformation in the 1500's resulted in a rebellion against the Roman Catholic church. The Protestants emphasized salvation by faith in Christ. Rightly so.

This doctrine has been stressed and still needs to be stressed since many still do not understand that salvation is not achieved by works of man.

As always the pendulum swings to the extreme before it heads back to the middle.

In this case the focus on works and the rewards that come with it resulted in them being ignored.

When a truth is ignored, ignorance occurs.

Where there is ignorance people's lives are destroyed in that area. (Hosea 4:6)

Hosea 4:6 – “**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me.**”

Services That Result in Rewards

1. Persevering under trial (James 1:12)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

– James 1:12

2. Diligently seeking God (Hebrews 11:6)
“Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.” – Hebrews 11:6
3. Martyrdom (Rev. 2:10)
“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” – Revelation 2:10
4. Faithfully doing God’s will (2 Timothy 4:7-8)
“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.” – 2 Timothy 4:7-8
5. Looking forward to Christ’s return (2 Timothy 4:8, see above verse)
6. Faithfully serving as a Pastor (1 Peter 5:2-4)
“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.” – 1 Peter:2-4
7. Leading people to a saving faith in Christ (1 Thes. 2:19-20)
“For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.” – 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20
8. Faithful stewardship (1 Cor. 4:1-5)
“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” – 1 Corinthians 4:1-5
9. Acts of kindness (Gal. 6:10)
“Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.” – Galatians 6:10
10. Hospitality (Matt. 10:40-42)
“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” – Matthew 10:40-42

A Study of Good Works

Men have a sin nature and produce sin.

All their works (from that sin nature) are filthy rags.

Isaiah 64:6 – **“We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”**

The saved man receives:

1. A new nature
2. A plan from God
3. The Holy Spirit
4. Good works to do

When the saved man walks in the Spirit he will be led into the plan God has for him.

During his life he will come across and be led into the “good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ep. 2:10)

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” – Ephesians 2:10

That man will execute those good works from the new nature he received at the point of salvation.

This born-again man, who is walking in obedience, will receive rewards from God for having done the things God created him and re-created him, to do.

Only a born-again man can achieve these rewards.

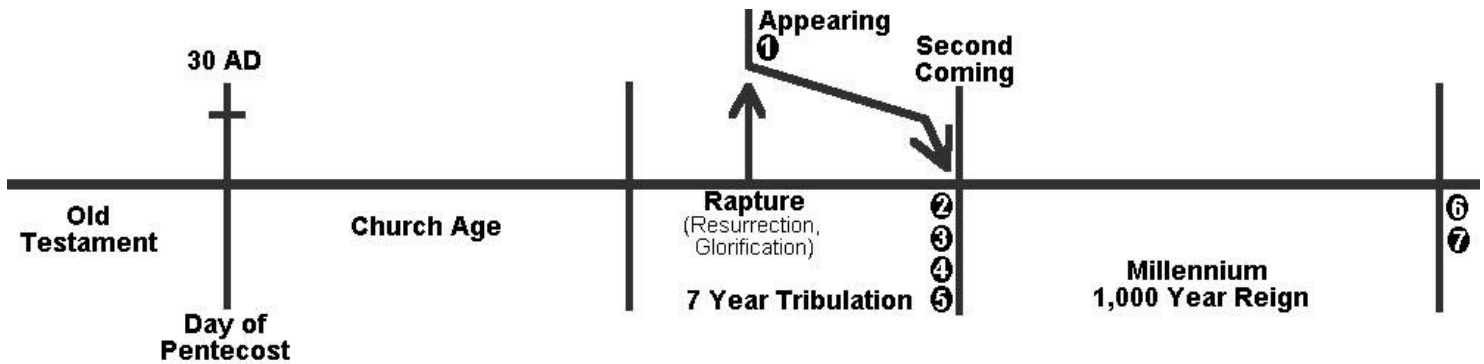
Only the good deeds done by the power of the Spirit will be rewarded.

If the “good works” have been prepared in eternity then the rewards have also been prepared.

