

Foundations 9e Eternal Judgment of the Believer: Authority, Glory and Rewards

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits”. **Hebrews 6:1-3**

All Christians will appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be eternally judged for our works, whether good or bad

“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, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.” **2 Corinthians 5:9-11**

Revelation 2:23b “All the churches shall know that I am He (Jesus) who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”

According to the Word of God, all believers will be recompensed with different levels of glory, authority and rewards, or lack of glory, authority and rewards.

Different Levels of Authority

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And

likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

“So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ He also who had received two talents came and said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.’ His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

“But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ **Matthew 25:14-30**

The Lord will reward us according to our faithfulness to serve Him in small things. To be proven faithful before the Lord with very little is to qualify for increased spheres of influence and authority. In a similar parable (Luke 17:11-27) the Lord rewarded the faithful with authority over cities. One was given authority over ten cities. Another was given authority over five cities. Some will have authority over nothing.

The Lord despises laziness and associates it with wickedness. To not faithfully use what God has given us for His will results in severe loss, weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Different Levels of Glory

The level of glory that we carry in eternity is determined by the faithfulness of our walk with God in this life.

When believers are resurrected and receive incorruptible, immortal bodies, we will not all have the same level of glory. Some believers will shine brightly with great glory, like the sun. Others will have a lesser glory like the moon. Others will have even less glory, like a twinkling star.

“There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.”

1 Cor. 15:41-42a

We are being prepared, in this life, for an eternal level of glory. This involves passing through trials while we keep our eyes on eternity. Everyone will, at times, experience varying degrees of affliction and suffering. Our preparation for eternal glory includes keeping our eyes on the eternal and not setting our hearts on that which is temporary.

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do

not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

Our work will be rewarded

“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”

Matthew 16:27

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.” **Revelation 14:13**

“For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” **Mark 9:41**

Varying Levels of Rewards

When the Bible speaks of “overcoming” it refers to our faithfulness to God’s will and growing up into the fullness of Christ. This involves our obedience and cooperation with the Holy Spirit. All believers can overcome, but not all will choose to overcome. Therefore, there are different levels or degrees of eternal rewards.

In the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus addressed the churches of Asia Minor regarding eternal rewards. To those who overcame, He promised great rewards.

Jesus is the Exceedingly Great Reward

Jesus exhorted the church at Ephesus to overcome a divided heart and return to Him as their first love. He promised:

“To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” **Revelation 2:7b**

Jesus IS the tree of life therefore He was offering Himself as the reward. “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” **Genesis 15:1**

A White Stone and a New Name

To the church at Pergamos, Jesus said:

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.” **Revelation 2:17**

Ruling the Nations and the Morning Star

To the church at Thyatira Jesus promised:

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’— as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the Morning Star. “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Revelation 2:26-29

Clothed in White Garments

To the church at Sardis: “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**

A Pillar in the temple of God, the Name of God and the Name of the City of God

To the church at Philadelphia: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”

Revelation 3:12

Reigning on the Throne with the Lord Jesus Christ

To the church at Laodicea: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Each of the promises made to these seven churches are offered to all believers, however the eternal rewards will not be given to all. They are reserved for those who overcome. Some believers will diligently live in such a way as to inherit these rewards and others will not. Some will rule and reign with the Lord Jesus Christ and others will not. These are part of the eternal judgments that we must understand in order to “go on to maturity” in Christ.

Living in light of eternity

Suppose you were told that there would be one day next month by which you would be evaluated for the rest of your life. In other words, if you lived righteously for that one 24-hour period it would determine how the next 50 or 60 years of your life would be. How would you then live that one day? You would be very careful to make very sure that you did everything right!

Likewise, we are given a very short time to live on this earth. How we live during our brief life now will determine the quality of our life for all eternity.

“Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless”

1 Peter 3:14