**Lesson 2: Toward a Better Understanding of *The Judgment Seat of Christ***

**REVIEW**

1. **FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS: What does the New Covenant say about our sin?**
   1. **Jesus takes away our sin.**

***John 1:29[[1]](#footnote-1)***

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

***Hebrews 10:10***

*By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

***Hebrews 10:12***

*But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God*

***Hebrews 10:14***

*For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

* 1. **Our sins are continually cleansed by His blood.**

***1 John 1:7***

*If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

* 1. **We are forgiven for past present and future sins.**

***Ephesians 1:7-8***

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us.*

***Colossians 1:14***

*In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

* 1. **God is not imputing our sins to us.**

***Romans 4:8***

*Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.*

* 1. **God has covenanted with us to never again remember our sins.**

***Hebrews 10:16-17***

*“This*is*the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”17*then He adds, *“Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

1. **What does the New Covenant say about the believer and God’s wrath and judgment?**
   1. **We are free from the wrath of God.**

***Romans 5:9-10***

*Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.****10****For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

* 1. **We will not come into judgment.**

**John 5:24**

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*

* 1. **We have everlasting life, will not perish, and are not condemned.**

***John 3:16-18***

*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever* ***believes*** *in Him should* ***not perish*** *but have* ***everlasting*** *life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be* ***saved****.18 “He who* ***believes*** *in Him is* ***not condemned****; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

* 1. **We can know for a certainty that we have eternal life.**

***I John 5:10-13***

*He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may*continue to*believe in the name of the Son of God.*

***Verse 13 Wuest Expanded Translation***

*These things I write to you in order that you may know with an absolute knowledge that life you are having, eternal (life), to you who believe on the name of the Son of God.*

***Verse 13 Amplified***

*I write this to you who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) the name of the Son of God [in the peculiar services and blessings conferred by Him on men], so that you may* ***know [with settled and absolute knowledge]*** *that you* ***[already] have life, yes, eternal life.***

1. **How we interpret passages must be based on solid principles.**
   1. **We must rightly divide the Word.**

***2 Corinthians 2:2***

*But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.*

***2 Timothy 2:15***

*Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [rightly handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.*

* 1. **We must interpret New Testament passages based on the clear teachings of the New Covenant.**

***Hebrews 1:1***

*God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by*His*Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.*

1. **The Rapture of the Church**
2. **Most eschatologists agree that the Judgment Seat of Christ will happen immediately after the Rapture of the Church. So, we will briefly show that all those who believe in Jesus will be raptured, not just a few super-saints.**
   1. **What is the Rapture (Our Blessed Hope)**

*The Rapture[[2]](#footnote-2) is an event that will happen at any moment in which the Lord will come down from heaven in order to receive His own. The bodies of those now dead who believed in Jesus will come out from where they are and be raised. Immediately thereafter, we who are alive in Christ will be caught up off the earth to meet them and the Lord in the air and will forever be with Jesus.*

***1 Thessalonians 4:13-17***

*But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.* ***14*** *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.* ***15*** *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.* ***16*** *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.* ***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.*

* 1. **We, all believers, will be raptured. None will be “left behind”.**

***1 Corinthians 15:50-57***

*Behold, I tell you a mystery:* ***We*** *shall not all sleep, but* ***we*** *shall* ***all*** *be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and* ***we*** *shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”*

* 1. **We are overcomers through faith in Jesus.**

***1 John 5:4-5***

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.* ***And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.****5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who* ***believes*** *that Jesus is the Son of God?*

* 1. **Believers will not face the wrath of God. We are comforted by His coming.**

***1 Thessalonians 5:1-11***

*But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren,* ***you*** *have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon* ***them****, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And* ***they*** *shall not escape. 4* ***But you, brethren,*** *are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake* ***you*** *as a thief. 5* ***You*** *are* ***all*** *sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9* ***For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ****, 10* ***who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*** *11 Therefore* ***comfort*** *each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.*

1. **There are four main judgments revealed in Scripture.**
   1. **Judgment Seat of Christ (discussed in this lesson)**
   2. **Judgment of Israel (This is also known as “Jacob’s Trouble”-during the Great Tribulation. This judgment will be followed by Israel’s repentance toward God through Jesus Christ. See Zec. 12:9 through Zec. 13.)**
   3. **Judgment of angels (There are no details about this judgment, only that we will judge them. See 1 Cor.6:3.)**
   4. **Great White Throne Judgment (of the non-believing dead: Rev. 20:11-15)**
2. **Those who do not believe in Jesus are judged before the Great White Throne Judgment.**
   1. **The Great White Throne Judgment will be for those who were not included in the Rapture, those who died during the Tribulation, those who died during the millennium, and those who died in the Last Battle.**