Eschatology of Rewards

Numbered on the timeline below are:

1. Judgment of believers in the Church Age – “*Bema*” seat judgment
2. Judgment of Old Testament Saints
3. Judgment of Saints from the Tribulation Period
4. Judgment of Jewish survivors from the Tribulation
5. Judgment of Gentile Survivors from the Tribulation.
6. Judgment of Satan and fallen angels.
7. Judgment of unsaved (lost) of all time – Great White Throne Judgment



Judgments in Scripture

1. Judgment of believers in the Church Age (“bema” seat)

- a. 1 Cor. 3:10-15 – “According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.”
- b. 2 Cor. 5:10 – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat (Bema) of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”
- c. Romans 14:10-12 – “Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.”
- d. 1 Cor. 4:1-5 – “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.
- e. 1 Cor. 9:24-27 – “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an

imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, **lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.**”

- f. 1Thes. 2:19-20 – “For what is **our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming?** Is it not you? For you are our glory and joy.”
- g. 2 Tim. 4:7-8 – “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth **there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.**”
- h. James 1:12 – “**Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life,** which God has promised to those who love him.”
- i. 1 Peter. 5:4 – “**When the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**”
- j. Rev. 2:10 – “**Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.**”
- k. Rev. 3:11 – “I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize

2. Judgment of Old Testament Saints

- a. Daniel 12:1-3 – “**At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, **like the stars forever and ever.**”

3. Judgment of the Saints of the Tribulation Period

- a. Rev. 20:4-6 – “Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw **the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. **This is the first resurrection.** Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and **they will reign with him for a thousand years.**”

4. Judgment of Jewish survivors of the Tribulation

- a. Ezekiel 20:34-38 – “I will bring you **out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered,** with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples,

and there I will enter into judgment with you face to face. As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you, declares the Lord God. I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge out the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against me. I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”

- b. Matthew 25:1-30 – (full chapter = “ten virgins”, “talents”, “final judgment”).
25:31-32 – “**When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations...**”
- c. (Lev. 27:32— example of passing under the rod or the herdsman’s staff)

5. Judgment of Gentile Survivors of the Tribulation

- a. Matthew 25:31-46 – “**When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.... 41 ‘Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.... 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.’**”
- b. Joel 3:1-3 – “**For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land, and have cast lots for my people, and have traded a boy for a prostitute, and have sold a girl for wine and have drunk it...**
Joel 3:7 – “**Behold, I will stir them up from the place to which you have sold them, and I will return your payment on your own head....**
Joel 3:10-12 – “**Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, “I am a warrior.”**
Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations, and gather yourselves there. Bring down your warriors, O Lord.
Let the nations stir themselves up and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations...
Joel 3:13-16 – “**Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Go in, tread, for the winepress is full. The vats overflow, for their evil is great.**
Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision!

For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

The sun and the moon are darkened, and the stars withdraw their shining.

The Lord roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the Lord is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.”

6. Judgment of Satan and fallen angels

- a. Matthew 25:31-46 – “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left... 41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ 45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
- b. Revelation 20:7-10 – “And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle... the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”
- c. Jude 6-7 – “The angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.”

7. Judgment of unsaved (lost) of all time (Great White Throne Judgment)

- a. Rev. 20:11-15 – “Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the

second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

- b. John 5:28-29 – **“Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”**

Time of Judgment for Church Age

Rewards are given when Jesus returns for his church.

“Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.” - 1 Corinthians 4:5

“Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”
- 2 Timothy 4:8

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done.” - Revelation 22:12

“Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”
- Luke 14:14

“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life—in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor for nothing.” - Philippians 2:15,16

“For what is our hope, I our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?” - 1 Thessalonians 2:19

Romans 14:10-12

“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or, why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat. It is written: ‘As surely as I live’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’ So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.” – Romans 14:10-12

The context is the brother of weak-faith who condemns the brother who is not legalistic (“**judge your brother**”). This is followed by the brother of stronger-faith who condemns and looks down on the pathetic doctrine of the weak-faith believer. (“**look down on your brother**”)

We do not need to hand out the judgment and rewards because God will take care of it.
 The point is it is wrong to assume for ourselves the task of evaluating each other's work.
 It is a sin of taking Christ's position for yourself.
 There is great freedom in this to live and let live.
 You are occupied with the knowledge that the judge from eternity is observing you and preparing his verdict.
 Are you preoccupied with preparing a pre-season evaluation of others?

Manuscript note on the Greek text:

“**God’s**” judgment seat is found in many manuscripts and is believed to be original. Many other manuscripts have “**Christ’s**” judgment seat in the Greek text.

This appears to have been brought over from 2 Corinthians 5:10.

“**God’s**” appears to be the correct translation.

Even the theology of God’s judgment teaches that it has been handed to the Son and will be executed by Christ as stated in John 5:22-29:

“For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him... Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.”

Romans 14:10 - “**stand before**” is “*paristami*” and means “to place beside, to stand beside.”

