**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

Living with an eternal perspective Part 2

*By I Gordon*

*‘In the choir of life it is easy to fake the words, but one day we shall all sing solo before God.’*

*Author Unknown.*

**Introduction**

In part one of this study, we looked at some introductory scriptures which detail the fact that we shall all stand before the Lord Jesus to have our life as a Christian examined. We saw the need that we have to live our life with an eternal perspective. This study will carry on from there and will look at what exactly we are rewarded for, what God’s standard of measurement is, and whether we can lose our rewards. It will close with an Old Testament example from the life of David.

**What are we rewarded for?**

There used to be a bumper sticker that said ‘Look busy, Jesus is coming!’ This sticker is obviously humorous (and it makes me laugh!) but I don’t think anyone is going to be able to trick the Lord so easily! Our whole life will pass through fire, as we saw in the first study, to see what will last and be rewarded for eternity. So an obvious question you may be asking is ‘Well, what gets rewarded then?’ Good question. Let’s go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 3 and see what it says…

*1 Cor 3:5-8 What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task****. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.*** *So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.* ***The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.***

Straight before discussing the judgement seat of Christ, Paul gives two activities that will be rewarded by God at that time. They are pretty simple… Planting and watering. Simple enough so that anyone could do them… in fact, you may be even able to!

* Planting - We plant or sow seeds through our witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. This witness is in the true sense of the word of course… not just with words, but with actions as well.[[1]](#footnote-1)[1] Planting seeds in the natural isn’t so hard, and neither is it in the spiritual[[2]](#footnote-2)[2]. God says that the sower of spiritual seed will be rewarded in the age to come.
* Watering - What do you think this involves? In the context of this passage, it meant teaching, exhorting and encouraging. Paul had come in first to the Corithians and planted the seed. But it was Apollo’s’ job to follow it up and make sure there was growth by watering the seed.

*John 4:35-36 Behold, I say to you, Lift up your eyes and behold the fields, for they are already white to harvest. He that reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto life eternal* ***that both he that sows and he that reaps may rejoice together.***

In a similar passage, Jesus showed how in the reaping of souls, everyone has a part to play. And what’s more, in the age to come they will rejoice together! There will be the sower of the seed, the waterier, the gardener, the harvester, and the one harvested in the Kingdom of God… all rejoicing together. And it will all be worth the effort![[3]](#footnote-3)[3]

Five different crowns are also mentioned in the Bible for those that are to be rewarded. Can you name them? Or do you know of any passages that speak of them? (If you can’t answer the first two questions, try this toughie - ‘How many crowns are mentioned in the Bible concerning rewards?’) Check out the footnote for the answers.[[4]](#footnote-4)[4] We should always remember however that ‘*neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow*.’ And any crowns received are not for our own glory or boasting, but ultimately for the glory of God and the worship of the Lamb (see Rev 4:10).

**God’s Measurement…**

Having looked briefly at what is rewarded, let’s talk measurement. It is always important to remember that God’s standard for measuring our lives is not necessarily our own. We look at people in the natural and think ‘wow, hasn’t that person succeeded?’ And yet God says that many who are first (in this life) will be last (in the age to come) and many that are last will be first. For -

* Firstly, *‘The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Sam 16:7)*
* Secondly, God doesn’t look so much at how much we do, but what we do with what we’ve got[[5]](#footnote-5)[5]. It was on this basis of measurement that Jesus could say of the poor widow (who only put two small coins into the offering) *“I tell you the truth,* ***this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.*** *They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.” (Mark 12:41-44)*

**Losing your rewards**

While a true believer cannot lose their salvation, they can lose their rewards. A few verses are necessary to point this out.

*Rev 3:11 ‘I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.’*

*2 John 7-8 ‘Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.*

From these two verses it is clearly important to make sure that you are not falling into spiritual deception, which will lead to a loss of reward. Also, it is important that our ‘works’ as a Christian come from a true heart and are not performed to be ‘seen’ by others. If that is the case then it truly is a ‘performance’, an act, and the words of Jesus to the Pharisees would apply to us – *‘I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.’ Matt 6:2 – ‘their reward’ being the applause of men! Some reward (not!)*

**Old Testament Example – David’s Faithful Men.**

Now, there is an awesome example in the Old Testament (like there always is!) which we would do well to follow. The example occurs in the life of King David, and especially relating to David’s faithful followers. Here is the abbreviated background – David has been anointed as King by the prophet Samuel, though he is not yet reigning in his kingdom. Instead, it is Saul, who despite being rejected by God, still reigns temporarily over Israel. While in exile, a small band of misfits rally around David and become his men. Here is where we are introduced to them.

*1 Sam 22:1-2 David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there.* ***All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.***

A more raggedy bunch of men you wouldn’t find… distressed, in debt, and discontented with life… yet they believed in David and where willing to follow him though it meant hardship for them. And David accepted these men and trained them as his own. He knew that if they were willing to side with him in the day of his trouble, then they would make faithful leaders when he reigned and became King of Israel. It wasn’t an easy discussion for these men to make however, as King Saul didn’t make life very easy for those who aligned themselves with David. At times they had to run for their lives. At times they went hungry and were forced to live in caves as they tried desperately to escape from the clutches of Saul. Yet despite this, they looked forward. They looked forward to the day when David would reign... they looked forward to the day when the difficulties they had encountered for the sake of David would be rewarded. And rewarded they were. You see we read about these ‘misfits’ again in 1 Chron chapters 11-12 where, after David received his kingdom, all of their deeds are recorded. No loyalty to David was forgotten. No faithfulness to the king went unrewarded.