***Revelation 20:11-15***

*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15* ***And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.***

* 1. **Even though Jesus died for the sins of the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2), and even though He extends reconciliation to the whole world (2 Cor. 5:19-20), only those who believe in Him receiving this reconciliation and forgiveness will be saved.**

***John 3:17-18***

*“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.****19****And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* ***20****For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.****21****But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”*

***John 6:28-29***

*Then they said to Him, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?” 29 Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”*

***John 8:24 Amplified***

***T****hat is why I told you that you will die in (under the curse of) your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He [Whom I claim to be—if you do not adhere to, trust in, and rely on Me], you will die in your sins.*

1. **The Judgment Seat of Christ is for all believers.**

***Romans 14:10***

*But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

* 1. **The Bema Seat of Christ**
     1. **The Bema judgment was a place of judgment for wrong-doing.**

***John 19:13***

*When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat (bema) in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

* + 1. **The Bema judgment was also a place of reward.**

*The concept of the Bema Seat comes from the ancient Olympics, where a judge would sit on the Bema Seat at the finish line. The judge's purpose was to determine what position the runners came in-first, second, and so on-and then to give out the appropriate rewards. That is the imagery behind what is known as the Bema Seat.-AllAboutGod.com*

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

***MOUNCE***

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be repaid according to what he has done[[3]](#footnote-3)* ***while*** *in the body, whether good or bad.*

1. **THE BIG QUESTION**

**We understand and readily accept that there will be rewards given at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but if we are forgiven and He’s not holding our sins against us (and we are and He isn’t), then what are the “good and bad” things for which we will give an account?**

**First of all, this verse does not negate our understanding that our sins were completely dealt with at the cross and that He remembers them no more.[[4]](#footnote-4) We must also keep in mind that Jesus said that those who believe will not come into judgment (which means that we will not go to hell.)**

**In order to understand, we must look for examples within Scripture to help us understand.**

1. **Each of us will be held responsible for how we have built upon the body of Christ. Teachers will receive a stricter “judgment”.**

***1 Corinthians 3:5-17***

*Who then is Paul, and who*is*Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field,*you are*God’s building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation*with*gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.14 If anyone’s work which he has built on*it*endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and*that*the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which*temple *you are.*

* + 1. **“The Day” is referring to the Judgment Seat of Christ.**
    2. **The “temple of God” in this passage is speaking of the whole body of Christ for the word “you” is actually plural.** Therefore, it should read, “Do you all not know that you all are the temple of God that that the Spirit of God dwells in you all? If anyone defiles the temple of God, (speaking of the Body of Christ), God will destroy him. For the temple of God (again referring to the body of Christ) is holy, which temple you all are.”
    3. **That Paul is speaking of the body of Christ here is also evident from the passage itself.**
    4. **Paul is specifically targeting in this passage himself and all those who add onto the foundation through teaching, and this teaching include words and deeds.** If someone adds to the foundation gold, silver, and precious stones; in other words, if someone adds well (accurately) to the body of Christ, his work will stand and he will be rewarded. If anyone adds wood, hay, or straw; in other words if someone adds poorly (inaccurately) to the body of Christ, his work will be burned. He will lose his reward.
    5. **Clearly, Paul says that the person who loses his reward will still be saved, so where is says “God will destroy him,” he means his rewards will be burned for they defiled the temple of God.**
    6. **Other Scriptures also point to the importance of teaching correct doctrine.**
       1. **Perverting the gospel of Christ (the grace of Christ)**

***Galatians 1:6-9***

*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you* ***in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel****,****7****which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to* ***pervert the gospel of Christ****.****8****But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you,* ***let him be accursed****.****9****As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received,* ***let him be accursed****.*

* + - 1. **Teachers within the body of Christ will receive a stricter judgment based on what they have taught and how they have lived.**

***James 3:1***

*My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.*

* + - 1. **Our lives…our deeds also teach; for example, Peter was giving a wrong message when he separated himself from the Gentiles when the Jewish brothers came.**

***Philippians 4:9***

*The things which you* ***learned*** *and* ***received*** *and* ***heard*** *and* ***saw*** *in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.*

***Galatians 2:11-16***

*Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14****But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel****, I said to Peter before them all, “If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? 15We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, 16****knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.***