A technical meaning is to stand before a judge as in Acts 27:24:

Acts 27:24 -

3004 [e]	3361 [e]	5399 [e]	3972 [e]	2541 [e]	4771 [e]	1163 [e]	3936 [e]	2532 [e]	3708 [e]
legōn	Mē	phobou	Paule	Kaisari	se	dei	parastēnai	kai	idou
24 λέγων ,	Μή	φοβοῦ ,	Παῦλε ;	Καίσαρί	σε	δεῖ	παραστήναι .	καί	ἰδοῦ ,
saying	not	Fear	Paul	Ceasar	you	it behoves	to stand before	and	Behold
V-PPA-NMS	Adv	V-PMM/P-2S	N-VMS	N-DMS	PPro-A2S	V-PIA-3S	V-ANA	Conj	V-AMA-2S

παρίστημι /pā-rē'-stā-mē/ "*paristēmi*"

5483 [e]	4771 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	3956 [e]	3588 [e]	4126 [e]	3326 [e]	4771 [e]	- para = "beside, before"	- histēmi = "to stand"
kecharistai	soi	ho	Theos	pantas	tous	pleontas	meta	sou	meaning "to stand beside",	
κεχάρισταιί	σοι .	ὁ	Θεός ,	πάντας	τούς	πλέοντας	μετά	σοῦ .	"to exhibit",	
has granted	to you	-	God	all	those	sailing	with	you	"to appear before",	
V-RIM/P-3S	PPro-D2S	Art-NMS	N-NMS	Adj-AMP	Art-AMP	V-PPA-AMP	Prep	PPro-G2S	"to present by argument"	

Romans 14:10 - “**judgment seat**” is “*bema*” and refers to a raised place that is mounted by steps or a platform. It is the technical term for the official seat for a judge who is handing down judgments.

This judgment helps put in perspective the seriousness of the Lord's return.

We comfort ourselves in the thought of joy at the Lord's return, but here we are directed to consider that we will be judged at the Lord's return.

Our current lives will be placed beside the manifested glory and holiness of God on that day.

Joy may be the last thing we experience on this occasion.

This judgment is for believers and is not to evaluate them for the category of lost or saved.

Romans 8:1 says, **"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."**

Some extent of loss will occur as stated in 1 Cor. 3:10-15:

"Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

Whatever is not loss will result in reward as stated in 1 Cor. 4:4-5:

"Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God."

Romans 14:12 – "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God."

In context the emphasis is on the fact that on that day we will give an account of OURSELVES.

We will not be held accountable to give an account of or a testimony against our brothers.

Jesus has that under control.

Application:

Today we should be constantly evaluating and judging our own actions, thoughts, and motives.

If this consumed us there would be no time to worry about others.

"Account" is the word "*logos*" which means "word, or a rational expression."

We will not just stand there and duck.

We will be required to speak before the God and judge of the universe.

(The option of speaking through an attorney at this judgment is not said to be available in scripture.)

You will speak to the king on your own behalf.

Matthew 18:23 – **"Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him...the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'**

Matthew 25:14-30 – “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more... And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’...

He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

“By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.” – 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

This passage of scripture is discussing the building of the church and is in reference to the individual teachers and pastors building the church by building into people’s lives.

“**Foundation**” is Jesus Christ.

We build on this foundation which becomes our life’s work.

The context is in reference to the teachers and pastors.

The application can be made to each of our individual lives.

“**Gold, silver and costly stones**” were used to adorn the ancient temples.

These building materials refer to the pure doctrine and the precious word of God.

“**Wood, hay and straw**” were used to build the average person’s residence.

They may be nice but you did not find royalty or the priesthood of the ancient world living in this basic type of building.

“Wood” examples might be:

- Proverbs 30:6 –
“Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.”
- Isaiah 8:20 –
“To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.”
- Jeremiah 23:25-32 –
“I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal? Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who steal my words from one another. Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the Lord, who use their tongues and declare, ‘declares the Lord.’ Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the Lord, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the Lord.”
- Matthew 15:5-9 –
**“You say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, “What you would have gained from me is given to God,” he need not honor his father.’ So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites!
Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:
‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;
in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”**

“The Day” refers to Jesus Christ return.

- 1 Thes. 5:1-11
“Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are

drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

- 2 Thes. 2:1-4

“Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.”

