

Fisher's Foundations JUDGEMENTS OF GOD

Lesson 10

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS CLASS:

Is to acquaint the student with the biblical truths concerning judgement of all sin and sins.

"Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

"We should live our lives as those whose every action is recorded, for recorded they shall be." –C. H. Spurgeon

INTRO:

The Bible clearly teaches that all men will one day stand before God to be judged. And God the Father has committed all final judgment to His beloved, sinless Son, Jesus Christ (John 5:22). Our verse above says that God has promised a future day of reckoning by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the assurance that all will one day stand before Him, the living Lord of lords.

Of course there are a lot of doctrines taught in the Bible, but none is declared with more consistency and fervor than the doctrine of divine judgment. Some teachers have abused this doctrine with imbalance, but there really isn't any viable reason for us to back off with this Message. People want to know exactly what is going to happen. How many judgments are there? And who will be judged? For what will they be judged? Though there are a number of judgments that may be found in the pages of Scripture, there are at least five that we want to zero in on. And they really need to be highlighted, especially two of them that are particularly important for us humans. Let us briefly examine these.

Q&A 1. What promise has God given that men will one day face judgement?

The first judgment I want to mention is what the Bible calls "***The Judgement Seat of Christ.***" This judgement is for authentic Christians, will take place at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 16:27; 1 Corinthians 4:4-5; Revelation 22:12), and will be a judgment of the works, motives and obedience of believers. Whatever the Christian has built upon the foundation (Christ) -- whether it be gold, silver, precious stones, or else wood, hay, and stubble -- it must be tried by the fire of divine judgment. The work of some believers will

stand the test while that of others will be burned away. But even though a born again person's works may be consumed, his faith in the imperishable foundation will remain and his salvation rests secure (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Be cognizant that this judgement is not held to determine whether or not the one judged will get into heaven, because that has already been decided at the moment they repented of sin and received Jesus by faith.

Yes, let me reiterate; Paul's counsel is directed to Christians here, for only the Christian who is born from above will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Greek: **Bema**. Bema means a base with steps). This **Bema** judgment event has nothing whatsoever to do with the fate of unbelievers, for in the Scriptures they are never mentioned in connection with it.

One of the greatest errors ever perpetrated in Christian theology is the idea that only one great judgment will take place at the end of the age, at which all men will be gathered before the Great White Throne. There is absolutely no basis in the Word of God for such an idea.

His Plan For Me

*When I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ
And He shows His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way - and I see
How I blocked Him here, and checked Him there,
And I would not yield my will,
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,
Grief though He loves me still?
Would He have me rich and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing,
Down the paths I cannot retrace.
Lord, of the years that are left to me
I give them to Thy hand
Take me and break me and mold me,
To the pattern that Thou hast planned! -Author Unknown*

A second divine judgment concerns the righteous **judgment of all nations**. Scripture declares that this judgment will also take place at the return of Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:32). It should be distinguished from the final judgment of the wicked -- which takes place at the Great White Throne -- since three distinct groups of individuals are represented: **sheep, goats, and brethren**. And, according to verse 31, the setting of **this judgment** is on the **earth** (i.e., not a Great White Throne).

A third judgment in Scripture concerns the **judgement of the nation Israel**. Bible scholars may disagree about the nature and extent of this judgment, but they are fairly well agreed

that such a judgment must take place. Such passages as Ezekiel 20:37-38, Isaiah 1:24-26, and Malachi 3:2-5 definitely teach such a judgment. Certainly, as Paul puts it in Romans 11:2, "*God hath not cast away his people*" (Israel). But it will be necessary for many of them to pass through great tribulation so that a godly remnant may be rescued out of the wrath that is to come.

