

If you want to start a lively conversation in the lunch room or perhaps at a party, introduce the subjects of **POLITICS** or **RELIGION**.

Everyone has an opinion and, eventhough there might be great discrepancies between them, each person tends to think his or her opinion is the right one!

Well, I'm glad God doesn't judge according to changing opinion or personal bias!

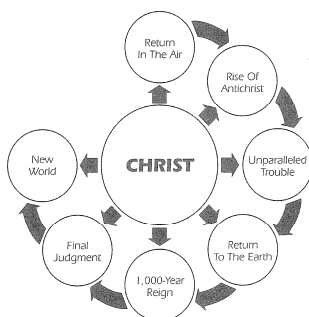
[SLIDE 2]

Peter tells us in his 1st letter that *God “judges each man’s work impartially” (1Pe 1:17)*

Luke declares that God will *“judge the world with justice” (Acts 17:31)* and in the last of the judgments, John informs us that those whose names are not written in the Book of Life are *“judged according to what they had done” (Rev 20:12)*

So, every person who has ever lived – every one of us - is destined to face God's Judgment at some time.

In fact, the Bible tells us of **FOUR SPECIFIC JUDGMENTS** which are YET TO COME and all of them in some way, revolve around END TIMES.



[SLIDES 3-6]

1. **JUDGMENT OF ALL BELIEVERS** following the rapture of the Church. After we are caught up to meet the Lord in the air and then go with Him to His Father's house in heaven, we will stand before the Lord in judgment.

2. Then, when Jesus comes back to earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom, there will be a **JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL AND THE GENTILE NATIONS** alive at the end of the tribulation (Matt 25:31ff)

3. Then there is a **JUDGMENT OF FALLEN ANGELS**, seemingly towards the end of the Millennium (Rev 20:10, Jude 1:6, 1 Cor 6:3)

4. And concerning all people who die without a relationship with Christ, there will be a **JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED DEAD BEFORE THE GREAT WHITE THRONE**, right at the END of the Millennium (Rev 20:11-15)

Today, I want to focus on the 1st of these **JUDGMENTS** – the **JUDGMENT** of all **BELIEVERS** - commonly referred to as The **JUDGMENT SEAT** of **CHRIST**.

Let me show you where this fits in the
PROPHETIC timetable.



[SLIDES 7-9]

... in heaven during TRIBULATION period

We read of this judgment in two places:

[SLIDE 10]

[Rom 14:10-12 NKJV] 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.

11. For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12. So then EACH OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD.

[2 Cor 5:10 NIV] For WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, that EACH ONE MAY RECEIVE WHAT IS DUE HIM FOR THE THINGS DONE WHILE IN THE BODY, whether good or bad.

There are some important observations we can make:

- These words are addressed to ALL CHRISTIANS

“WE must ALL appear / stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST (GOD)”

- **Rom: “EACH SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD”**
- **2 Cor: “EACH ONE (WILL) RECEIVE WHAT IS DUE FOR THE THINGS DONE WHILE IN THE BODY” (NIV)**

Are you surprised by that?

These passages clearly teach that all **CHRISTIANS** are going to be evaluated; we're going to be **JUDGED**? **BUT, Jesus said:**

[SLIDE 11]

[John 5:24 NKJV] "...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.

How can these ideas be reconciled?

In the passage John recorded, JESUS was saying something like this:

- There is **JUDGMENT COMING UPON ALL PEOPLE** because of their sin
- **BUT, when you place your FAITH in Me, I give you everlasting life and I SAVE YOU FROM COMING JUDGMENT** because I have taken that judgment in your place!

- What is more, **while you were at one time DEAD in terms of your relationship with Me, you are now ALIVE** and ALREADY HAVE the essence of ETERNAL LIFE!

SO, if you are a Christian today, YOUR SIN HAS ALREADY BEEN JUDGED AND PAID FOR IN JESUS CHRIST!

HOWEVER, the JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST will be a time of REVIEW of ALL YOU'VE DONE SINCE YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN

How do we know that?

The word for "JUDGMENT SEAT"= *bēma* (Gk)

While it can be used to refer to the raised platform and seat occupied by a judge in certain contexts, the word *bēma* seems to have had a **MORE SPECIFIC MEANING** in Greek literature.

In his book, *Things To Come*, Dwight Pentecost quotes Dr Leonard Sale-Harrison: “In Grecian games in Athens, the old arena contained a raised platform on which the president or umpire of the arena sat. From here he rewarded all the contestants; and here he rewarded all winners. It was called the “bema” or “reward seat.” It was never used of a judicial bench.”