“**Fire**” speaks of judgment. Judgment works to purify and destroy:

1. Fire is a purifying agent as in Zechariah 13:7-9:

“**Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; I will turn my hand against the little ones. In the whole land, declares the Lord, thirds shall be cut off and perish, one third shall be left alive. And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are my people’; and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’”**

2. Fire destroys or consumes as in Jeremiah 23:28-29:

“**Let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat? declares the Lord. Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord.”**

3. Judgment by the Word of God as in John 12:48:

“**The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.”**

Hebrews 4:12-13:

“**For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”**

The winners:

- 1 Peter 1:3-9:

“**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by**

fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Those who suffer loss:

- Ezekiel 44:10-16—Some believing Levites will have a lesser position in Millennium due to their unfaithfulness. They did not serve the truth but instead failed morally and in responsibility. The faithful Levites will have privileges because they did not fail to perform their assignments

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

3588 [e]	1063 [e]	3956 [e]	1473 [e]	5319 [e]	1163 [e]	1715 [e]	3588 [e]	968 [e]	3588 [e]	5547 [e]	2443 [e]	2865 [e]	1538 [e]
tous	gar	pantas	hēmas	phanerōthēnai	dei	emprosthen	tou	bēmatos	tou	Christou	hina	komisētai	hekastos
10 τοὺς	γὰρ	πάντας	ἡμᾶς	φανερωθῆναι	δεῖ	ἔμπροσθεν	τοῦ	βήματος	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ	, ἵνα	κομισῆται	ἕκαστος
-	indeed	all	we	be revealed	must	before	the	judgment seat	-	of Christ	that	might receive	each
Art-AMP	Conj	Adj-AMP	PPro-A1P	V-ANP	V-PIA-3S	Prep	Art-GNS	N-GNS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Conj	V-ASM-3S	Adj-NMS

φανερώω = phaneroó /fa-ne-ro'-o/ "make manifest, show", "make visible", "illumine"
βῆμα = Bema /BAY-mah/ - a platform to which someone walked up to receive judgment, (fig.) the administration of justice; (literal) "a tribunal chair" or "throne" where rewards/punishment are handed out.

3588 [e]	1223 [e]	3588 [e]	4983 [e]	4314 [e]	3739 [e]	4238 [e]	1535 [e]	18 [e]	1535 [e]	5337 [e]	
ta	dia	tou	sōmatos	pros	ha	epraxen	eite	agathon	eite	phaulon	φαῦλος = <i>phaulos</i> /FOW-los/ - "mediocre, worthless, ordinary, inadequate, bad" - This is not the word: - κακός (<i>kakos</i>) = bad, evil - πονηρός (<i>ponēros</i>) = toilsome, bad, evil, degeneracy
τὰ	διὰ	τοῦ	σώματος	, πρὸς	ἃ	ἔπραξε	, εἴτε	ἀγαθὸν	εἴτε	φαῦλον	
the things [done]	through	the	body	according to	what	he did	whether	good	or	evil	
Art-ANP	Prep	Art-GNS	N-GNS	Prep	RelPro-ANP	V-AIA-3S	Conj	Adj-ANS	Conj	Adj-ANS	

1. **“appear” or “be revealed”** is the Greek word φανερωθῆναι or *“phanerothanai”*.
 - a. The meaning of this word is “to make clear, to manifest, make visible, show, illumine.”
 - b. The meaning of this word is **not**:
 - i. “they will need to show up”
 - ii. “you will need to be there”.
 - c. This word means your life and character will be crystal clear.
 - i. Everything you did and the motives will be made obvious.
 - ii. Maybe for the first time we will see the motives we had while we were serving the Lord.
 - iii. The motive will be clear as it says in 1 Corinthians 4:5:
“Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.”
 1. Proverbs 21:2 – **“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart.”**
 2. Proverbs 24:12 – **“If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?”**

- d. Also notice what is judged. It says “we” not our works.
- i. Our service is an extension of ourselves.
 - ii. What is in our hearts manifest itself in our works.
 - iii. Though the works are said to be judged in 1 Cor. 3:13, it indicates the “quality” of the works will be judged:
“Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.” – 1 Corinthians 3:13
- e. Two people may do the same good service for two different reasons.
- i. Consider those who were preaching Christ in an attempt to out preach Paul and do it for envy and competition as in Philippians 1:15-18:
“Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”
 1. Notice above that both were doing the same work: Preaching Christ. The difference was in their motives:
 - a. Out of envy and rivalry, out of selfish ambition.
 - b. Out of good will, in love, in knowledge, sincerely.
 - ii. Jesus warned of wasting our lives to honor ourselves, Matthew 6:1-6:
“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven...when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

2. “**Judgment seat**” the word is **βῆμα** (βήματος) “*bema*” /BAY-mah/ meaning a platform to which someone walked up to receive judgment.
- a. Figuratively, it refers to the administration of justice.
 - b. Literally, it is “a tribunal chair” or “throne” where rewards/punishment were handed out.
 - c. The “judgment seat” or “*bema*” is the place of judgment and reward.
 - d. Called the “judgment seat of Christ” here in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and in Romans 14:10 the “judgment seat of God.”

