

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST:  
A JUDGMENT OF SINS OR SERVICE?

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## Introduction

In the Christian church today there exists a wide range of teachings concerning the nature of the judgment of Christians which will take place at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10). The title itself, “judgment seat of Christ,” seems to carry connotations of a judgment setting where sins will be judged and punished. Some people believe that Jesus Christ, the judge, will play a video of the sins of every believer’s life for all believers to see and then judge and punish for those sins. This interpretation is one of the views that has been taught by well-meaning pastors, but is this what will occur at the judgment seat of Christ? In contrast, a study of the Greek language behind the English translation reveals the possibility that the judgment seat of Christ will actually be a place of reward and ceremony similar to the award ceremonies after athletic competitions where the athletes receive their rewards. In this view Christians will be rewarded for their godly service. Is this what will occur? Is it possible that something in-between these two extremes will occur? Is there a middle position where some judgment and some reward will take place? Finally, what impact should this impending event have in the life of the believer today? Can it be a motivation for greater service for Christ and a joy to be anticipated? Or is it a dread that cannot be avoided and is best not dwelt upon?

The judgment seat of Christ brings together three great biblical doctrines: soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Throughout the church age, ecclesiology and eschatology have been represented by a wide spectrum of interpretations and applications. This diversity has had a great impact on the views of the meaning and purpose of the judgment seat of Christ. For

Premillennialist, this judgment is one of many of the eschatological judgments. However, for the Amillennialist, there will only be one future event of judgment, not multiple. It is not the purpose of this paper to settle these kinds of debate between Premillennialists, Amillennialists, etc. The Premillennialist position is assumed to be correct and, so, the judgment seat of Christ will be analyzed from this perspective. It is also not the purpose of this paper to determine the type of rewards that will be received at the judgment seat of Christ.

This paper will proceed by first biblically exegeting 2 Corinthians 5:10 as a representative passage concerning the judgment seat of Christ. Following this, the two major views on the nature of the judgment will be presented and analyzed. Then, to determine the correct view of the nature of this judgment, the judgment that occurred at the cross of Christ will be presented. Finally, the implications for the Christian life will be considered. A conclusion section will summarize the findings of this analysis.

### The Judgment Seat of Christ

There are three passages in the New Testament that teach directly about the judgment seat of Christ: Romans 14:10-12, 1 Corinthians 3:10-4:5, and 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. The single verse that best summarizes these teachings is 2 Corinthians 5:10. In this verse, Paul writes, “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” (2 Cor 5:10).<sup>1</sup> This verse teaches the essential characteristics of this judgment: The Persons of Judgment, The Place of Judgment, and The Purpose of Judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> All Bible references are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

### The Persons of Judgment

Paul begins v.10 with “We must all appear.” The pronoun “we” includes all of the New Testament saints from Pentecost to the rapture,<sup>2</sup> that is, the saints of the church age. The Tribulation saints (Matt 8:11) and the Old Testament saints (Dan 12:1-2) will be judged at the end of the Tribulation in preparation for the millennial kingdom (Rev 20:4-6). Paul goes on to say that these Christians “must appear.” The word “appear” is an important term in this passage. A simple rendering of the word would indicate nothing more than showing up. However, the verb used here, φανερόω, means “made visible, clear, manifest or known.”<sup>3</sup> Vine states that “the true meaning is to uncover, lay bare, reveal.”<sup>4</sup> Paul makes this appearance a necessity with his use of “must.” Putting this all together, “we must all appear” says that the saints of the New Testament have an unchangeable appointment set for them to have something revealed. Before Paul describes that which is to be laid bare, he describes the place where this is to occur.

### The Place of Judgment

Paul continues in v.10 writing that these Christians must appear “before the judgment seat of Christ.” The term “judgment seat” comes from the Greek word, βῆμα, and means “a raised place or platform, reached by steps.”<sup>5</sup> In the Septuagint (Neh 8:4) this word was used to

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<sup>2</sup>Clarence E. Mason, Jr., “A Study of Pauline Motives: As Revealed in 2 Corinthians 4:16-6:4a,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 111, no. 443 (July 1954): 220.

<sup>3</sup>G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd, 1991), 465.

