

PREPARING FOR ETERNITY THE CHRISTIAN'S DAY OF RECKONING

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

Part Fourteen

INTRODUCTION: As Christians, we will some day stand before Christ to give an account of our service and stewardship to the Lord. The sins of a Christian are forgiven because of Christ's death upon the cross. Yet, the Bible clearly teaches that Christ shall judge us according to our deeds and our faithfulness to Him while on earth. We shall either receive rewards or suffer loss. This judgment is not to be taken lightly. At the judgment seat of Christ, we will have our motives and our deeds exposed for what they really are. How we are living our lives now will determine our privileges and rewards in heaven.

I. PREPARATION FOR JUDGMENT

A. AMBITION FOR CHRIST. (Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:20)

B. APPROVAL FROM CHRIST.

1. Manner of pleasing Christ. (Romans 12:1-2; Col. 3:23-25)
2. Motive for pleasing Christ.
 - a. Disclosure of life before Christ. (1 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12)
 - b. Dread of facing Christ. (1 Cor. 5:11)
 - c. Divine love of Christ. (1 Cor. 5:14)

II. PROSPECT FOR JUDGMENT

A. APPEARANCE BEFORE CHRIST.

1. Inescapable. (v. 10, we must; Rom. 14:10-12)
2. Inclusive. (v. 10, all appear)
3. Individually. (v. 10, things done in his body; Rev. 22:12)
4. Impartial. (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; 1 Pet. 1:17)

B. ACCOUNTABLE TO CHRIST.

1. Revealing judgment. "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17:10)

2. Reason for judgment. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." (1 Corinthians 3:14)

3. Result of judgment.

a. Rewards to the faithful. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." (1 Cor. 3:14)

b. Regrets for the unfaithful. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:15)

Philip E. Hughes: "It is impossible to go through life selfishly and recklessly giving no consideration to God, and then expect to have His approval."

Vance Hayner: "A man is just as rich as his investment in the bank of heaven."

LESSONS FOR LIFE:

1. Our pursuits and our priorities in this life reveal where our treasures are.
2. Only the things done for Christ will survive this judgment.
3. At the judgment seat of Christ, our lives will be read like an open book.

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"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecc. 12:14)

"For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hidden, that shall not be known." (Luke 12:2)

I. PREPARATION FOR JUDGMENT

A. AMBITION FOR CHRIST.

"And whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Col. 3:17)

"For ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:20)

B. APPROVAL FROM CHRIST.

1. Manner of pleasing Christ.

"... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:1-2)

"And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." (Col. 3:23-25)

2. Motive for pleasing Christ.

- a. Disclosure of life before Christ. (1 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12)
- b. Dread of facing Christ. (1 Cor. 5:11)
- c. Divine love of Christ. (1 Cor. 5:14)

II. PROSPECT FOR JUDGMENT

A. APPEARANCE BEFORE CHRIST.

1. Inescapable. (v. 10, we must)

“For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
(Rom. 14:10-12)

2. Inclusive. (v. 10, all appear)

3. Individually. (v. 10, things done in his body)

“Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” (Rev. 22:12)

4. Impartial. (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11)

“... who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work.”
(1 Pet. 1:17)

B. ACCOUNTABLE TO CHRIST.

1. Revealing judgment.

“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” (Jer. 17:10)

“All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:13)

Roy L. Laurin: “As a result of our appearance before this ‘bema,’ we shall be seen in our true light. We shall be stripped of all disguise and pretense. All the trappings and gaudy coverings of religious hypocrisy will have been dissolved and we shall be seen as we are. There will be no further pretense or sham. The last great assize will reveal us in the blaze of reality.”

Philip Hughes: “... the word manifest means ‘to be laid bare, stripped of every outward façade of respectability, and openly revealed in the full reality of one’s character.’ All of our hypocrisies and concealments, all our secret, intimate sins of thought and deed will be open to the scrutiny of Christ.”