Romans 14:10 – **“For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.”**

3936 [e]	3588 [e]	968 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]
parastēsometha	tō	bēmati	tou	Theou
παραστησόμεθα	τῷ	βήματι	τοῦ	Θεοῦ .
we will stand before	the	judgment seat	of	God
V-FIM-1P	Art-DNS	N-DNS	Art-GMS	N-GMS

3. “Due” is from the word **κομίζω** or “komizo” /ko-MID-zo/ and it means “to bring, to receive, to provide for”.

- a. It is in the middle voice here giving it the meaning of “to carry off, to get for oneself, to receive, to receive as recompense.”
 - b. It is referring to receiving what belongs to you.
4. “Things done” pictures the whole life of the believer as a single unit.
 5. “In the body” this is the position for the basis of your operation. Notice, your body is not judged. You, the one living in the body, will be judged.
 6. “Bad” or “evil” means “mediocre, worthless, ordinary, inadequate, bad, of no account, good-for nothing.”
 - a. The word indicates the impossibility of any true gain ever coming forth
 - b. Worthlessness is the central notion.
 - c. This is **not** the word:
 - i. “*kakos*” meaning “evil, bad”
 - ii. “*poneros*” meaning “degeneracy, evil, bad, toilsome”
 - iii. “*hamartanó*” meaning “to sin”, “to err”, “to miss the mark”
 - d. This refers to the wood, hay and straw of 1 Cor. 3 that is burned up.
 - e. The things that may have earthly value but are worthless in the light of eternity.

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.”

1. **“Stewards”** (or, NIV, “Entrusted”) is οἰκονόμος “*oikonomos*” /oy-kon-OM-os/ refers to someone such as a steward given the responsibility of managing a household for a master.
 - a. a house-distributor, manager, overseer as an employee
 - b. a fiscal agent or treasurer
2. **“Faithful”** is the key concept.
 - a. The master has given you an assignment and the master will evaluate your performance.
 - b. What if some other evaluation comes along that judges your performance on a different criterion than the original responsibilities assigned by the master?
 - i. “I care little if I am judged by you” meaning → an individual on earth
 - ii. “I care little if I am judged by any human court” → a group, organization on earth
3. **“I do not even judge myself”**, in other words Paul is saying he does not even have the freedom to set his own life goals nor to establish the criteria for self-evaluation outside of the original requirements established by Jesus Christ
 - a. He can only do what he was assigned to do.
 - b. If someone, even himself, wants to change the assignment or the evaluation process, Paul still must stay focused on the original assignment.

Jesus' Parable of the Coins Teaches Rewards - Luke 19:11-27:

verse 13 "Put this money to work" is one Greek word and it means "to gain by trading" and "to do business with." They were given something that belonged to "a man of noble birth." They were supposed to work for the man in his place while he was gone.

verse 14, another group is introduced as "his subjects" who "hated him". Apparently, in the noble man's absence there are two groups:

- 1) His servants, who had been given a portion to be responsible for and to do business with.
- 2) Subjects of his domain, but not his servants. These subjects were against the noble man and so they would have been opposed to his servants carrying on his business.

Cities for coins.

The servants who were faithful to their assignments and carried on business in a potentially dangerous environment were rewarded cities for their increase in coins. (A "mina" was a coin worth 100 drachmas or 100 days of pay.)

Each servant started with one mina.

Ten servants turned in results.

We only have three of them.

One produced 10, another 5.

The unproductive servant had his information about the noble man confused. He did not live in the way the master told him to. The noble man said "put this money to work" but instead he hid the coin. He suffered loss upon the return and judgment of the noble man.

The evaluation of the two groups (servants and subjects):

1) Servants (Believers)

i) Productive: Coins turned into cities

ii) Unproductive: Loss— "Even what he has will be taken away"

2) Subjects who hated him (unbelievers)

i) "But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me."

Promises to Seven Churches in Revelation

Ephesus - "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life which is in the paradise of God." (2:7)

Smyrna - "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." (2:10) "He who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death." (2:11, as in "the fiery lake of burning sulfur" from 21:8)

Pergamum - "To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it." (2:17)

Thyatira - "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—'He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery.' just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star." (2:26-28)

Sardis - "He who overcomes will like them be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels." (3:5)

Philadelphia - "Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from

my God, and I will also write on him my new name." (3:12)

Laodicea - "To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne." (3:21)

Who are those who "Overcome"?