1. **We usually focus on the idea of having our works destroyed and some even fear the Judgment Seat of Christ. However, we can rest assured that God remembers our good works toward each other.**

***Hebrews 6:10-12***

*For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of**love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.****11****And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,****12****that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

1. **The concept of destroying the body of Christ is also evident in the other passage that clearly names the Judgment Seat of Christ. Only in this passage it is has to do with how we treat each other. Jesus commanded us to “love one another as I have loved you,” so it makes perfect sense that we will be both rewarded for loving each other and “suffer loss” for mistreating each other.**

***Romans 14:4-5; 10,12-23***

*Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.****5****One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*

***10****But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother?* ***For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.***

***12****So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.****13****Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.* ***14****I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.****15****Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not* ***destroy*** *with your food the one for whom Christ died.****16****Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;****17****for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.****18****For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.*

***19****Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.****20****Do not* ***destroy the work of God*** *for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.****21****It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.****22****Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.****23****But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.*

***1 Corinthians 13:1-3***

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.****2****And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.****3****And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.*

1. **Believers need not fear the Judgment Seat of Christ.**
   1. **We need not fear our Father.**

***Romans 8:14-15***

*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.****15****For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”*

* 1. **Paul looked forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ.**

***1 Thessalonians 2:19-20***

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?****20****For you are our glory and joy.*

***2 Corinthians 5:4-8***

*For we who are in*this*tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 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.*

***2 Timothy 4:6-8***

*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

* 1. **The hope of His coming purifies us.**

***1 John 3:2-3***

*Beloved, now* ***we are children of God****; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* ***3*** *And* ***everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself****, just as He is pure.*

* 1. **His coming again brings us comfort.**
     1. **We are comforted about those who have passed away in Christ. We will be reunited with them.**

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-18***

*For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.****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.****18****Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

* + 1. **We are encouraged during times of trial.**

***Romans 8:18***

*For I consider that the* *sufferings of this present time are not* *worthy* *to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

* + 1. **We are comforted when treated poorly by members of the body of Christ. We need not take revenge because each of us must individually give an account to God for how we have treated each other.**

***MORE ENCOURAGEMENT***

***1 Corinthians 5:50-58***

*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.****51****Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—****52****in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.****53****For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.****54****So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”****[***[***g***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Cor%2015&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-28773g)***]***

***55****“O Death, where is your sting?  
O Hades, where is your victory?”*

***56****The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.****57****But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

***58Therefore****, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

**From: The Love of God Discipleship Series: God’s Love for You**

**C. D. Hildebrand**

*The Judgment Seat of Christ (the Bema of Christ) refers to a point in time when the lives of the believers in Christ will be judged. It is believed by most mainstream Christians that this is a special judgment for believers only, and that there will be another judgment for the rest of mankind called the Great White Throne Judgment. Most end times teachers believe that the Judgment Seat of Christ will happen shortly after the Rapture. It will not determine whether we are eternally saved or perish. That was already decided when we received Jesus as Lord and Savior and were given “everlasting life” (John 3:16). Rather it will be a time when our deeds are evaluated whether good or bad and we will be rewarded for the good deeds we have done. This is to imply that imperfect saints will stand before this judgment and give account.*

#### *Once a traveling minister visiting our church told the congregation that at the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be a video tape of each and every action of our lives since the time we received Jesus. In other words, His view was that we were forgiven of sins before we were a Christian, but afterward, we will have to give account for each and every action. This is completely inaccurate. In* [*1 John 1:7*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?book_id=69&chapter=1&verse=7&version=50&context=verse) *it says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.” There is therefore a continual cleansing from sin. Once our sin is cleansed, it is removed from us forever. In* [*Hebrews 8:12*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?book_id=65&chapter=8&verse=12&version=50&context=verse) *it declares of the new covenant, “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” So we are not only forgiven of initial sins, but forgiveness is an ongoing process. It is clear from these and many other Scriptures that the atoning work on the cross of forgiveness of sins continues into our daily walk with Him. However, we know from Romans 6 that we have been set free from the power of sin, so that in reality, we do not have to sin. John also writes in 1 John 2, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” When we sin, Jesus is our lawyer. He is the only one with the right to defend us on the basis of His shed blood.*

*God knew that even though He set us free from the power of sin, so that we no longer are bound by it and therefore never have to sin again, that most would fall short. That is why at the cross ALL sin for all time was paid for. We aren’t supposed to sin, we are set free not to sin, but if we do sin, our sins were already judged by Christ.*