J. Vernon McGee has written: "Someday every believer is going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. I wish I could lay upon the heart of believers that it is not going to be a sweet little experience where the Lord Jesus is going to pat us on the back and say, 'You nice little Sunday school boy, you didn't miss a Sunday for ten years. You are so wonderful.' The Lord is going to go deeper than that. He is going to test you and see if you really had any fruit in your life. Have you grown in grace and knowledge of Him? Have you been a witness for Him? Has your life counted for Him? Have you been a blessing to others? My Christian friend, I am not sure that I am looking forward to the judgment seat of Christ, because He is going to take Vernon McGee apart there. I will not be judged for salvation, but because I am saved, He is going to find out whether or not I am to receive a reward."

2. Reason for judgment.

“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” (1 Corinthians 3:14)

3. Result of judgment.

a. Rewards to the faithful.

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MUST I GO, AND EMPTY-HANDED

Must I go, and empty-handed, Thus my dear Redeemer meet,
Not one day of service give Him, Lay no trophy at His feet?

Not at death I shrink nor falter, For my Saviour saves me now;
But to meet Him empty-handed, Thought of that now clouds my brow.

O the years in sinning wasted, Could I but recall them now,
I would give them to my Savior, To His will I’d gladly bow.

O ye saints, arouse, be earnest, Up and work while yet ‘tis day;
Ere the night of death o’er-take thee, Strive for souls while still you may.

Must I go, and empty-handed? Must I meet my Savior so?
Not one soul with which to greet Him: Must I empty-handed go?

John Doe died Wednesday at the age of 45. He was saved at the age of 16 and was a member of a small Baptist Church in town. He believed the Bible was the Word of God and Jesus was the only Savior. John was married and had four children. He was a very successful business owner. Last year, John earned over \$125,000. His wife works in a lawyer's office. John had other business interests and between his wife's salary and all other income they earned over \$175,000. John had a beautiful home and all the play toys of a twenty-first century family. He owned an SUV, an expensive car, truck, boat, four wheelers, and a camper. He bought a new car for both his oldest son and daughter. He gave his wife and children everything he could.

His oldest son is in college. John always was encouraging his son to get a good education so he could get ahead and be successful in life. His view of success was having this world's goods. The professors had all but robbed his son of his faith. John had failed to anchor his son in the truth of God's Word. His oldest daughter is a junior in High School. She is very active in all the school's activities. John is very proud of his daughter. He wants her to be popular. He buys her the most fashionable clothing, nothing but designer clothes for his daughter. She loves having material things. She sees God like her daddy, someone who will give her everything she wants without any sacrifice. His younger children are into sports. He wanted to keep them involved in sports so they will stay out of trouble. He taught his younger son and daughter the importance of being faithful to their coaches and loyal to their teams. In John's eyes, it was more important to be faithful to coaches and teams than to be faithful to the Lord.

John Doe seemed to be active in everything except his church and its ministry. His attitude was, "let somebody else do it." He was involved in several civic organizations in town. It was good for business to rub shoulders with important people. John attended Sunday School and church as much as he could. His involvement with his children's activities, civic duties, and business responsibilities demanded most of his time. He never made it to church for Wednesday services. His wife and children very seldom went either; after all, they have all these other important things to do. John never taught his children the need to put God first because he never did. John felt guilty for not spending more time with his wife and children. They missed a lot of church on Sundays to go on trips, picnics, and other activities. He called this family time. John made himself believe that God would understand. John Doe thought you could not have quality family time seated together in church. God did not see it that way. John had always taught his children to believe in God. The problem was that John taught them not to take God too seriously.

When John was twenty, God really dealt with his heart. He even thought that God was calling him to preach. He just kept brushing it aside until those feelings finally went away. John did teach Sunday School for two years. He never applied himself and was never prepared. He took lightly the privileges of teaching. John never attended the prayer meetings held at church. When revival was held at church, he would tell the preacher he would try to come a night or two. John never came out for visitation.