<sup>4</sup>W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1981, Electronic form, Logos Research System, 1996).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

refer to the wooden platform on which Nehemiah stood to read the Scriptures. In ancient Greek culture the term referred both to a seat of judgment (John 19:13; Matt 27:19; Acts 18:12) and to an elevated platform for awarding athletes who won athletic events:

The word translated “judgment seat” (*bema*) is another instance of Paul’s intimate knowledge of the Olympic games (*cf.* 1 Cor 9:24–27). The *bema* was a stand on which the judges stood to observe and evaluate the actions of the contestants. If any athlete broke a rule...he missed the prize (victor’s wreath-*stephanos*) regardless of the place he finished in the race or contest. Likewise, when an event was completed, the contestants stood before the *bema* to hear the judges’ announcement of the results, and to receive such reward as might properly be theirs.<sup>6</sup>

The city of Corinth had a *bema* seat on its main street that was used by authorities both to reward citizens and to render justice. The latter use is seen in Acts 18 when the Jews dragged Paul there to see if Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, would stop him from teaching Christianity. In Romans 14:10, Paul uses the term to refer to the “judgment seat of God.” In this context, the judgment seat belongs to Jesus Christ. This ownership is consistent with the fact that God has given Christ the authority to execute judgment on His behalf (John 5:22, 27).

### The Purpose of Judgment

After setting the stage with the Persons of Judgment and the Place of Judgment, Paul introduces the Purpose of Judgment with the phrase “so that” in v.10. As Paul writes, the reason that the church saints appear before the judgment seat of Christ is so that “each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” First, “each one” focuses on the individual nature of this appearance. This usage has a parallel usage in Romans 14:12 where Paul explains that “each one of us will give an account of himself to God.” Second, a recompensing is to occur. The verb for recompense here is κομίζω, which

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<sup>6</sup> Mason, “A Study of Pauline Motives,” 220-21.

means “to receive back”<sup>7</sup> or “receive as his due.”<sup>8</sup> Third, this recompensing is based on “deeds done in the body, according to what he has done.” The words Paul uses here, “deeds done in the body,” seem to take on the same meaning as their English counterparts and need further expansion or support to determine precisely the “deeds” to which Paul is referring. The phrase “according to what he has done” gives further insight into the nature of how the recompensing will occur. The verb, πράσσω, which is translated “done,” is in the aorist tense and has the basic meaning “to achieve, accomplish.”<sup>9</sup> The use of the aorist is constative, indicating the ‘what’ has been done in its entirety, in a single whole.<sup>10</sup> This “pictures the whole life of the individual Christian as seen as a unity.”<sup>11</sup> This interpretation is further supported by the grammar that follows since the phrase “whether it” switches back to the singular form. Paul is saying that what is done in the lifetime of each individual Christian is summed up and viewed in total. Paul then gives “deeds” a further breakdown by classifying them as either “good or bad.” Both of these words have several Greek words that could represent them, depending on the meaning the author wanted to attach to the word. In the case of the word “good,” Paul chose ἀγαθός which

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<sup>7</sup>Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 253.

<sup>8</sup>Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. IV, *The Epistles of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), 229.

<sup>9</sup>Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 376.

<sup>10</sup>H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1927), 195-96.

<sup>11</sup>Fritz Rienecker, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, trans. and ed. by Cleon L. Rogers, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 468.

means “good and useful, especially moral goodness in relation to God who is perfect.”<sup>12</sup> For the word “bad,” Paul chose φαῦλος which means evil or bad in terms of actions and is an antonym for ἀγαθός.<sup>13</sup> A careful word study reveals that both of these words have a wide enough semantic range that they cannot, of themselves, describe exactly the nature of the “deeds” that will be recompensed at the judgment seat. Since both words can take on meanings of a moral nature, and since both words are used in judgment contexts relating to salvation (e.g. John 5:29), further study will be necessary to ascertain the exact content of the judgment to occur at the judgment seat of Christ.

In summary, 2 Corinthians 5:10 teaches that the saints of the New Testament have an unavoidable, necessary appointment set for them to appear before Jesus Christ on His judgment seat. When each Christian appears, Christ will reveal a sum total of the deeds that the individual has done so that these deeds can be recompensed, that is, the believer will receive back his due for his overall, total accomplishments based on whether they are good or bad. However, many questions remain, especially those raised above concerning the nature of this judgment. The next section will describe and evaluate the major evangelical positions on the nature of the judgment that will occur at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>12</sup>E. Beyreuther, “Good, Beautiful, Kind,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 2, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 98-107.

<sup>13</sup>E. Achilles, “Evil, Bad, Wickedness,” in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 561-67.



### The Nature of Judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ

The nature of the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ can be summarized into two views. The first view is the Judgment of Unconfessed Sin view, and the second view is the Judgment of Service view.