*Yet the Scripture does declare that when come before the Judgment Seat of Christ we will give an account for our deeds. I have often wondered, “If our sins are continually cleansed, what sorts of things might these be?” It is my opinion that they will be the areas in our ministry in which we did not yield to God, such as continued unkindness toward a certain person or group of persons, ministering with selfish motives such as for personal glory, harboring resentments, ongoing hypocrisy, thinking oneself to be superior to others, not giving to the needs of others, neglecting His call on our lives, and continual self-centeredness. We will also be held accountable as to how we have ministered within the body of Christ. In 1 Cor. 3:11-15 it says,*

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

*There does seem to be room for speculation, but it will be how it will be. If we are continually walking in faith and love we do not need to fear the Judgment Seat of Christ. I have formed a picture of what it might be like based on what we know about it and the character and work of Jesus. This is my opinion, but perhaps it will help you understand the Judgment Seat of Christ. I picture it might be either that moment happens simultaneously with all of us before His throne or individually. Following is the individual view which I favor.*

*I will come before His throne and He will reveal my heart. I don’t even think He will need to speak. I will just know the true nature of my works. He will extend His hand of grace to me and the wood, hay, and stubble of my life will be burned up, completely consumed by His love and grace. At last I will be completely free. Then He will stand me to my feet and praise me for what I have done in His name and for His kingdom. He won’t leave out anything. He will thank me for working with Him in the gospel. I will stand amazed that He noticed every righteous loving deed I ever did from forgiving an offense to helping someone in need. I will be sobbing both because He burned up the garbage in my life and because my Lord and Savior will recognize what I have done in His name. Then, He will reach down and dry my tears and say, “Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many.”*

*This could also happen with all of us before the throne at the same time. No words would need to be spoken. There might be a moment of deep regret and weeping, and then He will mercifully consume the wood, hay, and stubble of our lives.*

*What I do not believe is that Jesus will make our unrighteous deeds a public matter, for it is written, “Love covers a multitude of sin,” (1 Peter 4:8), and “God is love.” (1 John 4:8)*

*Then, the reward ceremony will begin, and the various crowns and awards will be handed out[[5]](#footnote-5). It has been speculated, and I whole-heartedly agree, that we will all then throw our crowns at his feet because He alone is worthy and without Him, we would never have done one thing to deserve them.*

*While this is one of those prophecies that we will not know the exact details about until it is fulfilled, we can rest assured that whatever happens at the Judgment Seat of Christ, it will be just and gracious. Jesus will serve both as our Judge and Advocate. If we have fallen short in ministry, there will be no argument. Then He will reward us. I am convinced that this will not be a time of fear, but of joy. Imagine it. The church now united with their Savior forever.*



1. Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture is quoted from the New American Standard Bible, Copyright © 1995 by [The Lockman Foundation](http://www.lockman.org/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It’s important to understand why we use *Rapture* to refer to this event since the word does not appear in our English Bibles. According to the Holman Bible Dictionary, when the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, the word *rapto* was used to translate the Greek word *harpadzo* which means “to *seize*: - catch (away, up), pluck, pull, take (by force)”. It is from the word *rapto* that we get our word Rapture. It means to imply that there is a certain event in which believers will be snatched away from this earth. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Again, this is not talking about sin. Sin has been judged at the cross. This is talking about our deeds, of what sort they were WHILE in the body. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In their book entitled Bible Doctrines a Pentecostal Perspective, William Mencies and Stanley Horton write, “There is a Judgment Seat of Christ. The judgment is for believers only. It is not a judgment on sin, for the believer by accepting Christ as Savior has had his sins judged at the cross already.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. **Some rewards that the Bible mentions (not all given at the Judgment Seat of Christ) are the crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8), the crown of life (James 1:12), the crown of glory (**[**1 Peter 5:4**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?book_id=67&chapter=5&verse=4&version=50&context=verse)**), the right to eat from the tree of life in the Paradise of God (Rev. 2:7), to not be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2:11), hidden manna to eat and a white stone with a name written on it that only the individual knows (Rev. 2:17), degrees of power to rule over the nations (Rev. 2:26), the morning star (Rev. 2:28), to not be hurt by the second death (Rev. 3:11), we will be clothed in white garments, our names will not be blotted out from the Book of Life, Jesus will confess his name before the Father and before His angels (Rev. 3:5), to sit with Him in His throne (Rev. 3:21)** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)