

Modern day Christianity seems rather quick to criticize the wicked state of the world. Yet, we frequently fail to acknowledge that many of the world's woes have begun from within the church. For this reason, the Apostle Peter admonishes the people of God that true judgment must begin at our own doorstep.

I Peter 4:17 For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God:** and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Since God no longer dwells in buildings made with hands, we must begin the judgment where He dwells today. He dwells within each and every believer and we must begin judgment from within. However, false teachings have aided carnal Christians by helping them ignore the truth.

A false premise taught in many churches today says that the worst thing that can happen to a Christian at the Judgment Seat of Christ is simply the loss of rewards. This teaching is perpetrated upon the church because of the misunderstanding of the following passage.

I Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and **another buildeth** thereon. But let every man take heed **how he buildeth** thereupon. **11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if any man **build** upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; **13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. **14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall **receive** a reward. **15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall **suffer loss:** but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Notice that the Christian will either receive a reward or suffer loss. But to say that this is the only outcome would contradict the very well known doctrine of sowing and reaping.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man **soweth**, that shall he also **reap**. **8** For he that soweth to his flesh shall **of** the flesh **reap corruption;** but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit **reap life everlasting**. **9** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Preachers that teach that our loss of rewards is the extent of our suffering at the Judgment Seat of Christ are mocking God and are deceived by the Devil. Since sowing to the Spirit will reap life everlasting in the next life....sowing to the flesh will reap something in the next life too — corruption. What will be the loss spoken of in the previous passage? There are many Christians that think they are getting away with their sin because they continue in it for so long. Sin has a consequence attached to it and we cannot determine what the outcome will be.

The verse says that one that sows to the flesh shall "of" the flesh reap corruption! It does not say that they will necessarily reap the full corruption "in" the flesh. Those that sow to the Spirit shall ...reap life everlasting. When does the Christian reap life everlasting? Of course, in heaven (if we faint not)! When will the faint Christian reap the corruption of the flesh? At the Judgment Seat of Christ. Preachers that teach that we need only be concerned with losing our rewards are making a mockery of God and are deceived.

In order to understand this truth more fully, the first thing we need to identify is the difference between **standing** and **state**. A Christian's standing is unalterable; his state is ever changing. A

saved person is destined for heaven which is a reflection of their standing and a result of their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, a Christian's state is ever changing — as a result of their walk (either obediently or disobediently). For instance, a Christian can never be condemned to hell. But this does not mean that no condemnation can come upon a Christian's life.

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no **condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The verse promises **no** condemnation for the Christian who walks after the Spirit. But the same verse implies that there is condemnation if the individual determines to walk after the flesh. The condemnation has nothing to do with the standing of the Christian, but everything to do with his state. Just because our standing is guaranteed does not mean that we will not have to give an account of how we have lived following salvation.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the **judgment seat of Christ**. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall **confess** to God. 12 So then every one of us shall **give account of himself** to God.

What are we going to have to confess before God? What are we going to have to give an account of? Following are five areas that we will give an account.

1. We will give account of every word we speak.

Matthew 12:36 But I say unto you, That **every idle word** that men shall speak, they shall **give account** thereof in the day of judgment.

Christians will give an account for every idle (useless) word spoken. We fail to appreciate how powerful our words are and how wicked our tongue (**James 3:5-6**) Christians should learn how to "hold their tongue." To many times we speak without thinking; we complain without considering; we discuss without knowing. We are going to give an account for every idle word we speak. We should think about what we say and consider the effects of what we say before we speak.

2. We will give an account of our lives lived.

I Timothy 5:24 Some men's **sins** are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. 25 Likewise also the **good works** of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.

How does a Christian have their sins go "before to judgment" and why do some men's sins follow after? The verse also says that the good works of some are manifest beforehand for others to see, but when God reveals everything at the judgment, nothing will be hid. Again we must consider the difference between our standing and state. There is no condemnation in your standing — you cannot lose your salvation; however, there is condemnation in your state.

3. We will give an account of our stewardship.

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a **steward**; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. 2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? **give an account of thy stewardship**; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Who are the stewards today? It can only be Christians. Paul tells us: Moreover **it is required in stewards**, that a man be found **faithful (I Corinthians 4:2)**. This is the only usage of the word required in all of the Church Age epistles. God gives us one requirement today...faithfulness! Faithfulness covers every aspect of the Christian's life — church attendance, giving, praying, witnessing, etc. Faithfulness covers every aspect of the Christian walk. God does not have to say a lot — He expresses volumes in simple truths.

What type of steward are you? Are you a good steward of the mystery. Are you a good steward of the word of God? Are you a good steward of men's souls? We fail to grasp the eternal consequences of our actions. We do not fear the day when we will stand in judgment.

4. Those in positions of authority will give an account.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey **them that have the rule over you**, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must **give account**, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Maybe at the Judgment Seat of Christ there will be those that accuse the Christian because of his lack of service.

5. We will give an account of our witnessing.

Ezekiel 3:18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but **his blood** will I require at thine hand.

God will require us to give an account of our faithfulness in warning the lost of their sinful condition. Can you make the same statement as the Apostle Paul? He made the statement that he was pure from the blood of all men.