"To him who overcomes. . ." Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21

"Overcomes" is from the Greek word developed from nikh "nika" which means "conquest, victory" and is used once in the NT in 1 Jn. 5:4. The word in Revelation for "overcome" is the word nikaw "nikao" and means "to subdue." It is translated 24x as "overcome", 2x as "conquer", 1x as "prevail" and 1x as "get the victory," It is used in reference to God in Romans 3:4 and to Christ in John 16:33, Rev. 3:21, 5:5 and 17:4. In reference to the believer it is used in Romans 12:21; 1 John 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4-5; and Rev. 12:11; 15:2; 21:7. In Rev. 2:7 "overcome" means "to be the victor, to gain a victory, to be victorious." This seems to be a term applicable to all believers rather than to a limited or special group When we study John's use of it and the promises here in Revelation 2 and 3.

John uses it 7x in John and First John and 16x in Revelation. To John faith manifested itself in victory. The Believer/Conqueror prevails over evil through his faithfulness to Christ. In Revelation the victor is the martyr.

“To him who overcomes. . .” could then be translated “To the victor. . .” or “To the conqueror. . .”

1 John 5:1, 4, “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. . . Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

To believe in Christ means you have overcome the unbelief and sin of the world.

The overcomers are not a special group of believers who surpass others in performance. This is a general description of normal believers.

John uses the word “overcomes” for the believer/conqueror because he expects a believer in Christ to have victory over the world.

The victory we achieve is like the victory Jesus achieved: “Just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” (Rev. 3:21)

In the use of “overcome” in John’s writing there is a tension between positional truth and achieved rewards. Even the white clothes are: a) a result of being washed in the blood of the lamb, (Rev. 7:13,14) b) described as being “the righteous acts of the saints.” (Rev. 19:8) So, all believers have all the rewards mentioned to the seven churches, though some believers will expand and increase the victory from this position as an overcomer.

Those who do not overcome: “He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This will be the second death.”

The Promises from Revelation 2 and 3:

Each promise:

- a) Is the victor’s reward
- b) Are spoke metaphorically and symbolically
- c) Are difficult to clearly interpret
- d) Correlate with the last two chapters of Revelation
 - tree of life in 2:7 and 22:2
 - second death 2:11 and 21:4

“Tree of Life”

One of many trees given to Adam and Eve in Paradise. (Gn.2:9) Made off limits to man after fall (Gn.3:22,24) The age of Messiah will restore this tree and Paradise to man (Is.51:3; Ez.36:35; Rev.22:1-4,14) Man will eat of this tree and live forever. Consider John 5:51, “If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever.” Right to eat of this tree is removed in Rev.22:19.

Second Death

No promise of deliverance from natural death or martyrdom. The overcomer will not face the second death. Rev. 21:8 says, “Their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death. Rev. 20:6, “Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.” Rev. 20:14, “the lake of fire is the second death.”

Hidden Manna

The emphasis is on “hidden.” Legend records that Jeremiah hid the jar of manna and it will be restored to mankind in the millennium. This is probably referring to our eternal relation with Jesus who is the manna from heaven. He will be the source that sustains us for all time in his kingdom.

White Stone

Possibly a brilliant diamond.

In courts of law the accused received a white stone on acquittal and a black stone if guilty.

Special stones were used as invitations to social events to the select guests.

Stones with inscriptions were used which may mean the value of the stone was the name inscribed on it.

New Name

Their new eternal world and society include a new name. To know a person’s or a god’s name meant to have power and authority over them. These overcomes have an eternal source, an honored position and are above dominion.

Authority over the nations

“to the end” means “completely”, not to the end of life. A place of responsibility in His kingdom.

“**Rule**” is “*poimane*”, “to shepherd.” It is not just judging, but leadership and guidance.

“**Iron scepter**” is wooden staff of shepherd with an iron point.

“**Dashing pottery**” refers to ancient kings smashing clay vessels with enemies’ names inscribed on them. This means absolute, sovereign power from God.

The Morning Star

Jesus is the morning star in Rev. 22:16. This refers to the rulership that arrives at the dawning of a new age just like a morning star arrives before a new day.

Dressed in White

White garments are the attire appropriate for the heavenly society. Rev. 3:18, 6:11; 4:4; 7:9, 13; 19:14. Where do the white garments come from? Rev. 7:13-14 says, “ ‘These in white robes—who are they. . . ? They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb.’ ” These are believers. A believer has the acceptable clothing for the New Jerusalem. An inscription found in Asia Minor says: “Soiled clothes disqualify the worshipper and dishonors the god.” Rev. 19:8 says, “Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.” Believers will have unpolluted glory.

