

2 Corinthians 05 - The Ministry of Reconciliation; Bema Seat of Christ

I. Paul's explanation of his ministry (2 Cor 1:1—7:16)

(3) Paul's philosophy of ministry (2:14—6:10)

(D) Ministry is to be performed with the right motivation (4:16—5:21)

(b) Future with Christ (5:1-8)

(c) Future reward (5:9-10)

(d) Theocentric motivations (5:11-16)

(i) God's judgment (5:11-12)

(ii) God's glory and the Corinthians' welfare (5:13)

(iii) God's love (5:14a)

(iv) Christ's death (5:14b-16)

(e) Reconciliation (5:17-21)

2 Corinthians 5

(b) Future with Christ (5:1-8)

1 For we know that if our earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.

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1 We know that if the earthly tent we live in is torn down, we have a building in heaven that comes from God, an eternal house not built by human hands.

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 indeed, in this *tent* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

2 For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

2 For in this one we sigh, since we long to put on our heavenly dwelling.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 since in fact after putting it on, we will not be found naked.

3 inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.

3 Of course, if we do put it on, we will not be found without a body.

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For indeed, we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

4 For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

4 So while we are still in this tent, we sigh under our burdens, because we do not want to put it off but to put it on, so that our dying bodies may be swallowed up by life.

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.

- All will be resurrected (Acts 25:15; John 5:29). Resurrection is not a blessing for the unsaved.

5 Now He who prepared us for this very *purpose* is God, who gave us the Spirit as a **pledge**.

5 Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

5 God has prepared us for this and has given us his Spirit as a guarantee.

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

- "...pledge" - *arrabon*, a first installment, a down payment, a deposit, a pledge which obligates the contracting party to complete the transaction

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—

6 Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—

6 Therefore, we are always confident, and we know that as long as we are at home in this body we are away from the Lord.

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—

7 for we walk by faith, not by sight—

7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

- The Christian life is lived by faith, not by sight, and faith comes by the Word of God (Rom 10:17)

8 but we are of good courage and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

8 We are confident, then, and would prefer to be away from this body and to live with the Lord.

8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

(c) Future reward (5:9-10)

9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

9 So whether we are at home or away from home, our goal is to be pleasing to him.

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, so that **each one** may **receive compensation** for his **deeds done through the body**, in accordance with what he has done, whether good or bad.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

10 For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of the Messiah, so that each of us may receive what he deserves for what he has done in his body, whether good or worthless.

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.

- It should be of paramount importance to every believer the fact that every believer will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and hear Him evaluate us

— For believers, our sin has already been judged in Christ, and we need not be in dread of being judged for our sin (John 5:24; Col 2:13-14). At the *bemaseat* judgment, it is the believer's *works* that are judged.

- "...we must all" - both a requirement ("must") and a statement as to quantity ("all")

— All Christians must stand before Christ so their works can be judged; there is no exemption

— The purpose of this judgment is not to judge our sin (already judged at the Cross), or to determine salvation (determined at the point of faith alone in Christ alone we are transferred from death to life).

— So if it's not to judge sin or determine salvation, why do we need to be judged? The purpose is to give or withhold rewards, on the basis of faithfulness to Christ while alive on the earth.

- Some hold that there is only one general judgment for all people (saved and lost) following the return of the Lord, but that is not what Scripture teaches. There are several judgments that will take place with the saved being judged on a separate occasion from the lost (see chart: **Scripture's Four Judgments** below).

- "...each one" - this judgment is individual; we don't receive rewards as a group, as a church, or as a ministry

- "...receive compensation" - we're not punished at this judgment; what remains of our works after going through the fire will determine our reward

— "compensation" - reward; a reward is a capability to glorify God in eternity

- "...deeds *done* through the body" - the works I've done since putting my faith in Christ

— The question will be how have I really been living for Christ? Have I been attempting to live the Christian life through my own power and failing miserably, or have I been relying upon His resources for daily living? What was my motive for service?