A fourth judgment is the **judgement of Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and the multitudinous array of demonic emissaries** -- the fallen angels. Jesus once declared, "*Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out*" (John 12:31 NKJV). In that statement Satan's doom was sealed. Although sentence was pronounced upon him at the Cross, it is not until Revelation 20:10 that this sentence is executed: "*The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*"

A fifth judgment in the Word of God concerns that of **the Great White Throne** (Revelations 20:11-15). This is one most Christians think about when they hear about God's judgement. You don't want to be outside of Christ and take part in this one, believe me! In this judgment **the saints will be seated with Christ**, and the wicked -- those "*not found in the book of life*" -- will be judged. "Or do you not know (addressing Christians) that **the saints will judge the world?** And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that **we shall judge angels?** How much more, matters of this life?" (1 Corinthians 6:2-3). The fate of those who endure this judgment is called the second death, everlasting separation from the presence of the Lord (Revelations 21:8).

In a nutshell, here's what the doctrine of divine judgment is about; **the Christ of Calvary's bloodstained cross will be the Judge of the Great White Throne**. What a comfort it is for the true believer to realize that he has passed from death to life and will not be judged in the final Great White Throne Judgment.

These facts should cause us as believers to **judge ourselves**, [1 Corinthians 11:31]. Indeed, since Peter tells us that "*judgment must begin at the house of God*" [1 Pet. 4:17]. We ought to carefully examine ourselves by the Spirit. The Christian has nothing to fear from these judgments. They only need to see that their works be composed of the gold, silver, and precious gems that will endure the intense fire of God's holiness.

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). No second chance; no reincarnation. "**And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many**" [Hebrews 9:27-28]. After this *the judgment* [the forensic, or in Greek the word is "krisis," the tribunal]. Forensic is the examination of all points of evidence. After you die, God isn't looking for a piece of evidence to condemn you, He's looking very carefully for that evidence so He can admit you into heaven. The overarching question will be, "What did this person do with Jesus Christ, accept Him or reject Him?"

Once was enough for Jesus dying—and He didn't die spiritually. His physical body died to pay for the sins we committed in our physical bodies. Now a day of judgment is quickly approaching, and God has assured us of this by quickening Christ's physical body out of the tomb exactly how His Word said—on the third day according to the Scriptures. And there were over 500 eyewitnesses of Christ's physical resurrection, so we need not wonder about it.

The Bible says, ***"He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead"*** [Acts 17:31].

Listen beloved, the only things that God really wants to remove from your life is that which would destroy it [sin]. His Holy Word tells us how to make life work down here, and we must believe that God has good reasons for everything He warns us against. He tells us clearly what we would do well to do, and what we would do well to avoid doing [regardless of our circumstances or feelings]. God isn't out to be a killjoy for you. He has your best interests in mind.

Why should we hate sin? Because God hates it and His word tells us to avoid it. Sin destroys valuable lives! I believe it is safe to say that sin has a built-in type of judgement of it's own (better known to us as consequences). God often doesn't remove the consequences even after He graciously forgives us. Why? He wants us to learn to hate sin like He hates it. These consequences are far reaching too.

In the New Testament, the Corinthian believers were abusing the Lord's supper to their own hurt: ***"For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged*** (the Greek word here is "krino" and it means avenge, conclude, sentenced), ***we are disciplined by the Lord*** (paideuo—smite, strike, instruct, often beaten with impunity or by a single blow and less violent. In the NKJV it's "chastened by the Lord") ***in order that we may not be condemned along with the world"*** [1 Corinthians 11:29-32 NASB].

In the Old testament sin would literally get a nation dispossessed and relocated. ***"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you [for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled], lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you"*** [Leviticus 18:26-28].

"You shall therefore keep all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell may not vomit you out. And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them" [Leviticus 20:22-23]. I'm sure you've noticed that when one sins, it normally adversely affects more than just the one who committed the sin. And that's the reason so many are up in arms towards God and His authority saying that He is unfair and mean. But it's not God's fault when innocent people suffer [I mean innocent at least in regards to this particular sin]. It's true that God is good, but bad things still happen to moral people.

It breaks our hearts when we think of all who suffer needlessly—like all the crack babies born these days. But it hurts God the most. It's kind of hard for us to understand or explain, but because God didn't make us animatronic robots, we can all make choices. God won't make you love him; He won't make you hate evil either. You were created a free moral agent and God will not override your power to choose, even if it hurts others.