Acts 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day that, **I am pure from the blood of all men.** 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The Apostle Paul says that he was pure from the blood of all men. The book of Ezekiel warns us to warn the wicked of his wickedness so that he can change his wicked ways. Pilate tried to wash his hands of the blood that was upon them. We cannot wash the blood off of our hands any more than Pilate could clean himself up.

Maybe when we get to heaven we will be re-introduced to all those that we could have and should have witnessed to and the blood of them will be on our hands and we will attempt to wipe it off on the unspotted garments provided to us because of the blood of Jesus Christ. We are going to have white garments given to us like His. Maybe our sin will pollute our garments.

How do our lives affect the Judgment Seat of Christ? The loss at the judgment seat of Christ may deal with our clothing. Verse 10 in the following passage refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ, but the entire context discusses how a person is clothed.

II Corinthians 5:1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, **eternal in the heavens.** 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be **clothed** upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being **clothed** we shall **not be found naked.** 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst 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, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Verse one discusses our tabernacle in the heavens. Verse two reveals that this tabernacle refers to how we will be clothed. Verse six confidently affirms that while we are absent from the Lord we are clothed with this mortal body. Furthermore, Paul confidently affirms that he is willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord and because of this fact, he labored (next verse).

9 **Wherefore** we **labour**, that, whether present or absent, we may be **accepted** of him. 10 For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ**; that every one may **receive the things done in his body**, according to that he hath done, whether it be **good or bad.** 11 Knowing therefore **the terror of the Lord**, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

Verse 9 says we labour in order to be accepted of him. We are already positionally accepted (our standing). Ephesians drives home this point even further.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us **accepted** in the beloved.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ makes us accepted in the beloved — standing. However, verse 9 is not referring to our standing, but instead refers to our state. The verse is talking about our walk, our work and our life. Verse 10 continues by telling us that we will receive the things done in our bodies!!!

Because of the preachers understanding of the terror of the Lord, we should be warning Christians to live for God. God is not mocked. We are not "getting away with our sin" down here. The Christian says, "But I am forgiven." Yes, praise God you are forgiven. Praise God! I'm forgiven. You're forgiven! Every Christian is forgiven. But God is not mocked...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Christians playing fast and loose with the things of God is a big deal. Can you imagine standing before the righteous God of the universe? You will then have a fuller understanding of the meaning of receiving the things done in your body. Shamefully, Christians today are blind and naked to the truth.

Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods,

and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and **naked**: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and **white raiment**, that thou mayest be clothed, and that **the shame of thy nakedness** do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Nakedness is a shame. We are told that there will be those in heaven ashamed. In our wicked, degenerated form of Christianity, we have Christians that think they are doing so good just because they make it to church on Sunday morning (and maybe that evening and even Wednesday too). There is much more to faithfulness than simply going to church to "punch your card." God is not mocked. We cannot do as we please. To many Christians act as though they have God's hands tied behind His back because they are saved. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men! All I want to do is persuade you to live for Jesus...live for Jesus...live for Jesus. There is nothing else that matters. Back to the shame of thy nakedness. How many Christians fail to truly understand the importance of diligent Bible study?

II Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be **ashamed**, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The Apostle Paul will have the privilege of presenting the church (the bride of Christ) to the Lord Jesus Christ. He will present us as a chaste virgin to Him.

II Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ.

We are the bride of Christ. Because of Paul's ministry to the church, he is going to present the church to Christ. But notice that at the marriage supper of the Lamb we will come to it dressed in our righteousness.

Revelation 19:7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his **wife** hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine **linen**, clean and white: for the fine linen is the **righteousness of saints**. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the **marriage supper of the Lamb**. And he saith unto me, these are the true sayings of God.

We are saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ (**Philippians 3:9**), but rewarded based on our own righteousness. That means that our standing is determined by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but our state by our own righteousness. Our work is related to righteousness. The fine linen that will clothe us individually is the righteousness of saints. Revelation chapter 16 talks about keeping the garment.

Revelation 16:15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and **keepeth his garments**, lest he walk **naked**, and they see his **shame**.

We have a garment given to us. It is white, clean and beautiful because of what the Lord did for us at the cross of Calvary. Another connection of being ashamed and righteousness is found in First John.

I John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be **ashamed** before him at his coming. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth **righteousness** is born of him.

Colossians gives some final clarification concerning the Church. Paul speaks of the presentation of the individual Christian in verse 22, but qualifies his remarks with the word "if" in verse 23.

Colossians 1:22 In the body of his flesh **through death**, to **present** you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: 23 **If** ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

IF!!! Paul speaks of warning every man so that he may present every man perfect (complete).

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, **warning** every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may **present** every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Those that claim that Christians need only be concerned with a loss of rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ never consider that the Bible clearly points out that we will receive for the wrong too. What kind of garment will you have (for all eternity)? Or will you be naked? God is not mocked. We are joint-heirs with Christ IF...(Romans 8:17, II Timothy 2:12). We are not JUST going to lose our rewards...we are going to receive something too.

Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall **receive the reward of the inheritance**: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall **receive for the wrong** which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

The Bible clearly teaches that the Judgment Seat of Christ for an unfaithful Christian is not just a matter of losing rewards. Christians will receive something too. What may that be? My purpose is to warn every believer based on my knowledge of what the Bible says about the terror of the Lord and the fact that God is not mocked. Christian, won't you make a renewed commitment to Him?