

03 – STAGES OF THE JUDGMENT SEAT

6. What Kind of Judgment Is It?

- a.) **It's Fair and Accurate** – (1 Cor. 4:5) – He's got perfect sight and understanding. (He won't make any mistakes.)
- b.) **It's a Personalized Judgment** – He takes "you" into consideration. We don't all have the same abilities, the same start in life, or the same resources. God takes all of that into consideration.
- c.) **It's Intensely Thorough** – (That's an understatement!)

2 Cor. 5:10 – "For we must all **appear** before the judgment seat of Christ."

- ✓ I used to think that Paul was saying that we need to "make an appearance" – or "show up" – at the Judgement Seat. But it means more than that.
- ✓ The Greek word for "appear" means "to **make completely visible**, to **turn inside-out**, or to **show in its true character**". ("We must all be turned inside out, be made completely visible, and have our true character revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.")
- ✓ On that day, you'll be one-on-one with Jesus, as He reviews your life. There'll be no hiding anything; no "putting a positive spin" on things. Everything will be seen for exactly what it is. (As terrifying as that might sound, it's not as bad as you think.)

1 Cor. 4:5 – "He will shine light on everything that is now hidden in darkness, and he will expose the secret motives of men's hearts, and **then shall every man have praise from God.**"

- ✓ What's the result of Jesus seeing you exactly as you are? A tongue-lashing? (No. Read it again.) "...**then shall every man have praise from God.**"

- ✓ **The purpose of this judgment isn't to belittle you or chew you out. He's looking for things to praise (and reward) you for.**

- ✓ Yes, it's thorough! But that's so nothing will go unrewarded that *deserves* a reward, and nothing will be rewarded that *doesn't* deserve it. He'll look at the true nature of everything that was done. Whatever has eternal value will receive a reward.

A Few More Thoughts

- ✓ It's not just your works that Jesus examines. He also examines you.

Romans 14:12 – "So then every one of us shall give account **of himself** to God." (It's not just your works. You'll give an account of *yourself*!)

- ✓ He'll ask you: "What did you do with the life that I gave you? Did you live it for Me? Did you follow My plan, or did you dream up one of your own? Were you obedient? Did you mature in your walk with God?"

He Gives Us Time

- ✓ Now, don't stress too much about that! He gives you time! You've got your whole life to work on these things.

Matt. 25:19 – "**After a long time** the lord of those servants came to reckon with them."

- ✓ He's not demanding results by next Tuesday. He gives you your whole life! But that's where it can be deceptive. It seems like so much time! And Satan is a master distractor. (We're so "side-trackable".)
- ✓ We spend so much time focused on things that don't matter, while we ignore what will last for eternity. We can't do anything about the time we've wasted in the past. But we can certainly make the best use of the time we've got left.

Three Stages of Judgment

- ✓ I see three distinct parts to the Judgment Seat of Christ. (i) There are the Books, (ii) a verbal account, and finally, (iii) a trial by fire. Let's look, first, at the Books.

I. The Books

Daniel 7:10 – "... the judgment was set, and the books were opened."

Rev. 20:12 – "... (the lost) were judged out of those things which were written in the books ..."

- ✓ (Technically, those verses refer to the unbelievers' judgment, not ours. But it stands to reason that, if the unbelievers' judgment includes books, ours is likely to as well.) The Bible identifies five books (in Heaven) that contain information about you.

a. The Book of Life

- ✓ The Greek word for "life" (used here) is "Zoe", which refers to eternal life. Essentially, this is God's "Family Album". Everyone who has received eternal life has their name written in this Book.

b. The Book of "You"

Psalms 139:16 – "You saw me before I was born, and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every detail of my life was already written in Your book. Every day was recorded before any of them ever happened!" (TLB)

- ✓ Well, that settles the abortion debate, doesn't it? Every detail of your life was recorded while you were still in the womb. Don't misunderstand. That doesn't mean that God decided everything you'd do, and now, you're just a "puppet" acting it out.
- ✓ God doesn't make your decisions for you, but He *does* have a plan for your life. (That plan was written in a book before you were born. And, that book will be at your judgment.)

c. The Book of Tears

Psalms 56:8 – "You have seen me tossing and turning through the night. You have collected all my tears and preserved them in your bottle! You have recorded every one in your book." (TLB)

- ✓ This book records all the hurts and injustices you experienced in life. Every tear you ever cried is recorded in this book. It seems that God will bring up the hurts of the past and finally set things right.

d. The Book of Remembrance

Malachi 3:16 – "Those who feared and loved the Lord spoke of him often to each other. God saw what they were doing and listened in. A book of remembrance was opened in God's presence and minutes were taken of the meeting, with the names of the God-fearers written down." (TLB, MSG)

- ✓ I have a friend who loves Bible prophecy as much as I do. When we're together, it doesn't take long for the conversation to turn to the "end times". A couple of hours can pass before we notice that our wives have been sitting there, unable to get a word in edgewise.
- ✓ According to this verse, as we were talking, an angel was taking "minutes" of the "meeting". That book will turn up at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

e. The Book of Works

Revelation 20:12 – "And I saw the (spiritually) dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (KJV)

- ✓ This verse is referring to the unbelievers' judgment. (I'm sure we'll have a similar book at our judgment.)

- ✓ For believers, the book of works contains all their works since the moment of salvation. (Excluding the ones that they've confessed and forsaken – 1 John 1:9.) So, written records of our works (good and bad) will be there, along with the other books we've mentioned.

II. A Verbal Account

Ro. 14:12 – “So then each of us shall give **account** of himself to God.”

- ✓ The Greek word for “account” means, “to communicate in words”. So, there's a *conversation* between you and Jesus, concerning your life.
- ✓ The word “account” is also used in connection with stewardship. (Luke 16:2 – “So he called him and said, ‘How is it that I hear this about you? Give an **account** of your **stewardship** ...” – MEV)

Life Is a Stewardship

- ✓ Churches, in our day, don't talk much about stewardship. A **“steward” is one who manages what belongs to someone else.** I'm not sure if you realize this or not, but you don't own anything. (Everything you “own” is in your hands temporarily. It belongs to the Lord, and you're merely a steward of it – Ps. 50:10-12, Haggai 2:8, 1 Chron. 29:14, Lev. 25:23, 1 Cor. 10:26).
- ✓ I'll say it again: Everything you have is *in your hands* as a steward, not an owner. And your stewardship reaches beyond your physical possessions. You're a steward of your time, your talents, your treasure, your relationships, your opportunities ... *everything*. Jesus is going to ask you someday, “How did you use those things to further the Kingdom?”

III. Trial by Fire – We'll deal with that one next week.