God has promised a future day of reckoning by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we can have full assurance that all of us will one day stand before Him, the living Lord of lords. But there is actually a progression of Judgement you need to contemplate.

How do I mean? It's like this; the concept of judgement is truly related to events in the past, present and future. Sin, sorrow, sickness, Satan and separation were all judged on the cross of Christ—Calvary discharged a fivefold judgement.

I. THE NATURE OF JUDGEMENT

1. There is a Judgement that is Already Past.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

“Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

At this judgment bar Satan was judged—his power over the believer was broken for good. Here also the sins of the believer were judged and taken away. We don't have to worry about separation from God anymore, because that which was so negative—the spiritual minus of your life, represented by the crossbeam that Jesus carried, was turned into a mighty plus sign by God. The eternal bummer is transformed into an eternal blessing! The cross alone bridges the gap so we can enjoy access to the Father.

Q&A 2. What is the significance of this past judgment at the cross for you as a Christian?

2. There needs to be a Present Judgement in the Daily Life of Every Believer.

“For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:31, 32).

This ongoing, continual judgment must be going on in the Christian's life to prevent the chastening from the Lord. We are to exhibit before God, a thorough confession of sin as the Spirit shines His searchlight down on the motives, words and deeds (or lack of them) in the life of every believer.

Though we are to currently judge the message of different ministers we might hear, we are not to judge other people. I find it interesting that God never once asked his people to build a judgement seat. But He did ask His people to build a mercy seat: *“You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width”* (Exodus 25:17).

We often judge ourselves by our good intentions and others by their bad deeds, but if we are to be like our Master, we are to be merciful with all people. I think if we are to error, it's better to error on the side of mercy rather than judgement. *“For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment”* (James 2:13). If you take a preference that God doesn't prefer, you will eventually find yourself opposed by God. Look at what happened on the cross—Jesus became the wiping post of the ages. Your sin was judged there, so appropriate the benefits thereof.

God does prefer mercy to judgement. ***“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead***

in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)”
[Ephesians 2:4, 5].

“Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed” [Psalm 85:10].
Judgement says, “You sinned, you will die.” God’s mercy says, “You sinned, but let’s give them another chance.” Mercy lines itself up with peace. Truth lines itself up with righteousness, but on the cross Mercy and Truth kiss and a Holy God is satisfied.

Q&A 3. Why should the Christian continue to “Judge his life motives, deeds and words?”

3. There will be a Certain Judgement in the Future.

Contrary to the belief of many, *the Judgment Seat of Christ* [1 Corinthians 3:8-16; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10], *the Judgement of the Living Nations* [Matthew 25:31-46], *the Judgment of Israel* [Ezekiel 20:37-38, Isaiah 1:24-26, and Malachi 3:2-5], *the Great White Throne Judgment* [Revelation 20:11-15], and *the Judgment of the Fallen Angels* [Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4] have not yet taken place. But these sobering events will shortly take place, so we all need to be ready! With a sense of urgency, we also need to help others get ready! This fact must remain clear in our minds!

Let’s take a closer look at two judgements of significant importance, *the Great White Throne Judgment* [for the unsaved], and *the Judgment Seat of Christ* [for the saved].

The Great White Throne Judgment Is Certain

There’s only two kinds of people in this world; those who have found Jesus and those who are looking for Him—saints and sinners. Jesus declared, ***“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad”*** (Matthew 12:30). In or out—you decide, but no in-between. ***“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”*** (1 John 5:12). Have you exchanged your life for His life yet? Have you repented and by faith, established a personal relationship with God through Jesus? If not, you still have a little time, but you can be sure of this, that unrepentant sinners have an unavoidable appointment ahead at the Great White Throne Judgment.

Remember even though all roads lead to God, not all roads lead to heaven. Jesus is the only way and reservations to heaven must be made in advance! Because the books we’ve just discussed will one day be opened, and all those who are not listed will hear the Lord say, ***“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”*** (Matthew 7:23).

