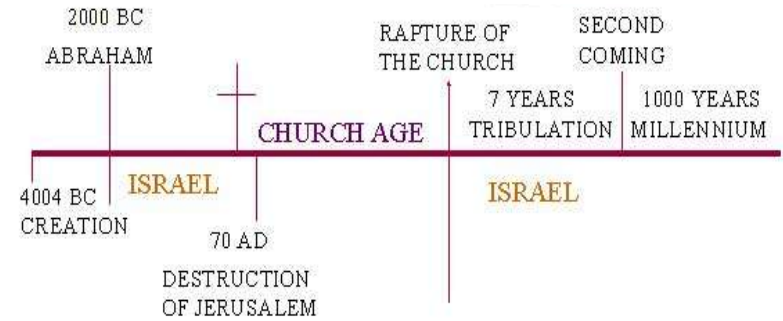


Dispensationalism & Covenants



Introduction

When the Church of Jesus Christ is “caught up” to be with the Lord in the air at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:51-55), the first thing that will happen is the individual believer will have his or her works *examined for reward or failure* by our Bridegroom Jesus Christ. This event is called “The Judgment (Bema) Seat of Christ”.

Why Should I Be Concerned?

If salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone, why should I be concerned about the Judgment Seat of Christ? After all,

Ephesians 2:8-9 (KJV) "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: {9} Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Salvation is by Grace alone. However, few read the *very next verse* which states:

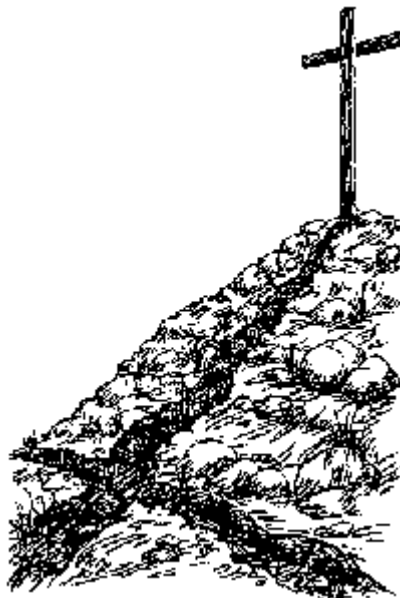
Following the Rapture:
Bema (Judgment Seat) of
Christ and Believer
Judgment For Reward

Rock Hill Baptist Church

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Lexington, Tennessee
38351

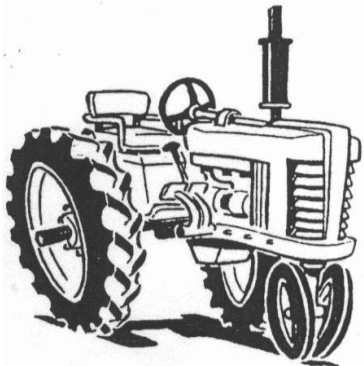
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Ephesians 2:10 (KJV) "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Though the Christian is not saved by works, he is nevertheless *expected and ordered* to work for his Lord and Savior. As Christians we are *designed and equipped* to do the works of God. When Jesus returns for His Church He will judge each and every believer to see if we *functioned within our God-given design*.



If we did function within our design, just as God equipped us to do, then we will receive *rewards* at the Judgment Seat of Christ. If not we will lose our Heavenly rewards – though not our salvation. The

believer's salvation is secure, though his reward can be lost if he is careless in living his life for Christ.

In our modern society a number of ministers and organizations have promoted a *pure grace* sort of agenda. They have taught that, since we are saved purely by the Grace of God in Christ, then we are free to do *whatever we like*. This sort of doctrine was *never* supported by the early Church nor the Scriptures. If you went out and purchased a tractor,

you would expect that tractor to do what you purchased it to do. In other words, you would expect it to work within its *design*. You would not buy a tractor and expect to take it out on the lake fishing, nor would you expect to use the tractor to take the kids to Church on Sunday. A tractor is used to plow, and you would expect your tractor to plow and work your fields. In the same way God *expects the believer* to function within his equipping. We are told:

1 Corinthians 6:20 (KJV) "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

You belong to Jesus, so you should honor Jesus. Who should we serve? Who should be first and foremost in our thoughts if we are believers?

1 Corinthians 7:23 (KJV) "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men."

Jesus, that's who! Christians are not saved so they can return to the world and wallow in the muck. Christians are saved so they can go out and serve Jesus. Any Gospel that proclaims salvation is *confession without conversion* is a Gospel foreign to the Scripture. Though we as Christians are saved by faith in Christ – faith alone, mind you – the believer is also *radically changed* at the point of salvation. A Christian will want to work for Christ. A Christian may fail, and may even fall into sin, but the Christian

will not walk away from God without a thought.
Believers are *indwelt by the Spirit of God*:

1 Corinthians 3:17 (KJV) "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for **the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.**"

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV) "What? know ye not that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? {20} For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.**"

The believer is *designed* to work for God, therefore he is *held accountable* for working for God.