Never Blot Out His Name

The ancient world had the custom of keeping a list of citizens but striking out the names of people who had died. To be blotted out meant to forfeit the privileges of the kingdom. The believers of this time period risked losing their earthly citizenship by confessing Christ. What counts is our acceptance in the courts of heaven and the society there. This world’s registry of the living is passing away. Verses concerning the Book of Life: Ps.69:28; Ex. 32:33; Ps. 109:13; Dn. 12:1; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; Phil.4:3; Isaiah 4:3; Ezekiel 13:9; Lk.10:20; Heb.12:22-23. Believers will never lose their heavenly citizenship.

Confess His Name

Matthew 10:32,33 says, “Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” The word “acknowledge” in Mt. 19:32 is the same as “confess” here in Rev. 3:5 (also Luke 12:8) It is “homolegeo” in Greek from two words “homo” meaning “same” and “lego” meaning “to speak.” “Homolegeo” means “to speak the same thing.” In the Greek it appears like this:

‘omoleghsei	en	emoi
shall confess	(untranslated “in”)	me (dative case of this personal

pronoun indicates the one to or for who an action occurs. In this case the confessing occurs for the personal interest of “me” (Jesus)

Matt. 10:32 literally says, “Everyone who shall confess in Me for my case, or for me before men, in him for his case, or for him, will I confess before my Father.” The confession will be determined by the context of the circumstances we find ourselves in. It appears to be in reference to a public confession of some sort. We confess allegiance to Christ in what we say, in what we do and in the choices we make. He will acknowledge us as his faithful servants. If you have placed faith in Christ you have confessed him in this world and are called an overcomer by John.

Pillar in the Temple

Pillars are for structural support and a picture of stability. We will not simply be in the kingdom taking up space, but will be useful, even necessary, for we will be part of the structural security of the kingdom. Peter writes, “You also, as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house. . .” (1 Peter 2:5)

Will write on him

Three things are written on each believer.

1—The name of God which will indicate ownership and sworn allegiance of a two-way covenant.

2—The name of the city of God, “New Jerusalem.” Indicates citizenship at a very committed level.

Your address, proof of citizenship in this incredible city, will be tattooed on your resurrection body.

3—Jesus’ new name which is known only to him (Rv.19:12) shows the depth of relationship we have with him as a member of his royal family.

Sit on Jesus’ throne - Even Ephesians 2:6 says we are seated with him in heavenly realms.

Many of these promises are found in Jesus’ teachings and the NT epistles. None of these teachings are radically new here. They are identified here in these seven letters from Jesus to the churches to encourage the believer/conqueror to fight the good fight and continue to overcome the world. We are to know that we are already eternal citizens of an eternal society. Our names will never be removed. Do not allow yourself to misrepresent your eternal home.

Crowns in Scripture

The “*stephanos*” (στέφανος) the victors crown. It is the symbol of victory given to the winners in the Greek games or a contest. It is a reward or a prize. It is used in these verses:

1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 2:5

The “*stephanos*” is also used as a ornament for festivities and celebrations in these verses:

Proverbs 1:9; Proverbs 4:9; Song of Solomon 3:11; Isaiah 28:1

The “*stephanos*” was also used to honor someone publicly who had distinguished themselves in service or given to someone for their worthiness. These were worn at the *parousia* (advent or return) of kings.

The “*diadema*” (διαδέμα) was the kingly crown. It is the crown worn by nobility who were possessor of a royal position.

Ranking of the Crowns

There are five crowns mentioned in scripture. They deal with different aspects of the Christian life. The crowns reflect levels of maturity in regards to a believer’s growth and accomplishments of service to the Lord. They are placed here in a possible list in the order that they could be obtained by the believer.

Incorruptible Crown (1 Cor. 9:25) - this crown would be the first level a believer would attain to. This crown indicates mastery over the sin nature. The Corinthians are being urged to run the Christian life

in such a way as to receive the reward in the end. Here the emphasis is in self-control.

“They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. . . I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”

- a) Paul is focusing believers on running the race or living the life God has given them to compete in.
- b) Just as each life has a race, each life has a reward available.
- c) Only those who run the race and run it according to the rules will get a prize.
- d) The crown or stephanos would wither and sometimes was withered (either of pine or celery see “1 Cor., NICNT, Fee”) at the time of the victory but it meant fame, prestige and fortune. The symbol of victory would fade but the fame was more enduring.
- e) Paul does not run aimlessly (9:26), meaning he does not live his Christian life without purpose or direction. Nor should we if we want to achieve what has been made available to us. Consider someone who enters a race not knowing the distance or direction.
- f) The boxer failing to land a blow is ridiculous and pointless. It is an analogy of the undisciplined believer missing his purpose.