This should spawn radical evangelistic fervor in you! Check out how John graphically describes this intense happening: ***“And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea”*** (Revelation 20:11-21:1).

The Bible often refers to unbelievers as “the wicked” because of their depraved condition without Jesus. Hey, it’s time to turn before you burn. Check out how the Bible describes their awful, but sure fate. ***“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”*** (John 8:24). God says they will die in their sins.

“And to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

How is the place of punishment for the wicked described? It’s a place of “fire.”

Jesus describes hell as a real cooker, ***“...the fire is not quenched. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.' And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched”*** (Mark 9:44-48).

Hell is tormenting; it’s a place of darkness and teeth grinding pain. The wicked, ***“...will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”*** (Matthew 8:13, 22:13; 25:30).

I know this might sound negative and very unpleasant, but we must believe it. The Gospel is bad news and Good News. We have to know the bad news, in order to appreciate the Good News. People have no chance of being born again after Bios death unless they are physically resurrected here. The Roman Church believe in purgatory an after-life waiting place neither in heaven nor hell where fire will purify men until they are clean enough to enter heaven. Modernists refer to this sudo-precedent in attempt to prove salvation is by works. That’s why we all need to receive Zoe life now (God’s kind of life). People are streaming into hell, but through Christ they can hang a U-turn and be saved. Our sweet little Jesus, meek and mild, didn’t pull any punches when He preached—He said it like it was. Did you know that He spoke more about hell than He did about heaven? His motivation was that people would ***“...flee from the wrath to come?”*** (Matthew 3:7).

The Judgment Seat of Christ

We can get a glimpse of The Judgment Seat of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:10:

“For we [regenerated ones] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

The Bible says, ***“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire”*** (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

This is a judgment of the Christians works. I repeat, it is not a place to determine whether or not the saved will get into heaven. This was determined the moment you trusted Christ and received eternal life. ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”*** (John 3:16-17).

This judgment is the place where all believers’ motives and acts of obedience or disobedience are weighed. We are not the ones to judge or condemn our brothers and sisters. And none of us will be required to give account for another saint’s life. Pointing the finger and making lame excuses like, “But he said” or “She did that” or “Bu, but ...my leader was a hypocrite” isn’t going to cut it!

“But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:10-12).

But here’s what’s thrilling; while we are in the body there exists the glorious potential for rewards for your actions done in love through the power of the Holy Spirit. We should serve because we’re saved—because we love God primarily and then all people! We should minister because we want to obey the Lord! These motives provide the premise for all acceptable works! And the Bible refers to the rewards for such kindness as crowns.

The Crown of Life

This reward is sometimes called the **“Martyr’s Crown”** and will be rewarded for faithfulness to Christ even at the expense of one’s own life.

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).

The Crown of Life is an overcomer’s crown for those willing to lay down their lives for Christ. ***“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”*** (Revelation 2:10).

The Crown of Glory

This crown is rewarded for faithful service as an overseer of the flock of God. It is also available to those who faithfully support their God ordained ministers. Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses, their pastor in the wilderness, while the battle was raging. And together a great victory was wrought for the Jesus movement of their day. I believe that leaders of home groups who support their pastor can gain this crown. Faithfully feeding and nurturing your flock matters to God!

“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away”[1 Peter 5:2-4].

“He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward”[Matthew 10:41].

The Crown of Righteousness

This crown is rewarded for purity of life, by living in the light of Christ’s return and loving His return. His Second Coming is imminent; do you prayerfully long for it?

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” [2 Timothy 4:7, 8].

In order to maintain purity, we all need to watch what we allow entrance into our ear-gate and eye-gate. You have a responsibility to keep the evil out!

Some call it the finisher’s crown. Lots of people start out with God and end up with the devil. God wants you to follow through with your commitment by His supernatural power! Jesus was a F-I-N-I-S-H-E-R! Before He paid the price and gave up His spirit, Christ’s last three words were: ***“It is finished!”*** [John 19:30]. Jesus told his disciples, ***“My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work”***[John 4:34].

