

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

### Reward According to Works:

(Mat 16:27) "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

(2Co 5:10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

### Some categories of judgment:

- **Our words.** "But I say to you that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned" (Matt. 12:36-37).
- **Our motives.** "Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each one's praise will come to him from God" (1 Cor. 4:5).
- **Our stewardship of money and possessions.** "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon, who will entrust the true riches to you? And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" (Lk. 16:10-12)
- **Our stewardship of our spiritual gifts and responsibilities.** (Matt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-27)
- **The nature of our service.** (Matt. 7:21; 1 Cor. 3:11-15)
- **Our relationships with others.** (Matt. 5:22-26; 6:14-15; 7:1-2; 18:23-35; Rom. 14:10; Jas. 5:9)
- **Our holiness of life.** (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5)

**The decision of the Judge.** The most important decision will be whether we shall be **included or excluded** from participation in the 1,000 year Kingdom realm of Christ. Scripture uses both the terms of "enter" and "inherit" to signify participation in this Kingdom.

Verses showing **some principles of entry into the Kingdom:** Matt. 5:20 (**exceeding righteousness in our living**); Matt. 7:21 (**doing the will of the Father**); Matt. 18:3 (**humility; willingness to be the least**). See context: Matt. 18:1-4; Mk. 9:33-37; Lk. 9:46-48); Matt. 19:23-24 (**willingness to die to what our soul enjoys**); Mk. 9:47 (**dealing severely with sin in our life**); Acts 14:22 (**faithful endurance to follow Christ through tribulations**); 2 Pet. 1:5-11 (**ongoing growth in the life and virtues of Christ**).

**Kingdom exclusion pictured:** Matt. 7:21-22; 8: 11-12; 10:33; 22:13; 25:30; Lk. 13:25-28; 1 Cor. 6:8-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5.

### Degrees of positive reward in the Kingdom:

- Great reward (Matt. 5:11-12; Lk. 6:35)
- Various crowns, signifying ruling positions in the Kingdom: 1. The **imperishable crown**, awarded for self-control (1 Cor. 9:24-27); 2. The **crown of rejoicing**, awarded for fruitful labor in the lives of others (1 Thess. 2:19); 3. The **crown of righteousness**, awarded for righteous living

due to love of the Lord's appearing (2 Tim. 4:8); 4. The **crown of life**, awarded for faithful endurance under trial and persecution (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10); 5. The **crown of glory**, awarded to the genuine, godly, and faithful shepherds of the Lord's flock (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

- Kingdom responsibilities according to our faithfulness now in spiritual responsibilities (Matt. 25:14-23; Lk. 19:12-26). The Lord gives all believers "spiritual capital" (such as the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the gospel, our spiritual gift, money) and expects each believer to labor by grace to produce some "spiritual profit" for the Master. The parable in Matthew stresses the variance in reward for faithfulness in accordance with God-given ability, whereas the parable in Luke stresses the variance in reward according to diligence, regardless of difference in God-given spiritual gifts and abilities.

#### **Degrees of negative reward in the Kingdom age:**

- Kingdom exclusion due to lack of service or lack of spiritual preparedness (Matt. 22:13; 25:30). "Outer darkness" pictures a place outside the glorious 1,000 year Kingdom of the Messiah. "Weeping" signifies sorrow and regret over missing the Kingdom prize. "Gnashing of teeth" signifies severe self-blame for not preparing for the Kingdom during one's lifetime.

- Varying chastisement according to light and obedience (Lk. 12:35-48).

- "Gehenna" judgment (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 10:26-28; 18:8-9; Mk. 9:43-49; Lk. 12:1-5). "Gehenna" is not "hell", which is a mistranslation in these verses. Our English word "hell" connotes the eternal destination of the lost, which in Scripture is pictured by a different term - "the lake of fire" (Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8). The gehenna warning verses noted above are addressed to disciples, not unbelievers. The Greek word in the verses noted is "gehenna", which refers to the actual "valley of Hinnom", which lies just outside the city of Jerusalem. This "gehenna" judgment has the background of a judgment that was sometimes passed upon the body of an executed criminal by the Jewish high council, the Sanhedrin. This court sometimes ordered that the body of the criminal should be cast into this valley. This valley was used by the residents of Jerusalem as a garbage dump for filth and animal carcasses. Fires were kept burning there for the consumption of the filth. So, this "extra" judgment could be passed upon an executed criminal. Therefore, the "gehenna judgment" represents a potential severe judgment upon unrepentant disciples who are guilty of the worst sins (such as uncontrolled anger and sexual lusts). Unbelievers are slaves of sin, so verses such as Matt. 5:27-30 cannot be telling unbelievers how to escape hell. The "gehenna judgment" takes place in the millennial age. Note the contrast between being cast into gehenna and "to enter life" or "to enter the kingdom of God" (Mk. 9:43,47).

- "Blackness of darkness" (2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 1:13). This severe judgment is reserved for Christians who are false teachers leading the sheep of God astray.

**MERCY:** Christ's judgment upon believers can be balanced with mercy. As we are merciful in our dealings with others in this life, then Christ may have some measure of mercy upon us at His Judgment Seat. (Matt. 5:7; Jas. 2:13) To be merciful to others is not to deal with them in a way of requiring strict justice, but overlooking and forgiving the offenses of others.

**CONFESSION OF SINS:** If we sincerely confess our sins now with an attitude of judging and turning away from them, then these sins are forgiven by God and will not be brought up at the Judgment Seat. (Pr. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:9) Forgiveness in these verses speaks of "fellowship forgiveness". We already possess eternal, judicial forgiveness of all of our sins in Christ (Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13).