Jesus Christ Taught Accountability

It is impossible to read the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and teach a doctrine of *easy believism*. Such a thing is not supported in Scripture! Jesus taught that we should *watch* and *be ready* for we do not know when our Lord will return.

Matthew 24:42, 46 (KJV) "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. **Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.**"

Why should we watch and be ready if our Lord

doesn't *care* what we're doing? Why watch and be ready if our Lord doesn't hold us *accountable* for our actions?

Matthew 25:13 (KJV) "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Jesus spoke of *unprofitable servants* who would lose their talents for failing to properly invest what was given to them (**Matthew 25:13-30**). Jesus warned His disciples again and again that they should *watch* for His unexpected return:

Mark 13:33-37 (KJV) "Take ye heed, **watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.** {34} For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and **gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.** {35} **Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: {36} Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.** {37} And what I say unto you I say unto all, **Watch.**"

Jesus was not speaking about unbelievers here, but believers. He uses the term "His servants" to show that those whom He is addressing are believers, not unbelievers. Jesus warned that His return would be unexpected, and, as such, we should be busy doing

the things He has assigned us to do.

Matthew Henry “*We are too apt to rest in a bare profession of faith, and think that this will save us; it is cheap and easy religion.*”

Luke 12:37-40 (KJV) "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. {38} And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. {39} And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. {40} Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."

Jesus taught that a greater blessing came for those servants who *watched for* His return, who were *obedient to* His work. In our modern day, serve me in a minute America many who profess Christ have done so as children, yet have never served the Master one day since then. Many have joined Churches all across our country and have never committed themselves to the cause that our Lord suffered and died for. Many remember being immersed or sprinkled as children, but have not spoken the name of Jesus in anything but a curse since that milestone in their lives. It is certain that salvation is by faith

alone in Christ alone – and it is equally certain that salvation, once secured, is sure and permanent. But it is also equally certain that those who are saved have been indwelt by the Spirit of God, made *born again*, and are changed and equipped to where they *can and must* work for the Savior.

Now what are we to say to those Christians who, professing Christ, immediately go to sleep as readily as the disciples did in the Garden of Gethsemane? What are we to say to those who have professed Christ, but now put Him to an open shame by not only refusing to live for Him, but who openly and admittedly sin along with the world? Is there a judgment coming for the Christian? Yes, dear friend, there is, and it is announced repeatedly in the Scripture.

The Apostle Paul Spoke Of A Christian Judgment

1 Corinthians 4:2-5 (KJV) "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. {3} But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. {4} For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. {5} Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every

man have praise of God."

When the Corinthian believers judged Paul's ministry and compared him to another famous preacher of that day called Apollos, they often found Paul to be well, *tried in the balance and found wanting*. You



see, Paul was a blessed Apostle, the Apostle to the Gentiles, a cherished Servant of God, but Paul was not as wonderful a speaker as Apollos was. I know the feeling, as does every preacher ever called into ministry by Jesus. We who serve Jesus as pastors and preachers are often judged by our members to be *tried in the balance and found wanting*. Sometimes

that trying is made in our presence and in our own hearing, which can hurt, but it is understandable. As servants we are all equipped to serve Jesus, but some seem better at the chore than others. No matter, I digress.

Rather than take offense at being compared with Apollos and being found *less a preacher*, Paul asked

the Corinthians "Why do you judge this steward? I do not even judge my own efforts, for *He that judges me is the Lord*". Paul then alludes to the fact that – when Jesus comes – there WILL be a judgment that will reveal the quality of our work. He said **"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts"**

The work of the believer – even the Apostle – will be judged when Jesus returns for His people. Following the Rapture of the Church each believer will have his or her works *tested* for – how shall I put this? - that work's adherence to God's will and God's Word. The Apostle speaks of this to the Roman Christians when he tells them to stop judging one another's stewardship. He said:

Romans 14:10-12 (KJV) "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."