Paul was a finisher, as well; ***“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy”***[Acts 20:24]. Later he declared, ***“I have finished the race.”***

The Crown of Rejoicing

Now this is the reward I really desire! It is sometimes referred to as the “Soul-winners crown.” Who is it rewarded to? Those who plunder hell and populate heaven—those who win people to Jesus Christ by bold witnessing. God calls every Christian to do this in a Spirit-tactful way, regardless of whether they have the “gift of evangelism” or not. All of us are called to wisely give witness to the lost with words and without. The inference is that the soul-winner will have great joy in heaven by seeing people there due to their faithful, verbal witness to them.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise”[Proverbs 11:30].

“Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever”[Daniel 12:3].

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For you are our glory and joy” (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20).

The Incorruptible Crown

This crown is rewarded for discipline in the Christian walk. *“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown”* (1 Corinthians 9:25). I’ve got a dear friend named, Joe Hayes, who is very disciplined. As a new Christian, Joe was inducted into the *Marshal Arts Hall of Fame*. In 1972 he finished one and two with Bruce Lee (Joe number 1, Bruce number 2), before 1600 people gathered at Madison Square Garden in New York. They were there to see this fight and the reward that is so honorable in the world’s eyes and then Joe boldly stood up with it to loudly pronounce, “Jesus Christ is Lord of my life!” What excitement there was and yet when it was all said and done, Joe went home with a corruptible crown. But yours doesn’t have to be.

These crowns are gifts that Jesus desires to give us at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Since they are of great value to Him, they are of the highest value to His followers. Further, they are something of heavenly, eternal worth that His leaders may cast at His feet in gratitude for so great a salvation. I don’t want to stand there with a stupid look on my face saying, “Well Lord, I was kinda’ lazy but I made it. Man, I just got in, but by fire.” How sad it will be for many lukewarm Christians that will enter heaven by just the skin of their teeth. You don’t want to get in empty handed, having nothing with which to say “thank you” to Jesus with, do you?

“The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created’” (Revelation 4:10, 11).

The Lamb’s Book Of Life and Then Some

Contrary to how it is often portrayed in church dramas, there is not one book in heaven that will be opened for the purpose of judgement, but more than one. *“But there shall by no means enter it (to heaven) anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life”* (Revelation 21:27).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books (plural) were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books” (Revelation 20:12 emphasis mine).

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels” (Revelation 3:5).

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous” (Psalm 69:28). This book of the living sounds like it would be synonymous with the book of Life.

The Book Of Remembrance

“A book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name” (Malachi 3:16).

A Little Book

*"He [a mighty angel] had a **little book** open in his hand... Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, 'Go, take **the little book** which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.' So I went to the angel and said to him, 'Give me the **little book**.' And he said to me, 'Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth. Then I took **the little book** out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter'" [Revelation 10:2; 10:8-10].*

There will be different rewards for all the saved-obedient in heaven and for all the lost-disobedient in hell. Yes there are varying degrees of punishment in hell. [At the Judgement Seat of Christ Keep in mind that God has forgotten the sins of the saved—sins won't be in the book of remembrance].
Mormons believe there are 3 different levels in heaven and no hell at all. This is false!

In Matthew 10:14-15, Jesus talking to his disciples and said, "*Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.*" [more tolerable—anektoteros—here means more endurable or more bearable. This word comes from the root word *ανεχης*; to hold up, bear with].

Also look at these other verses, "Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom, which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you" [Matt. 11:20-24].

"But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near. I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment [at the Great White Throne Judgement] than for you. And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades! The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me" [Lk. 10:10-16].

CHRISTIANS MUST BUILD WITH THE RIGHT MATERIALS (1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-17).

God's judgment will be fair. It will be based on what the servants know of God's will. This is not to suggest that the more ignorant we are, the easier time we will have at the Judgment Seat of Christ! We are admonished to know God's will [Romans 12:2; Colossians 1:9] and to grow in our knowledge of Jesus Christ [2 Peter 3:18]. Jesus is stating a general principle: the more we have from God, the greater our accountability before God.

