

## After Rapture, what's next?

30/9/2020 JC Meeting

### **Reading: 2-Corinthians 5:1-10**

God's prophetic program for the Church will begin with the Rapture and the next major event for the Church will be to stand before the BEMA (Greek word for judgment seat) of Christ in Heaven. At the judgment seat of Christ, all believers from the church age—the time between the day of Pentecost and the Rapture—will appear individually before Christ, to receive rewards or loss of rewards based on their **life, service** and **ministry** for the Lord. This will be the 1<sup>st</sup> of seven great future judgments that will occur.

### **The Future Judgments:**

1. **The Judgment of Church-age believers** (2-Corinthians 5:10). All Christian believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ in Heaven for rewards
2. **The Judgment of Old Testament Believers** (Daniel 12:1-3). In this all OT Righteous will be resurrected and rewarded after the Second Coming.
3. **The Judgment of Tribulation Believers** (Revelation 20:4-6). Those who will trust and accept Christ during the Tribulation and are martyred will be resurrected and rewarded at the end of the Tribulation.
4. **The Judgment of Jews living @ the Second Coming** (Ezekiel 20:34-38). All Jews who will survive the tribulation will be judged right after the Second Coming of Christ. The saved will enter the millennial Kingdom while the lost will be purged.
5. **The Judgment of Gentiles living @ the Second Coming** (Matthew 25:31-46). All Gentiles who will survive the Tribulation will be judged immediately after the Second Coming, when Christ sits on His glorious throne. This is often referred to as the judgment of the "sheep & goats". The righteous will enter the millennial Kingdom while the unrighteous will be cast into hell.
6. **The Judgment of Satan and Fallen Angels** (Revelation 20:10). The final judgment of Satan and fallen angels (demons) will take place after the millennial Kingdom (Matthew 25:41; 2-Peter 2:4 and Jude 6).
7. **The Great White Throne Judgment** (Revelation 20:11-15). The Judgment of all unrighteous people will occur at the end of the Millennium. They will be judged according to their works and cast into the lake of fire.

Let us look at some important questions and find their answers from the Scriptures.

**Question No:1** Will Christians face Judgment?

**Answer:** Yes. All believers will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:8-10; 1-Corinthians 3:11-15 & 9:24-27). At that time each believer's life will be thoroughly examined by Christ—the divine Judge.

**Question No:2** What is a “Judgment Seat”?

**Answer:** The idea of a judgment seat goes back to the athletic games of Paul's time. After the games concluded, a dignitary took his seat on an elevated throne in the arena. One by one the winning athletes came up to the throne to receive a reward, usually a wreath of leaves—a victor's crown. In the case of Christians, each of us will stand before Christ the Judge and receive what is due to us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

**Question No:3** Can we lose our Salvation at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

**Answer:** No. Those who have placed faith in Christ are permanently saved, and nothing threatens that. Believers are eternally secure in their Salvation (John 10:28-30; Romans 8:29-39; Ephesians 1:13 & 4:30 and Hebrews 7:25). This judgment has to do with the reception or loss of rewards, depending upon whether the Christian has lived faithfully or unfaithfully during his or her earthly life (see 1-Corinthians 3:12-15).

**Question No:4** Will Christians be held accountable for all their actions on earth?

**Answer:** Yes. The Christian's judgment will focus on his or her personal stewardship of the gifts, talents, opportunities and responsibilities given to him or her in this life. The very character of each Christian's life and service will be utterly laid bare under the unerring (always right & accurate) and omniscient (knowing every thing) vision of Christ, whose eyes are “like flame of fire” (Revelation 1:14).

Numerous Scripture verses reveal that each of our actions will be judged before the Lord. For example, the Psalmist affirmed to the Lord: “You will render to a man according to his work” (Psalm 62:12; see also Matt 16:27). In Ephesians 6:7-8, we read that “whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord”.

**Question No:5** What about our thoughts? Will they be judged too?

**Answer:** Though it might seem a bit unnerving (make/feel nervous or frightened), the answer is yes. In Jeremiah 17:10 God said “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds”. In 1-Corinthians 4:5 we read “The Lord will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart”. The Lord is one “who searches mind and heart” (revelation 2:23). So—all our motives will be laid bare.

**Question No:6** Will the word we spoke on earth come up at the judgment seat of Christ?

**Answer:** Again, it’s a bit frightening to think about, but the answer is yes. Christ once promised: “I tell you, on the day of judgment, people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37). Think about that for a minute. If even our careless words are carefully recorded, how much more will our calculated boastful claims, our cutting criticism of others, our off-color jokes and our unkind comments will be taken into account. This is an important aspect of judgment, for tremendous damage can be done through the human tongue (see James 3:1-12).

**Question No:7** Will we be judged on anything else???

**Answer:** The judgment will be comprehensive. Our accountability to God embraces all of life. We will be held accountable for:

(a) How we use our God-given talents and abilities ( Matt 25: 14-29; Luke 19:11-26; 1-Cor 12:4-7; 2-Tim 1:6 & 1-peter 4:10)

(b) How we spend our time (Ps 90:9-12; Eph 5:15-16; Col 4:5 & 1-Peter 1:17).

(c) How we treat others (matt 10: 41-42; Heb 6:10),

(d) Our hospitality to strangers (Matt 25:35-36; Luke 14:12-14),

(e) Responding in a godly way to mistreatment (Matt 5:11-12; Mark 10:29-30; Luke 6:27-28&35; Roman 8:18; 2-Cor 4:17; 1-Peter 4:12-13)

(f) Making efforts towards winning souls for Christ (Proverbs 11:30; Dan 12:3; 1-Thess 2:19-20).

(g) We will also be held accountable for our attitude towards money (Matt 6:1-4; 1-Tim 6:17-19). All this is a powerful motivation to submit to Christ in all areas of our lives.

Let me close with this final question: What should be our attitude towards the judgment seat of Christ???

The impending Judgment of Christians should perfect them in the fear of the Lord, and cause them to be clear-minded and self-controlled. We need

to watch & Pray (1-Peter 4:5&7), to live holy & godly lives (2-Peter 3:11) and also show mercy & kindness to all (Matthew 5:7)

I am firmly convinced that Jesus delights to reward His people. He yearns (have strong feeling/desire/longing for) to do it. It will bring a smile to His face to be able to hand you a reward at the judgment seat. This fact—in addition to the awesome, marvelous and wonderful Salvation, He has provided us—should motivate all of us to serve & obey Him with joy and a sense of thrill & excitement, as well as with shudder & trembling for the future. May God help us to do so.....Amen.