

## REWARDS OF CHRISTIANS

Have you ever hear of a, "*Come as you are party*"? Back when I was a boy they used to have parties that they called, "*Come as you are.*" They object was that someone would call you at any time day or night, and, when invited, you had to go to the party "*just as you were dressed,*" however that might be. The only rules were that you had to be decent and suitable to be in public (No lady Gadiva's or dressed like Adam and Eve, as they were in the Garden of Eden.) I never attended any of these parties. First of all, I was never invited, and secondly, mother would never have allowed me to go anyhow. The idea was that "*you came as you were when you were called.*" When one arrived at the party, their appearances would be checked out. Sometimes a judge would award a prize to the one who was dressed the most unique or unusual.

Jesus is going to have a "*come as you are*" event. Death will summons us and Jesus Christ will review every detail of our life. He will award us based on His appraisal of our lives. For some this will be a very pleasant experience, however, for others this experience will be threatening and uncomfortable.

Have you ever had to go to court and stand before a judge? Even if it was only for a traffic ticket, remember how uncomfortable you felt . . . even miserable? I don't think anyone likes going to court. We feel uncomfortable having someone examine us, knowing that a decision has to be made about us. One feels defenseless, standing there being inspected.

One of these days everyone one of us will stand before the Lord, Jesus Christ to be inspected. God's Word tells us in Hebrews 9:27, "*It is appointed unto men once to die, after that the judgment.*"

God says, "*It is appointed to die!*" Death will be the invitation to this "*come as you are event.*" Every Christian, will be summoned to this court. One of the clearest announcements in God's Word is the fact of our forthcoming judgment.

Romans 14:12 states, "*So then each one of us must give an account of himself to God.*" You do not have a choice about this. There is no way you can avoid appearing at this judgment. Every one of us will keep this appointment. No one will get by this judge.

2 Corinthians 5:10, "*We must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his works in the body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad.*"

This verse is startling. Notice, **WHO** appears at this Judgment? **WE DO**, that is, *every Christian* will appear at this Judgment. This verse even tells *why* we appear. It is to be recompensed (or, rewarded) for **WORKS** done while in the body. We will receive for **ALL** of our works, whether they were good or bad. This judgment is serious. Christ will take into account **EVERYTHING** we've done during our time on earth.

Only one life, `Twill soon be past - Only what's done for Christ will last!

Do we understand what this really means? The hard truth of this needs to register in our heart. These words declare the *lasting effect* of our **WORKS** accomplished during our life on earth. These words declare, "*only what is done for Christ will last,*" meaning that only the works done for Jesus Christ will abide forever. All we will take from this life is what we have *done for Christ*. Every opportunity to do anything that is really lasting - ends at death.

A man told me just the other day, "*If I can just get to heaven, that's good enough for me.*" I've heard others say, "*All that is required to get to heaven is for one to keep their faith.*" Others say, "*My life is centered in Jesus. I treasure His Word. He paid it all. As far as I am concerned that even takes care of all my failures in this life.*"

If it doesn't matter what we do with our lives on earth, if all Christians are treated exactly the same in heaven, then *why* is there a Judgment for the Christians? Of course, Jesus paid it all, when it comes to the salvation of our souls. Scripture teaches us that Christ's precious blood makes us whiter than snow. We can no more make our self righteous than a brain surgeon can operate on his own brain. That isn't what these verses, which I have quoted, are all about. They are not speaking of salvation. What they are saying is that every blood-bought, blood-washed saint *will appear* before the Judgment Seat of Christ. God's Word tells us that there is coming a time when **EVERY** Christian will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ . . . The Greek word used is, "*The **Bema** Seat of Christ.*"

[We'll talk about that word "BEMA" a little later]

"*Only one life, 'Twill soon be past!*" This judgment is no joke. Galatians.6:7 states, "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*"

This verse is delivered to Christians. We are told, "*Be not **DECEIVED** . . .*" Who would deceive us about something as serious as a judgment? Certainly God would not. The only one who would is Satan, himself. Satan wants us to think Christ will, somehow, CANCEL the law of harvest, that, somehow, Christians will not reap what they sow.

Many Christians are deceived into believing they can "*mock God*" by their wasted, selfish lives. It cannot be done, especially since He has made such a huge investment in us.

God is after *disciples*. He wants those who are as eager to invest in Him as He is to invest in them. We are clearly told what God expects of us. He tells us that, "*a fruitful life will reap a joyous harvest in eternity, a wasted life will reap bitterness of LOSS.*"

If anyone thinks that God will overlook their disobedience and indifference to His commands, they are "*deceiving themselves.*"

It disturbs me immensely when I realize that so many of God's people fail to realize that there's a judgment day coming for the Christians. Satan has so many Christians "*deceived*" into thinking that everything that they are to **HAVE**, or **BE**, is automatically included when they were born-again.

I want to make it clear that Scripture teaches that the one who has accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior is "*redeemed.*" They are purchased of God. Jesus paid the price "*of His own blood.*" They are God's personal property. However they are also His "*slaves*" to do His work . . . to work for Him.

Satan "*deceives*" Christians into believing that they have no obligation to Jesus, after they have accepted Him as their Savior. Because "*sonship*" in Christ is **so** full and free, it is easy to be deceived into believing, "*Nothing anyone can do for God will make any difference!*" Satan is thrilled when Christians think like that. Anyone believing that - will never submit himself as a servant to Christ.

Salvation offers amazing rights, privileges and forgiveness of all our sins, mistakes and failures, however, this salvation does not wipe out responsibilities we have after we are saved. We have rights in Christ, but we also have *stewardship*. Rights do not repeal our obligation. Having Jesus as Savior does not revoke the requirement to serve Him as Lord. We are "*sons of God,*" but we also, "*servants of God.*"

We become a child of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *period*, but, the **KIND OF CHILD** we are, depends upon our life afterward. We can make of ourselves what- ever we desire. We can become as fully like Christ as we desire to be, or as little as we decide to be.

### *Wealth laid up in heaven*

We can be *rich* in heaven, or we can be *poor!* What we **BECOME** and what we **HAVE** in Christ *is entirely up to us*. Satan would have every Christian believe that everything is included in his born-again experience.

**It isn't true!**

Salvation does not cancel the law of harvest! We will **reap** what we **sow**! If we fail to live as Christ would have us to, we will suffer consequences. If we refuse to press for a holy life, we will be sorry. The blood of Christ cleanses us from the **GUILT** of sin, but it does not remove the consequences.

When God says, "*We will reap what we sow,*" He is speaking of consequences, *not guilt* of sin. There is a big difference in the guilt and the consequences of sin.

Every Christian will "*give an account*" of every unconfessed, unrepented, unforsaken sin! The "*consequences*" will be discovered when the child of God stands before Jesus Christ, Who is the Judge at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the outcome of this "*Bema Seat of Christ*" – will affect the believer's eternal rewards.