The Romans were judging one another in matters that, quite frankly, they should *not* have been judging one another for. Christians should judge *sin in the*

Church, and should expel sin from their midst as soon as it is recognized. There are a number of clear references in the Scripture to judging sin, especially in the writings Paul made to the carnal Corinthian believers (see **1 Corinthians 5:1-15; 6:1-5**). We should judge and cast sin out of our local churches. However there are certain things and points of stewardship that believers should *not judge*, for the *Scripture itself* does not judge it. On those areas we wait for the Lord's judgment. This was what Paul was addressing in the Book of Romans. Paul tells us to *leave the gray areas of stewardship alone*, for certain things (like eating meat sacrificed to idols) shall be judged by Jesus at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul specifically tells us:

we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ

Who shall stand before this Judgment Seat? WE shall, that is, WE BELIEVERS. How many of us shall stand before this Judgment Seat? ALL of us who are believers. What do we see in this text? We see a clear presentation that our works will yet be judged by Jesus Christ. The Christian, born again, indwelt by the Spirit, saved by Grace, is nonetheless a *steward of God*, and what he or she does with that stewardship will be weighed by the Master. The Apostle James echoes this warning when he says:

James 5:9 (KJV) "Grudge not one against

another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door."

If every Christian realized that Jesus *stands at the door* watching what we do, and if every Christian fully realized that our works *will be judged* when Jesus returns for His saints, then we would be more careful with how we live our lives in Christ. Few preachers ever address the Judgment Seat of Christ – especially within the Baptist camp. Most Baptists are so focused on the Doctrine of Eternal Security (what others call “Once Saved, Always Saved”) and even on Election that they ignore this prominent Biblical truth:

Romans 14:12 (KJV) "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

The Christian is *accountable*, and shall *give an account* of his stewardship to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Does The Judgment Seat Of Christ Determine One's Salvation?

I want to make this very clear: the Judgment Seat of Christ *does not* determine the salvation of the believer. Your salvation is determined at the *point you accept Jesus Christ as Savior*. A believer is saved by faith in Christ, never to be condemned to eternal damnation. Once saved by faith, God the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the believer's life, and

begins to equip the believer to work for Christ. The Scripture says:

John 3:18 (KJV) "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that **believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you believe on Jesus you are “**believeth on him is not condemned**”, but if you refuse to believe on Jesus you are “**condemned already**”. In other words, your judgment for salvation occurs *in this life*, and that judgment is conditioned on how you respond to God's offer of salvation through Christ Jesus. For that matter, the *unbeliever*, if he dies in his sins, dies in a *condemned state*. The Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15 does not *condemn* anyone: these unbelievers died in a condemned state, for they refused to accept Christ as Savior. What the Great White Throne Judgment does is *show those who stand before it* that they are condemned, and that their works were not good enough to gain them entrance in Heaven. What the Judgment Seat of Christ does is *show those believers who stand before it* that the stewardship they served in this life was, or was not, worthy of reward.

The Judgment (Bema) Seat of Christ is therefore a judgment of the believer's works, the works we did for Jesus in this life. Who must appear at this Judgment?

2 Corinthians 5:10 (KJV) "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."

Again, all Christians must stand before Jesus at this Judgment. Our works will be judged for worthiness. This is a judgment of *works*, not of salvation. Those who fail at this judgment will not be cast into eternal damnation, but they will be *ashamed*

1 John 2:28 (KJV) "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.**"

when He comes to receive them following the Rapture. Those who fail in their stewardship may lose their Heavenly reward. Paul warned the pastors at Ephesus to be careful with their stewardships:

Acts 20:31-32 (KJV) "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. {32} And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to **build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them** which are sanctified."

Telling them to watch and strive for their Heavenly inheritance. In **2 Timothy 2:15** Paul tells us to *study to show ourselves approved unto God* lest we be *ashamed* before Him. Again, we see the believer is commanded to faithfulness. In **1 Corinthians 9:27** Paul said that He drove himself as an Apostle lest he become *a castaway* or *disqualified* from his Heavenly prize. Again, we see an idea of accountability for the believer.

A Focal Text On The Judgment Seat of Christ

1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (KJV) "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, 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."

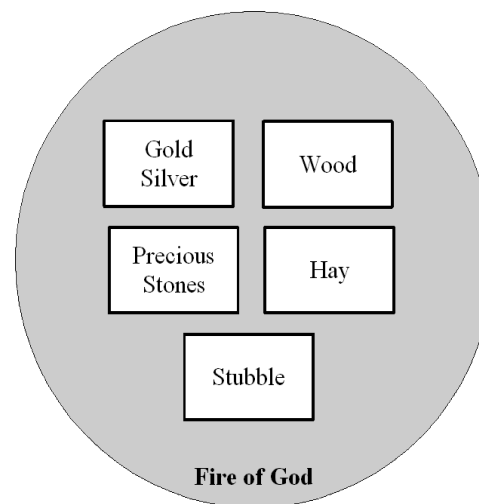
The *foundation* of our faith is Jesus Christ, and the work that He did for us on the Cross. If this

foundation is not in place, nothing – I repeat – NOTHING that we do has any value whatsoever. Once the foundation is laid, however, the born again Christian is *expected to work* for Jesus. The Apostle said:

**“let every man take heed
how he buildeth thereupon”**

The words *take heed* in our text is the Present Active Imperative of the verb *blepo*, which means “look carefully, look out!, pay careful attention to”. Since this verb is in the *Imperative* mood it is a command: “You'd better look out!” This is a far cry from the fluff preached to congregations of Christians all across America today. The Apostle said,

“You'd better watch your step, boys!”