Pentecost continues, “Thus, associated with this word are the ideas of prominence, dignity, authority, honour, and reward rather than the idea of justice and judgment. The word that Paul chose to describe the place before which this event takes place suggests its character.”

Now, what will happen when we come before that JUDGMENT SEAT since it is a place of REVIEW and REWARD? In Paul’s 1st letter to the Corinthian Church, he said this:

[SLIDE 12]

[1 Cor 3:10-15 NIV] By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11. FOR NO ONE CAN LAY ANY FOUNDATION OTHER THAN THE ONE ALREADY LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST.

[SLIDE 13]

12. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13. his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will TEST THE QUALITY of each man's work. 14. If what he has built survives, he will receive his REWARD. 15. If it is burned up, he will suffer LOSS; he himself will be saved, but only as ONE ESCAPING through the flames.

What a helpful yet challenging little passage!

(v 11) – NO OTHER FOUNDATION - only

Jesus CHRIST. It's NOT:

- Living a GOOD LIFE
- Keeping the GOLDEN RULE
- It's not the teachings of MOHAMMAD
- ...or the enlightenment of BUDDHA
- The FORCE
- Or Joseph Smith or Jim Jones or Marshall Appelgate or David Koresh
- OR ANY ONE of a 100 other wrong ways

IT'S JESUS CHRIST ALONE!

(v 12) – talks of BUILDING on the FOUNDATION

- Using various different types of 'building materials'
- The DAY – “Day of the Lord”

(v 13) - THE “WORK” will be tested/evaluated for its quality

(vv 14-15) – if it survives – REWARD;

If it is burned up – LOSS

(v15) - BUT the person will still be SAVED by “the skin of his teeth”

What type of WORKS is the Lord looking for?

I believe it can be summed up as: [SLIDE 14] “WHAT WE’VE DONE FOR CHRIST IN THE POWER OF HIS SPIRIT”

Gold/ Silver/ Precious Stones Wood/ Hay/ Straw

permanent / enduring	passing, temporary
beautiful	ordinary
valuable	ultimately worthless
hard to obtain	easy to obtain

MOTIVE IS THE KEY – 1 Cor. 4: 5

[1 Cor 4:5] Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

**EITHER WE'LL RECEIVE A REWARD
OR SUFFER LOSS**

What we long to hear is: *“Well done, good and faithful servant!”* [Matt 25:21]

Let's get specific about REWARDS:

The CROWNS are related to these rewards

Stephanos (Gk) = wreath of victory = CROWN

- Conqueror's crown NOT kingly crown
- Wreath of victory in the games
- Public honour for distinguished service

[SLIDE 15]

CROWN that WILL LAST FOREVER

1 Cor. 9:25-27 SELF-DISCIPLINE / PURITY

CROWN of REJOICING

1 Thess.2:19 SOUL-WINNING

CROWN of RIGHTEOUSNESS

2 Tim. 4: 8 LONGING for the LORD'S
APPEARING

[SLIDE 16]

CROWN of LIFE

James 1:12 PERSEVERING UNDER TRIAL
Rev. 2:10 MARTYRDOM

CROWN of GLORY

1 Pet.5:1, 4 SHEPHERD'S CROWN

What do we do with the CROWNS?[SLIDE 17]

[Rev 4:9-11] Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, [10] the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: [11] "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you

created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

CAUTION from the Lord Himself:

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

NOBODY IS GOING TO FOOL GOD!

- No “coat of paint to hide the decay”
- No putting on a show to impress
- Not by opinion – for JESUS is the Judge
[SLIDE 18-20]

When I stand at the judgment seat of Christ
And He shows me 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 I checked Him
there, and I would not yield my will...
Will there be grief in my Saviour's eyes,
Grief, though He loves me still?

He would 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.
Then my desolate heart will well-nigh break
With the tears that I cannot shed;
I shall cover my face with my empty hands,
I shall bow my uncrowned head...
Lord of the years that are left to me,
I give them to Thy hand;
Take me and break me, mould me...
To the pattern Thou hast planned!

CHECKLIST from the message: [SLIDE 21]

- **Every one WILL give ACCOUNT to God, but Christians give account at the BEMA SEAT.**
- **What We've done with JESUS is the criterion for this REVIEW**
- **There will be a sense of LOSS = SHAME or REWARD = manifest in some way**

HOW ARE YOU LIVING FOR CHRIST TODAY?