Christians will receive different rewards in heaven. "*Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before **the judgment seat of Christ** (the judgement for Christians only), that each one may receive **the things done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"* [2 Corinthians 5:9,10 the emphasis in these verses is mine].

Paul described two opposite kinds of building materials, as this chart reveals:

<i>Gold, Silver, Precious Stones</i>	<i>Wood, Hay, Stubble</i>
Permanent	Passing, temporary
Beautiful	Ordinary, even ugly
Valuable	Cheap
Hard to obtain	Easy to obtain

What did Paul want to symbolize by his choice of materials? He is not talking about *people*, because Christians are the *“living stones”* that make up God’s temple (1 Peter 2:5). I personally believe Paul is referring to the *doctrines of the Word of God*. In each section of this chapter, the Word is symbolized in a way that fits the image of the church Paul used. *The Word is food for the family, seed for the field, and materials for the temple.*

The Book of Proverbs presents the wisdom of the Word of God as treasure to be sought, protected, and invested in daily life. Consider these passages:

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies [3:13-15a].

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God [2:1-5].

Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it [8:10-11].

When you remember that Paul has been writing about *wisdom* in these first three chapters, you can easily see the connection. The Corinthians were trying to build their church by man’s wisdom, the wisdom of this world, when they should have been depending on the wisdom of God as found in the Word.

This says to me that ministers of the Word must dig deep into the Scriptures and mine out the precious gold, silver, and jewels, and then build these truths into the lives of the people. D.L. Moody used to say that converts should be weighed as well as counted. God is interested in *quality* as well as *quantity*, and Paul makes it clear that it is possible to have both. The faithful minister can work in the field and see increase, and he can build with the Word of God and see beauty and lasting blessings.

It is a serious thing to be a part of the building of God’s temple. First Corinthians 3:16-17 warns us that, if we destroy [“defile”] God’s temple by using cheap materials, God will destroy us! This does not mean eternal condemnation, of course, because 1 Corinthians 3:15 assures us that each worker will be saved, even if he loses a reward. I think Paul is saying that each of us builds into the church *what we build into our own lives*. Veteran missionary to India, Amy Carmichael, used to say, “The work will never go deeper than we have gone ourselves.” So we end up tearing down our own lives if we fail to build into

the church the values that will last. We may look very successful to men, but “the day shall declare it” and on that day, some ministers will go up in smoke. It is unwise to compare and contrast ministries. Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 4:5, “Therefore, judge nothing before the time.”

Young ministers often asked **Dr. Campbell Morgan** the secret of his pulpit success. Morgan replied, **“I always say to them the same thing—work; hard work; and again, work!” Morgan was in his study at 6 o’clock each morning, digging treasures out of the Bible. You can find wood, hay, and stubble in your backyard, and it will not take too much effort to pick it up. But if you want gold, silver, and jewels, *you have to dig for them.* Lazy preachers and Sunday School teachers will have much to answer for at the Judgment Seat of Christ—and so will preachers and teachers who *steal* materials from others instead of studying and making it their own.”**

In what spiritual condition are the “servants” Jesus is talking about? He’s probably talking about several conditions they could be in. Is Jesus talking to lost religious leaders and true pastors? All people legally belong to God, they were purchased by JC with His blood. Having received more gifts and knowing God’s will gives us more responsibility—we’re to be more accountable. Through our obedience to God’s will, we will receive crowns as rewards. While we sometimes experience immediate and material rewards for our obedience to God, this is not always the case. Some greedy TV preachers in the name of “prophecy” or “new revelation,” promise you a guaranteed return on your donation to them this side of heaven, which the Bible doesn’t guarantee to you on this side. If immediate rewards were always there for us, we would be tempted to boast about our achievements and do good deeds only for what we get. Jesus told us that if we look for rewards now, we will lose them later (Mark 8:36). Our heavenly rewards will be the most accurate reflection of what we have done on earth, and they will be far greater than we can imagine.