#### Judgment of Unconfessed Sin

A common view of the judgment seat is that God will punish believers for unconfessed sins and carnal living.<sup>14</sup> There are many variations of this view held among Christians. However, there are three common themes that run through most of these variations. First, the judgment seat of Christ will deal with unconfessed sin. Second, there will be punitive punishment for these sins. Third, there will be some amount of public exposure of these sins. As will be seen in the following analysis, there is not complete agreement among those who hold this position as scholars differ both on the actual details of what will occur at the judgment seat of Christ as well as on the emphasis to be placed on punishment, exposure, etc. This view will be examined by surveying some of the major proponents.

H. H. Savage explains that the emphasis will be placed on unconfessed sin and believes that each Christian will have to confess those sins before Christ at this time:

Those at the judgment seat of Christ are going to have to confess before Him the things that still need to be confessed. Those who are critics, those who are fault-finders, those who are character assassins, those who are doing everything they can to bring about schisms and difficulties in the church will have to report to Him. They have to confess to Him what sort of influence they have had on earth.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Samuel L. Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective: Part 1: The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137, no. 545 (Jan 1980): 34.

<sup>15</sup> H. H. Savage, "What Will the Faithful Do in Heaven?" in *Moody Founder's Week Conference Messages: February 5-11, 1962* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, n.d.), 49; quoted

This immediately raises the question of how much of a Christian's sin was dealt with by Jesus Christ on the cross. This is the difficulty associated with this view. A whole section is dedicated to this analysis below, but it can be said now that the good news for Christians is that all sin was dealt with at the cross and, because of that, there is no condemnation now or in the future for any Christian (John 5:24; Rom 5:1; 8:1).

George Dollar and Kenneth Dodson also represent the Judgment of Unconfessed Sin view and emphasize the aspect of punishment. First, Dollar defines the bhma as follows: "It is the judgment of the believer that will take place after the rapture of the Church but before the Lord's return to earth. Its purpose is to make manifest and deal with the sins of the believer that he has not dealt with in self-judgment."<sup>16</sup> Dollar reaches this conclusion through his interpretation of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. He believes that the unprofitable servant is a Christian who will be punished according to v.30: "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In fact, Dollar says, "For a thousand years when the Lord rules and reigns over the earth, you'll not rule. . . . But throughout that one thousand years, up there in the outer darkness . . . there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>17</sup>

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in Samuel L. Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective: Part 1: The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137, no. 545 (Jan 1980): 35.

<sup>16</sup>George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), 378.

<sup>17</sup>George W. Dollar, "Rewards" (tape-recorded sermon preached at Faith Baptist Church, La Crosse, WI, n.d.); quoted in Samuel L. Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective: Part 1: The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137, no. 545 (Jan 1980): 34.

Second, Kenneth Dodson writes the following about the judgment seat of Christ:

“Justice toward His children demands that God reward them for both ‘good works’ and ‘bad works’ at the ‘Judgment Seat of Christ.’ There will be crowns and rewards for ‘good works.’ There will be chastisement and ‘stripes’ for ‘bad works.’”<sup>18</sup>

Dollar’s interpretation, however, is unsupported. It is based on a misinterpretation of Matthew’s parable of the talents. The unprofitable servant is not a Christian but rather is an unsaved person facing eternal punishment. Dodson’s position points to a second problem with which neither author deals. He begins the explanation of his position by stating, “Justice toward His children demands...” As will be discussed below, God’s justice was fully satisfied for believers when Jesus died on the cross.

Even though Dodson emphasizes punitive punishment, he also believes that public exposure of each Christian’s unconfessed sins will occur as he writes,

The whole Bible teaches that God is a God of absolute justice and holiness, Who will bring every word and deed of human beings into judgment. He has a videotape of every human life, with all the lines of human influence that have gone from that life into other human lives, and He will play back all of these videotapes of all humanity. This will be “God’s Drama of History.”<sup>19</sup>

However, neither Dodson nor several other proponents of this view of public exposure provide Scriptural argumentation to support this position.

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<sup>18</sup>Kenneth F. Dodson, *The Prize of the Up-Calling or Paul’s Secret of Victory* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 82; quoted in Samuel L. Hoyt, “The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective: Part 1: The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137, no. 545 (Jan 1980): 35.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth F. Dodson, *The Prize of the Up-Calling or Paul’s Secret of Victory*, 77.