[Rom 14:10,12; 1 Cor 3:10-15]

Scripture's Four Judgments

Name	Sheep and Goat	Judgment of the Jews	<u>Bema Seat</u>	Great White Throne
Scripture	Matt 25:31-46	Ezek 20:33-44	<u>1 Cor 3:10-15</u>	Rev 20:11-15
Place	Earth, Jerusalem	Earth, wilderness	<u>Heaven</u>	Earth
Audience	Gentile Tribulation survivors	Jewish Tribulation survivors	<u>Church Age believers</u>	All unsaved
When	After Tribulation	After Tribulation	<u>After rapture</u>	After Millennium
Purpose	Saved Gentiles enter kingdom	Saved Jews enter kingdom	<u>Reward believers</u>	Degree of punishment in hell
Evaluation	Treatment of Christ's brethren	Passing under shepherd's rod	<u>Works taken through fire</u>	Not in the book; judged by books

Judgment Seat

- Bema Seat: tribunal, judicial bench, judgment seat, throne
- Acts 12:21: Herod Agrippa I addressed the people of Tyre and Sidon
- John 19:13 (Cf. Matt 27:19): Jesus brought before Pilate
- Acts 18:12,16-17: Paul accused before Proconsul Gallio (this relic still among the ruins in Corinth)
- Acts 25:6,10,17: Paul brought before Festus at Caesarea

If you visit Corinth, you can see the very judgment seat that Gallio passed judgment on the apostle Paul: a richly decorated rostrum, centrally located in the market place. It was the place where rewards were given out for victory in the Isthmian games. These rewards consisted of garlands, trophies, crowns, and special social benefits such as exemption from taxes. But punishments were also administered here as well.

Scripture's Five Crowns

(Rev 4:10: 3:11; 2 John 8)

SCRIPTURE	CROWN	PURPOSE
1 Cor. 9:24-27	Incorruptible	Gaining mastery over the flesh
1 Thess. 2:19-20	Rejoicing	Soul winning
Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10	Life	Enduring trials
1 Pet. 5:2-4	Glory	Shepherding God's people
2 Tim. 4:8	Righteousness	Longing for His appearing

Jesus continually exhorted His fellows to full discipleship by reminding them that one day they would face an accounting for their stewardship (Matt 10:26-42; 16:27; 24:45-51; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:42-48)

- He challenged them to pursue rewards (Matt 5:11,46; 6:1-6,16-18) and treasure in heaven (Matt 6:19-21; 19:21; Mark 4:24-25; Luke 12:13-21; 16:1-13)

Prominent NT theme:

- James 3:1
- 1 Peter 4:17
- 1 John 4:17

Rewards

- Rev 22:12; 1 Cor 3:8,24; Luke 6:23,35; Matt 6:1,6; 10:41-42
 - Rewards are a legitimate motive (Matt 6:1; 1 Cor 9:24; 1 Peter 1:17; James 1:12; 2 John 8; Heb 12:2)
- Both the character of our service (1 Cor 3:10-15), and the motivations that impelled us (1 Cor 4:1-6), will be revealed.
- It will be a time of reckoning (Rom 14:8-13)

Criteria

1. Our Deeds (1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 2:23) must be according to Scripture (1 Cor 9:24; 2 Tim 2:5)
 - Must emerge from motivation to bring honor to God (Rev 2:23; 1 Cor 4:5; Matt 6:1-4; Heb 4:12-13; Col 3:22-25; 1 Cor 10:31)
2. Our Faithfulness (Matt 24:45; 25:23; Luke 16:10; 1 Cor 4:2; Rev 2:10)
3. Our Words (Matt 12:36-37; Luke 12:2-3). A sobering thought!
 - We need: passion in our prayers, sacrifice in our service, and real dedication in our daily living!

Even though eternal salvation is an entirely free gift which can never be lost, the NT (2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12; 1 Cor 3:11-15) makes plain that the believer must give an account of his or her Christian life in the presence of Christ. As is shown in text just cited, this judgment is not merely a review of our good deeds, but a comprehensive review that embraces both "good and bad." Therefore, shame is decidedly possible at the Judgment Seat. This is all the more true since Christians at that time will have their eternal bodies. Thus sin will no longer inhibit appropriate regret and embarrassment about those things in one's earthly life that did not please the Lord. [Hodges]

12 Areas of Judgment for Believers

1. How we treat other believers (Heb 6:10; Matt 10:41-42)
2. How we exercise our authority over others (Heb 13:17; James 3:13)
3. How we employ our God-given abilities (1 Cor 12:4,11; 2 Tim 1:6; 1 Peter 4:10)
4. How we use our money (1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 9:6-7; 1 Tim 6:17-19)
5. How we spend our time (Ps 90:12; Eph 5:16; Col 4:5; 1 Peter 1:17)
6. How much we suffer for Jesus (Matt 5:11-12; Mark 10:29-30; Rom 8:18; 2 Cor 4:17; 2 Peter 4:12-13)
7. How we run that particular race which God has chosen for us (1 Cor 9:24; Phil 2:16; 3:13-14; Heb 12:1)
8. How effectively we control the old nature (1 Cor 9:25-27)
9. How many souls we witness to and win to Christ (Prov 11:30; Dan 12:3; 1 Thess 2:19-20)
10. How we react to temptation (James 1:2-3; Rev 2:10)
11. How much the doctrine of the Rapture means to us (2 Tim 4:8-9)
12. How faithful we are to the Word of God and the flock of God (Acts 20:26-28; 2 Tim 4:1-2; 1 Peter 5:2-4)

The judgment seat of Christ is not a possibility, but a certainty! You and I have a definite appointment on the calendar of God. Are you ready? Paul's reaction to v10 is recorded in v11:

(d) Theocentric motivations (5:11-16)

(i) God's judgment (5:11-12)

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade people, but we are well known to God; and I hope that we are also well known in your consciences.