Paul next refers to the *stewardship* of the Christian in six categories: gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble. These are all items that, if exposed to fire, they will either be **purified, remain the same, change states,**

or be destroyed. Gold or silver works will be

purified when placed under the trying fire of God. All dross or impurities will be burned out of the Believer's works, and what will be left will be reward. Precious stones, if placed under fire, normally remain unchanged ... however diamonds, composed of carbon, will burn. Wood, hay, and stubble will burn with varying degrees of speed, and what is usually left behind has no value (other than for making soap).

(1 Corinthians 3:13) "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."

It is important to note that the *work*, not the Christian himself, is tried by the fire of God. The Judgment Seat of Christ does not determine whether the believer is saved or not: it determines whether the believer's work is worthy of reward or not. All of the works that we, as Christians, committed in this life will be tested.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 "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."

If the believer's work remains following God's test, then the believer receives a reward. If the work burns,

the believer loses his Heavenly reward, but NOT his salvation. "What is that to me", you may ask - "I still have my salvation, so why work for Jesus in this life?" Ah dear friend. If you care so little for He Who suffered and died for you, are you truly saved? Jesus expected those who loved Him to be obedient to Him:

John 14:15 (KJV) "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

If you have no love for Jesus, are you saved? If you have no love for Jesus, does He make His abode with you?

John 14:23 (KJV) "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

If you have no love for Jesus, and do not obey Him, nor seek to honor Him with your stewardship, then the love of God is not in you. Check you life, professor! Profession without love has never been a true test of Christianity.

James 2:18-20 (KJV) "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. {19} Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and

tremble. {20} **But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"**

A professed Christian who has no care for Christ, who does not work for Jesus, is a person trusting in a dead faith. Living Christians are indwelt by the living God. Living Christians, flawed as they are, still work and strive for Jesus. Those who profess to know Jesus but who have never experienced any desire to serve Him, who wander from the altar of profession back into the slop of the devil's world, these professors need to check their hearts carefully. It may be as the Book of Peter warns:

2 Peter 2:20-22 (KJV) "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. {21} For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. {22} But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

If you have never experienced a changed life and a love for Jesus following your profession you may yet be dead in your sins. You may never have been

converted by God, and your profession may only be a sham, an outward mouthing without inward blessing. I pray that you judge yourselves lest ye be judged. I pray that you seek the Lord while He may yet be found. If you are a Christian, know that your works will one day be judged. And if you are not truly a Christian you are condemned already.

I pray that all will read these blessed words, and heed them. Jesus spoke these words to mere professors, Pharisees who claimed Abraham as their father, people who were clean on the outside but never truly born again. He told them:

John 8:12 (KJV) "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Believers do NOT walk in sin and darkness.

John 8:23-24 (KJV) "And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. {24} I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Believers DO accept Jesus Christ as the One and Only Messiah.

John 8:31-32 (KJV) "Then said Jesus to those

Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; {32} And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

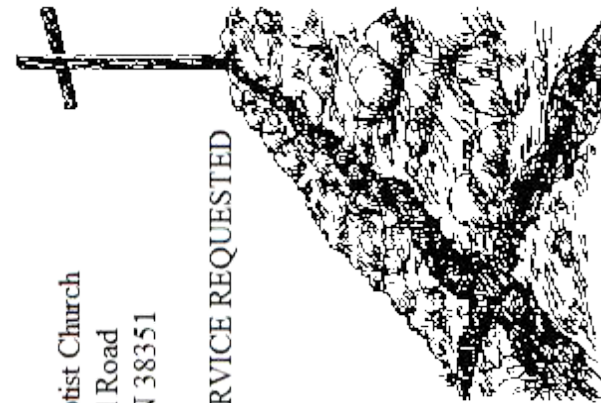
Believers continue in the Lord's Word, not on the pathway of sin.

John 8:34-36 (KJV) "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. {35} And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. {36} If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Believers do not remain enslaved to sin or to the things of this world, but enjoy life in Jesus.

John 8:42 (KJV) "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

Believers love Jesus and know God as their Father. This alone drives us to work for our Creator and our Savior. Mere profession without conversion has no efficacy. If you know Jesus Christ as your Savior then you love Him. If you love Him, you want to serve Him. If you serve Him, know that your works shall be one day judged. So work, dear Christian, work and tell others about Jesus!



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