## Judgment of Service

The other major position concerning the judgment seat of Christ maintains that it is only the Christian's service that is judged for the purpose of possible rewards. This position holds that all sin in a Christian's life was dealt with at the cross and that only the Christian's service remains to be judged for possible rewards. Clarence Mason represents this position as he writes,

We are going to see ourselves as Christ sees us. We shall stand "stripped of all disguise," "laid bare," "in our true characters." We did the things involved, though we used the body as the instrument. This should certainly lead to a more careful walk. There is not here a question of God evaluating a person's *salvation*; this is the judgment of a saved person respecting possible *rewards*.<sup>20</sup>

This position is based primarily on 1 Corinthians 3:8-18a. In v.8, Paul sets the context for this judgment. The church at Corinth had been aligning with different leaders but Paul reminds them that they "each will receive his own reward according to his own labor." In v.9 he tells them, "For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building." The issue in the context here is service as "fellow workers," not sin. Smith concurs that "the context of this passage has to do with the ministry and its faithfulness."<sup>21</sup> Paul continues in v.10 and 11 and teaches the Corinthians that Jesus Christ is the foundation that has been laid for their work. They are to build their service, i.e., their works, upon this foundation. Verse 12 explains that there are six different kinds of material from which a Christian's works can be built. The Christian's works are either like gold, silver, and precious stones or they are like wood, hay, and stubble. The works that are like gold, silver and precious stones are deeds that were done for His glory, that have eternal value in the plan of God. The works that are like wood, hay and stubble speak

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<sup>20</sup>Clarence E. Mason, Jr., "A Study of Pauline Motives: As Revealed in 2 Corinthians 4:16-6:4a," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 111, no. 443 (July 1954): 220.

of deeds done in the power of the flesh that did not glorify God and have no eternal worth in the plan of God. The judgment of these works by the Lord Jesus Christ is pictured as a flame which devours the wood, hay, stubble, and leaves only the gold, silver, precious stones. That which remains is rewarded. Paul writes in v.15 that some Christians will suffer loss. That is, some will have their works burned up, though they themselves shall be saved, “yet so as through fire.”

In summary, this position teaches, based on 1 Corinthians 3:8-18a, that each Christian will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and Christ will take all the service of his or her life and test it with fire. Everything that is worthless will burn away and that which remains will be rewarded. As Paul wrote, in 1 Corinthians 4:5, “...each man’s praise will come to him from God.”

In response, this position has the consistent biblical basis that other position lacks. As will be shown in the next section, all of the sin in a believer’s life was judged at the cross. As Paul wrote, “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1). 1 Corinthians 1:8-18a has the same context of the believer’s works (v.8-9) as 2 Corinthians 5:10 and, as such, serves to provide the details of how the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ will occur.

### The Judgment Of The Cross

The question of the nature of the judgment seat of Christ is directly tied to the doctrine of the cross and the judgment that took place there. To what extent did the work of Christ on the cross relate to sins in the Christian’s life? In light of Christ’s past dealing with sin at the cross,

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<sup>21</sup>Morton H. Smith, *Systematic Theology*, vols. I and II, (Greenville, S. C.: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Press, 1997, Electronic form, Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

how does God deal with it in the present and in the future? What does Scripture teach concerning justification and God's grace?

Scripture teaches that a Christian will never face eternal punishment for sin. Romans 8:1 clearly states that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." John 3:18 echoes this by stating, "He who believes in Him is not judged," and John 5:24 states this for the future, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

Scripture also teaches that by faith a person is justified by God. To be justified is to be declared righteous by God. It is to have a new standing before God in which the believer is regarded as righteous in His sight. Therefore, no legal charge can be brought against the believer such that he must be punished for his sins. The believer has peace with God (Rom 5:1) and, as a result of justification, is to be saved from the wrath of God through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:9). God sees the Christian through the righteousness of Christ on account of the believer's justification by grace through faith. This righteousness is an imputed righteousness and not an attribute of God's righteousness which is possessed by the believer. Because of this legal transaction, a Christian will never have to render any judicial payment or experience any judicial suffering for any of his sins, since the complete payment for his sins has been fully and forever paid by Jesus Christ at the cross.