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.

11 Therefore, since we know what it means to fear the Lord, we try to persuade people. We ourselves are perfectly known to God. I hope we are also really known to your consciences.

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.

- "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31; Cf. 1 Peter 4:17-18)

— Yet, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)

— It is interesting that Paul's fear is not of hell; it is fear of heaven. We will be accountable for what He has given us.

— The issue is not whether we are saved, but what have we done with our salvation? (1 Peter 4:17-18)

12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but *are* giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.

12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.

12 We are not recommending ourselves to you again but are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so that you can answer those who are proud of outward things rather than inward character.

12 For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

- God uses imperfect instruments:

- Peter denied his Lord
- John and James evidenced ambition to sit on His right and left hand

- Paul insisted upon going up to Jerusalem against the voice of the Spirit
Your effectiveness with others will derive from your own readiness for the Bema Seat

(ii) God's glory and the Corinthians' welfare (5:13)

13 For if we have lost our minds, *it is* for God; if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you.

13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

13 So if we were crazy, it was for God; if we are sane, it is for you.

13 For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

- We care not for man's approval: only dependence upon the Holy Spirit. To glorify Christ and to seek to save the lost. That's what it's all about.

(iii) God's love (5:14a)

(iv) Christ's death (5:14b-16)

14 For the **love** of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

14 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;

14 The love of the Messiah controls us, for we are convinced of this: that one person died for all people; therefore, all people have died.

14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

- "...love" - the third of three impelling motives:

1. Realization that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ
2. Recognition that all men are lost without Him
3. The love of Christ...

15 and He died for all, so that those who live **would no longer live** for themselves, but for Him who died and rose on their behalf.

15 and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

15 He died for all people, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for the one who died and rose for them.

15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

- "...would no longer live" - *mēketi zaō*, subjunctive mood, the mood of possibility or potentiality; the action described ("live") may or may not occur, depending on the circumstances.

— The NT always holds out the potentiality of a Christian living the Christian life and progressing in the middle tense of their salvation; it's never guaranteed (Cf. Luke 8:14; John 15:2; Rom 6:4; Eph 2:10)

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

16 Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer.

16 So then, from now on we do not think of anyone from a human point of view. Even if we did think of the Messiah from a human point of view, we don't think of him that way anymore.

16 Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

- It is not the Christ of the manger, with whom we are linked, but the resurrected Christ! We interpret the manger by the throne!

(e) Reconciliation (5:17-21)

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *this person is a **new creation***; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is a new creature*; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in the Messiah, he is a new creation. Old things have disappeared, and—look!—all things have become new!

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

- "...new creation" - once a person becomes a believer, they are no longer viewed by God as being lost and dead in sin in Adam's family, but not spiritually alive and positionally "in Christ" (Cf. Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22; Eph 2:1-3,12-13)

- This verse doesn't mean that the old/sin nature is dead, as in non-existent. Our sin nature never goes away, but it has been defeated on the cross so that when believers go back to the sin nature, it is by choice, not by necessity.

18 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

18 Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

18 All of this comes from God, who has reconciled us to himself through the Messiah and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

19 for through the Messiah, God was reconciling the world to himself by not counting their sins against them. He has committed his message of reconciliation to us.

19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are **ambassadors** for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

20 Therefore, we are the Messiah's representatives, as though God were pleading through us. We plead on the Messiah's behalf: "Be reconciled to God!"

20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

- "...ambassadors" - someone who represents the values of their home country on foreign soil

— Believers on earth represent the values of our home country (the coming kingdom, along with heaven), to people on "foreign soil," the earth, which is owned and run by Satan (1 John 5:19)

— As ambassadors, we are to represent kingdom values (Matt 6:33) on earth now, until the kingdom arrives

— If we were in the kingdom now, how would we be ambassadors for the kingdom? Why would Paul command us to be ambassadors for something that was already present?

21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

21 He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

21 God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that God's righteousness would be produced in us.

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.