Session 1 Introducing the Judgment Seat and Eternal Rewards

1. The Judgment Seat of Christ: the place of reward
   1. Each believer will stand before Jesus to give an account of themselves and to receive rewards.   
      The judgment seat, or *bema seat*,was a familiar term that referred to the platform where a judge sat to evaluate athletic contests like the Olympic Games. God gives each believer assignments in life that are based on our capacities—physical, mental, emotional, financial, circumstantial, etc.

10We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ…12Then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (Rom. 14:10-12)

10For 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. (2 Cor. 5:10)

* 1. Paul gave us details about the most important appointment in our life—the judgment seat of Christ.

8Each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor… 11No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12If anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13each one’s work…will be revealed by fire… 14If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15If anyone’s work   
is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. 3:8-15)

* 1. ***No other foundation***: The gift of righteousness through Jesus’ death on the cross is our foundation (Rom. 5:17). We are *saved* by faith in Jesus’ work, as a free gift, but are *rewarded* according to our works. Our entrance into heaven is not based on our works, though our role in heaven is.

17…who receive…the gift of righteousness…through the One, Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:17)

* 1. ***Rewards***: Rewards are about Jesus expressing how He feels about the way we loved Him in this life, about working closely with Him in reigning over the earth, and about God vindicating our choices for righteousness (Heb. 1:9). Rewards are not about us gaining superiority or status before others. Jesus called us to reject the “secular paradigm” of having status and authority (Mt. 20:25).
  2. The saints will have great joy in working closely with Jesus in reigning over much (Mt. 25:21).

21“I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.” (Mt. 25:21)

* 1. Jesus called us to “buy gold” and “lay up treasures in heaven” by developing our relationship with Him and obeying Him in what we do and say and in how we spend our time and money (Jn. 14:15).

18“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.” (Rev. 3:18)

20“… but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Mt. 6:20)

* 1. Paul exhorted the saints to seek those things which are above—this includes eternal rewards.

1…seek those things which are above, where Christ is…2Set your mind on things above…   
(Col. 3:1-2)

1. Different types of Eternal Rewards are given in varying measures
   1. There are different types of heavenly rewards that are spectacular and far more glorious than anyone has ever imagined (1 Cor. 2:9). Jesus highlighted 18 different rewards in Revelation 2-3.

9But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (1 Cor. 2:9)

17For our light affliction…is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,   
(2 Cor. 4:17)

* 1. Some in the kingdom will be called least and some great (Mt. 5:19; Rev. 19:5). Every believer will differ from one another in the measure of God’s glory that they receive in the context of rewards.

19“Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments…shall be called least in the kingdom …but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom.” (Mt. 5:19)

41There is one glory of the sun…and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42So also is the resurrection of the dead. (1 Cor. 15:41-42)

* 1. ***#1 Resurrected body***: God’s glory will be manifested in our resurrected bodies in varying measures.

43“The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” (Mt. 13:43)

* 1. ***#2 Garments***: Garments will vary in glory according to how believers lived (Rev. 3:4-5, 18; 19:8).   
     There may be many different types of clothing with unique designs, fabric, brightness, color, etc.

8To her [Bride of Christ] it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Rev. 19:8)

2And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. (Ex. 28:2)

* 1. ***#3 Authority***: We will all have different work assignments with varying measures of authority and responsibility (Mt. 19:28, 30; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21).

17“…because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.” 18And the second came…19likewise he said to him, “You also be over five cities.” (Lk. 19:17-19)

* 1. ***#4 Praise***: Each will receive varying praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5; cf. Mt. 25:21; 1 Pet. 1:7).

5The Lord comes…then each one’s praise [affirmation] will come from God. (1 Cor. 4:5)

* 1. ***#5 Crowns***: Some will receive crowns (Rev. 2:10; cf. 1 Cor. 9:25; Jas. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 3:11). Receiving a crown is not synonymous with the gift of eternal life that is freely given to all believers.

10…Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10)

* 1. ***#6 Treasures***: Jesus’ call to gain treasure in heaven includes many different things (Mt. 5:12; 6:4, 6, 18, 20; 10:41-42; 16:27; 19:21; Mk. 9:41; 10:21; Lk. 6:23, 35; 12:21, 33; 18:22; Rev. 3:18; 22:12).
  2. ***#7 Communion***: Our communion with God will vary according to our spiritual capacity. Jesus will reward some by writing the Father’s name on them, which includes receiving insight about God.