Hebrews 10 also clearly shows that there was complete payment for sin at the cross. Verse 12 states, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." The key here is that Christ's death was "one sacrifice" that was efficacious "for all time." The confirmation continues in v.14 as the author explains, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

### Implications for the Christian Life

What impact should this impending event have in the life of the believer today? Can it be a motivation for greater service for Christ and a joy to be anticipated? Or is it a dread that cannot be avoided and is best not dwelt upon? Paul answers these questions in 2 Corinthians 5:9. It is often the case that 2 Corinthians 5:10 is quoted concerning judgment without the benefit of the preceding verse which gives the reason Paul is even talking about the judgment seat of Christ in this passage in the first place! Together, 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 read, “Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 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.” For Paul, knowing that He was going to be rewarded at the bēma seat, his highest goal, his highest ambition, was to be pleasing to the Lord.

In v.9, the Greek word for ambition is φιλοτιμέομαι, which means “to love or seek after honor, hence, to be ambitious, emulous.”<sup>22</sup> Paul uses this word in Romans 15:20 to refer to his aspiration to preach the gospel, and in 1 Thessalonians 4:10-11 when he encourages believers to excel even more in their Christian lives by making it their ambition to lead a quiet, God-honoring life by attending to their own business. Paul attaches the word here to the most honorable goal possible, to be pleasing to his Lord, Jesus Christ.

Living a life that is pleasing to the Lord is a major theme of Paul’s writing and, hence, should be a major focus for every Christian. In 1 Corinthians 4:1-4, Paul clearly tells the Corinthians that it is a “small thing” (v.3) to be examined by them because the one who examines him is the Lord (v.4). In v.5 he ties this discussion to the judgment seat of Christ by

telling them to “not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *men’s* hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.” Paul uses the *bhama* seat judgment to focus their attention on the ultimate judge, who is their judge and the judge of others. He tells these Corinthians to let God praise His servants!

Paul also told the Galatians that he sought only the favor of God and not that of men (Gal 1:10). In this verse he makes it clear that to have any other ambition, that is, the ambition to please men, would mean that he was not a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to Timothy that being in ministry was like being a soldier (2 Tim 2:3-4). It is necessary for a soldier to disconnect from all earthly entanglements “so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier” (v.4). To the Ephesians, Paul wrote that they were to walk as children of the light trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord (Eph 5:8,10). Paul prayed for the Colossians that they “may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects” (Col 1:9-10). Paul reminded the Thessalonians of the instruction given to them on how to walk and please God, and then exhorted them to excel still more (1 Thes 4:1)! It is clear that living a life that was pleasing to the Lord was a constant and major theme of Paul’s writings.

In addition, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:9 that this ambition to be pleasing to the Lord was “whether at home or absent.” Paul is saying here that whether living in this life (i.e., at home) or if he were to go to be with the Lord (i.e., absent), it is his ambition to be pleasing to the Lord. This phrase pulls together the discussion of the prior eight verses (2 Cor 5:1-8) concerning Paul’s desire to be with the Lord. Note that his desire to be with the Lord did not lead to a

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<sup>22</sup> Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 471.



disinterest in the present life. Rather, Paul knew that his present body was a vehicle by which he could serve God in such a way that he would earn eternal rewards. Paul was even more careful about how he lived this life because it impacted eternity for him personally. Consistent with this view of the importance of the Christian's life in this body, Paul told the Romans to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to the Lord, so as to be acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1-2). The word "acceptable," used twice in Romans 12:1-2, is the same Greek word, εὐάρεστος, that is used for "pleasing" in 2 Corinthians 5:9! Paul knew that the body was the means by which he could please God here on earth. So, his desire to be with the Lord (2 Cor 5:1-8) led to another desire – not to disregard this body, this life, because he wanted another one but to use it to please the Lord. The fact that he would have to face the Lord some day elevated rather than diminished his sense of devotion to duty.

### Conclusion

When Paul's teaching on the judgment seat of Christ is stripped of the unbiblical teaching of punishment for sin at the judgment seat of Christ, what is left is the biblical picture of a future date before Jesus Christ that all Christians should anticipate. The nature of the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ is not to judge sin. No biblical basis for that position exists. The nature of the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ is to judge each Christian's service for possible rewards. Jesus has let us see this future event so that we can use it as a motivation to serve Him now, in our bodies, in a manner that will please Him and, ultimately, merit rewards for us. Paul's greatest ambition was to please his Lord, desiring that, when the deeds done in his body were tested by fire, most of them would remain as gold, silver, or precious stones to be rewarded by Jesus. Given the proper understanding of the judgment seat of Christ, Christians should

follow Paul's example and let the judgment seat of Christ be the reason for their ambition to please the Lord Jesus Christ in all of their service.

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