Crown of Righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7-8) - The second level of crowns goes to those who live righteously in this world while they look forward to Christ’s return. They are those who are not captivated by this world, but hunger and thirst after righteousness. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”

- a) This is a crown for righteous behavior and an upright life.
- b) “have longed” is in the perfect tense suggests those who greatly anticipated Christ’s return in the past and continued to do so up until the moment of the rewarding.
- c) This life is described by Paul to Titus in Titus 2:12,13: “[The grace] teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”
- d) “fought” is the word “*agonizomai*” and though it can refer to a military fight, it is clearly a reference to training and competing in athletics:
 - It is the same word translated “competes in the games” in 1 Corinthians 9:25
 - “make every effort” in Luke 13:24
 - “struggling” in Colossians 1:29
 - “wrestling” in Colossians 4:12
 - “strive” in 1 Timothy 4:10
 - “fight” in 1 Timothy 6:12
 - “race” is the noun form in Hebrews 12:1
- e) Notice: The same awards await all who qualify.
- f) Notice the “fight” (or, the agony of training and competing comes first, and then the successful “finish” of the race. The believer can think they will achieve victory without the struggle of preparing for and demonstrating righteousness.

Crown of Life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10) - The third level to attain to is to proceed in God's plan for your life while enduring trials. The believer who moves forward in God's call and assignment in the face of difficulty, even martyrdom, will receive this crown.

"Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him."

"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life."

- a) Testing and trials are part of the Christian life. It should be understood that when faced with test and trials many Christians turn back and do not continue on the path God has called them to run on.
- b) Jesus said we would have trouble: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- c) "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first." (John 15:18)
- d) Paul writes to Timothy, "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." 2 Timothy 3:10,11,12)
- e) The doorway to the next level towards fulfilling God's plan is to endure hardships and persecution.
- f) The reward is for "persevering" and remaining "faithful". The reward is not given for having great faith and getting delivered from the trial or test.
- g) We are faithful to the Lord in the trial. The Lord is faithful to reward us for enduring the trial.

Crown of Joy (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thess.2:19) - This crown is for those who lead others to Christ or demonstrate fruitfulness by influencing others towards righteousness. "Therefore, my brother, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown that is how you should stand firm in the Lord, dear friends!" "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy."

- a) Rewards are not just for how we live and what we do, they are also for the influence we have on how others live and what they do.
- b) It was being said in Thessalonica that Paul did not really care for the Thessalonians, but Paul said he did, and it should be obvious, since they will result in a crown for him if they succeed.
- c) Gabriel tells Daniel in Daniel 12:3, "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."

Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:4) - The greatest achievement is to fulfill your calling and finish the work God gave you to do. The scripture reference is speaking to pastors who finish their work faithfully, but this crown is not only for pastors. It is for anyone who finds and fulfills their assignment God has given them.

"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder. . . One who will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care. . .and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."

- a) Again we see the rewards being given upon Christ's return. Here Christ is seen as the Chief Shepherd paying his workers that he contracted out labor to shepherd for him.

- b) Earthly crowns or **stephanos** were made of vines, etc. This crown is made of Glory! (Isaiah 28:5)
- c) Just like Paul's crown in 2 Timothy 4:7,8 was available to "ALL who long for Christ's appearing," this crown is also available to all who serve at the position and with the capacity they were given. It is not just the office of pastor, although that is the context of the verse. The application extends to all believers who become what God has created them to be and they serve him in that position.

Review of Crowns:

Incorruptible Crown for mastery over the sin nature.

Crown of Righteousness for living righteously in this world.

Crown of Live for enduring trials while proceeding in God's plan.

Crown of Joy for leading others to Christ and in righteousness.

Crown of Glory for fulfilling your calling and finishing the work assigned.

Individual Capacity For Glory

It appears that part of our reward will be how we appear in eternity. The amount of God's glory shining through us will be based on our faithful service to God.

"Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." Matthew 5:6

"Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Matthew 13:43

"There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another, and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. . . .And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven." 1 Corinthians 15:40-41,49

God himself will receive glory for our capacity for a Christ like image. Some would wonder if we might feel left out or insufficient if we are shining like a 60 watt bulb and we are standing by a super-nova. I think that is answered by realizing that our level of capacity will be filled. As Jesus said, "Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness they will be filled." The desire you have for God will be filled. There will be different capacities, but each will be filled to capacity. In that way all will be filled.

