

Topic: What will be judged for rewards?

Date: April 24, 2020

Introduction:

For as long as I can remember I was taught that as a believer I would be judged on my use of time, talent and treasure (the three T's) when I appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Back on July 15, 2011 I attended a conference where a preacher gave a message proposing 15 items upon which believers (only) would be judged, after the rapture at the judgment seat of Christ (2Corinthians 5:10), for the purpose of rewards. The immediate difficulty with the list of 15 items is that they were drawn from all over the Bible: the gospel accounts, Israel's prophets, the Psalms, the Hebraic epistles, and Paul epistles. This preacher managed to slip in a fourth "T" which effectively covered the matter of "testing". For me the list is scary and ruins any joyful anticipation of the rapture, as I am well aware how easy it would be to find fault with my use of time, talent, treasure (ie: money), and testing (ie: persecution, etc.)

So, the following is what I now understand having done my own study.

Study:

Question:

"...You mentioned rewards had to do if we're studying/following sound doctrine in this dispensation. Will we also be rewarded for doing works like in the ministry (e.g. sharing the gospel, missionary trips, teaching, preaching, serving in worship services) or giving, etc.?"

Response:

1. 2Corinthians 5:17 at the moment of belief one is placed "...in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new".
2. Romans 6:6 Paul tells us "... that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed..."
3. 1Corinthians 15:44 at the time of the rapture the believer's new creature will receive a new body: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."
4. Ephesians 5:30 the spiritual body the believer will receive goes directly into the presence of God following the rapture, that body being "...members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

Thus, the believer proceeds to the heavenly places as a new creature in a spiritual body of "flesh and bone".

5. 2Corinthians 5:10 the believer as a new creature with a body of flesh and bone "...*(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."

Note: "...things done "in" (not "by") his body.

So then we ask: what has the new creature (now with a spiritual body of flesh and bone) done by his body on earth? Answer: nothing at all!

But, more importantly, the old creature/old man cannot do anything acceptable to God, as it is a body of sin that was crucified with Christ and destroyed. (Romans 6:6)

Moreover...

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Has the new creature (now with a spiritual body of flesh and bone) done something in his body on earth? Answer: yes; being the same person, though now as a new creature with a spiritual body. The believer takes with him into the heavenly places that which he has learned (doctrine) while yet in the old creature/old man: whether it be good or bad. There is both "sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1), as well as "doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14)

6. 1Corinthians 3:8-9 tells us "...every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.", and that " ... we are labourers together ... *ye are* God's building".

7. 1Corinthians 3:10-11 Paul tells the believer that he has laid the foundation which is "Jesus Christ".

8. 1Corinthians 3:12 the choice of building materials is identified as " ...gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble"

The choice is important as we are told that "...fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is". We know what fire does to gold, silver, precious stone, and what it does to wood, hay, stubble.

We know that the new creature in his spiritual body of flesh and bone will have no occasion on the earth to do the 4 T's (ministry, sharing the gospel, missions, service, giving, etc).

We know the old creature can do nothing of the 4 T's without also sinning: pride, boasting, etc.

So we choose gold, silver, and precious stones, as those are the materials that will not only survive the fire but at the same time be improved by refinement.

9. Proverbs 16:16 we learn that "wisdom" is better than gold, and "understanding" is better than silver.

10. Proverbs 20:15 knowledge is likened as a "precious jewel".

11. Proverbs 24:3-4 Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.

12. 1Corinthians 3:14-15 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

That which shall be tested by God's fire (Jeremiah 5:14, 23:29) will be: wisdom, knowledge and understanding. These come to the body of Christ through the epistles of Paul.

13. Colossians 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

We will be rewarded for our doctrinal wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

However, good works are important for other reasons:

1. 2 Corinthians 6:3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:
2. Philippians 2:15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;
3. Titus 2:7 In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *shewing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,
4. Titus 2:10 Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.
5. 2 Corinthians 9:8 And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all *things*, may abound to every good work:
6. Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
7. Colossians 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;
8. Titus 3:8 *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Finally, there is the question of understanding 1Corinthians 4:5. The context of the passage shows Paul's instruction to the Corinthians is about their judging of those who were "ministers of Christ" and "stewards of the mysteries of God":

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

Here Paul speaks of a judgment for him as a minister and steward that is different in scope from those that are not so commissioned:

Romans 11:13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:

Romans 15:16a That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,