The Lord gave John many opportunities to share Christ with his employees, business people as well as people in the community. He was good at talking business but was not much into witnessing. In the twenty-nine years of his salvation, John never won anyone to Christ. He did on occasion, ask people to come to church.

John gave to the church every Sunday he was there. He would drop \$20.00 in the offering plate. At the end of the year, John would give a check for \$3,000. It would help with his taxes. The members of this small church talked about how generous he was. He gave a total of \$3,700 when his tithe would have been \$17,500 if he would have tithed. Last year he headed up a fund drive for a family who lost everything in a house fire. He had his picture on the front page of the newspaper with some of his employees. Most of the money came from the employees and what he gave came out of the business. He loved the recognition and it was good for business.

Many came for his funeral. The leaders and business people said he would be missed in the community. The preacher and church members offered praise for John. His wife is in shock, his oldest son since being in college doubts the existence of God, his oldest daughter is angry and bitter at God, and his youngest children are without comfort or answers for their father's death.

There was another death in the community Wednesday. Henrietta Brown went to be with the Lord at the age of 68. She was raised in a home with 7 brothers and 3 sisters. Her family was very poor. At the age of 11 she accepted Jesus as her Savior. She was excited about her new life in Christ and she served Him heartily. Henrietta married at the age of 17. By the age of 25, she had four children. Her husband worked hard on a farm. It took every nickel to provide for the family.

When she was 28, her husband was killed when a farm tractor turned over on him. Her faith in Jesus sustained her during those difficult times. She had to go to work cleaning houses and taking in laundry to support herself and her children. She never complained. She just thanked the Lord for His grace and His faithfulness.

Henrietta poured her life into her children. Every night she would have a Bible story for them. Oh, how she could make those stories come alive. Moreover, they would sing those old songs like, "Nothing But The Blood," or "I'm A Child of the King." They would have prayer after their Bible story. Long after the children were in bed, Henrietta would be up praying for those kids. At each of their births, she gave her children back to the Lord like Hannah in the Bible. She taught her children to love Jesus. Every Sunday morning they would come walking down the road to the little Baptist Church. She made sure they were in Sunday School and the worship service. Come Sunday night and Wednesday night, Henrietta and her children were in church.

Her children had to wear hand-me-downs most of the time. They never had the toys and luxuries as most kids but they had what money could not buy, a mother's love and a faith in God.

Whenever there was a need in the community, Henrietta was one of the first to help. She would comfort the bereaved, pray for the sick, cook a meal for the hungry. Her home was always open and she was never too busy to lend a helping hand. She never missed a prayer meeting at church. Henrietta knew the power of prayer. When the church doors were open, she was going to be there. You never had to ask Henrietta to attend revival meetings. She knew the importance of those meetings. She taught Sunday School, sung in the choir, cleaned the church, and willingly did whatever was needed at church. Henrietta believed the church was like a lighthouse in this dark world of sin to show sinners the way of salvation. Henrietta never took a class on how to be a soul winner, but she was always witnessing and leading people to Jesus.

Henrietta never knew what it was like to have a lot of money, but she was always faithful with what she had. There were times she went without some personal things she needed so she could give her offering to church. Some people thought she was crazy. Henrietta was not crazy but wise. She was just laying up treasures in heaven.

At Henrietta Brown's funeral, her oldest son preached. God had called him into the ministry. He always said it was because of his mother's prayers. Her oldest daughter is the mother of five children. She wants to raise her children with the godly character of her mother. Henrietta youngest son rebelled in his teenage years; however she never gave up on him. At her funeral, her youngest son is seated with his wife and 3 children. He serves as a deacon now in his church. He praised God for giving him a mother who never gave up on him and never stopped praying. Her youngest daughter had to fly in from India. She and her husband are missionaries. She always said that her mother put a fire in her heart for souls.

John Doe and Henrietta Brown's race on earth is finished. They wait for the judgment seat of Christ. The character of their lives and their stewardship to God will be tested by fire. Which one do you suppose will be reward the most at the judgment seat of Christ? Which of the two would you like to be?