Now, I’m sure you get the picture, but I’ll spell it out anyway. Like David, Jesus has been declared by God to be the true King. But we do not yet see Jesus reigning in His kingdom on this earth. Instead, we know that Satan is currently ‘the god of this world’ even though, like Saul, he has been rejected and will be overthrown. Now, until this happens, Jesus is gathering to himself those that long for His kingdom – that raggedy munch of misfits like me (and hopefully you!) who are discontented with what this world has to offer and long for the true King to come into His Kingdom! And on that day, those that have faithfully followed Jesus will be fully rewarded.

And don’t you just wish that would come quickly!

**A simple parting thought…**

Let me just close with a simple, yet true story. It is the story of a man called Henry Morrison. Henry had been a faithful missionary in Africa for 40 years. When he finally headed home he found himself on the same boat as the American President, Theodore Roosevelt. As they entered New York harbour, Morrison began to feel quite dejected as he saw the great fanfare that Roosevelt was receiving. ‘Surely I should get some recognition after 40 years in Africa’, Morrison thought to himself. It was at this stage that Morrison heard a still small voice say to him – ‘Henry, you’re not home yet!’

You see, there is a ‘fanfare’ coming for those that are faithful to the Lord. And it comes when we truly ‘arrive home’. Nothing has been overlooked, nothing has been forgotten. Your life has been noted and recorded. So make the most of ‘today’ by living for ‘tomorrow’.

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (Rev 22:12-13)

1. [1] Just thought of a funny thing Major Ian Thomas said once – ‘Preach Christ, always preach Christ, and if necessary, say something.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [2] Although sometimes we make witnessing pretty hard. Don’t ya just wish you were more like a kid and said what you thought? I was dropping of some of my nephew’s friends after a birthday party the other day. I was asking them were they lived etc when my niece (who was also in the car) says to one of the boys ‘Hey, are you a Christian?’ ‘Um, er, no, no I’m not’ the boy responds. ‘Uuuuh, I am!’ my niece declares sounding very happy with herself. ‘I am too’ my other nephew says. ‘Um, I am as well’ I squeak out. Now, why can’t I do that? I pick up hitchhikers and like to tell them about the Lord if I can, but I can struggle away for ages trying to find ‘a way in’. My niece’s way seemed very easy. She wanted to know if the boy was a Christian so that is what she asked. Simple! [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [3] Always remember the old sign that you used to see put up around some churches. It read ‘Come work for the Lord. The work is hard, the hours are long and the pay ain’t great. But the retirement benefits are out of this world!" [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [4] Ok, quiz results time. Count up your score:

   1. Crown of Life – Perseverance under trials (James 1:12, Rev 2:10)

   2. Crown of Glory – Ministering faithfully to God’s sheep. (1 Pet 5:4)

   3. Incorruptible Crown – Running the race with self control (1 Cor 9:25)

   4. Crown of Righteousness – Loving His appearing (2 Tim 4:8)

   5. Crown of Exaltation – Winning Souls to the Lord (1Thes 2;19)

   So how did you go? Each correct name wins you $1,000. Each correct scripture is worth $2,000.

   For any hint of pride take off $15,000. Looks like you owe me aye? [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [5] Being faithful in the small things is what matters. I recently read the testimony of Charles Spurgeon. Now, that guy was a real legend! It has been estimated that he preached to over 10 million people in his lifetime! What’s more, his sermons have been read by an estimated 50 million people in 23 different languages! There is no doubting the fact that he was an enormously gifted individual who also worked hard to be faithful to his calling. I have no doubt that he will be greatly rewarded. But in reading Spurgeon’s life story, there was someone else who really impressed me. Someone who didn’t have Spurgeon’s gifts and abilities, he didn’t have the same opportunities… in fact, no one even knows his name! Yet I think when the rewards are handed out way up yonder, this man will be greatly rewarded... possibly even as much as Spurgeon himself. You see, this man lead Charles Spurgeon to the Lord. A snow storm blew so hard that particular Sunday morning that the minister didn’t even make it. In all, about a dozen people turned up at a little Primitive Methodist Chapel and in the end, a very thin looking man went up into the pulpit to preach. The text was ‘Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.’ He bungled the pronunciation. But Spurgeon recorded the opening –

   “My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says ‘Look’. Now lookin’ don’t take a deal of pains. It ain’t liftin’ your foot or your finger; it just says look. Well, a man needn’t go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. But then the text says ‘Look unto me’. Ay! Many on ye are lookin’ to yourselves, but it ain’t no use lookin’ there. You’ll never find comfort in yourselves. Look to Christ. The text says ‘look unto me’. “

   Now, this man wasn’t a ‘minister’... he was believed to be a shoemaker! There was only a small group and others may have called the meeting off. But this man gave an impromptu sermon that morning that lead to the salvation of Charles Spurgeon. And in doing so, he proved himself faithful in the small things and will be greatly rewarded. It is a true story which we can all learn from. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)