

THE JUDGMENT SEAT: THE BELIEVER'S FINEST HOUR

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

1A. THE SESSION AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT:

1b. The issues at the judgment seat:

1c. Positively: Service and Rewards:

The Scriptures emphasize the work and rewards of the believer:

2 Cor. 5:10 "what he has done"

1 Cor. 3:13 "every man's work"

Eph. 6:8 "whatsoever good thing any man doeth"

Col. 3:23 "whatsoever ye do"

2c. Negatively: Not Sins

Christ's "one sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:12) brought "remission of these" (10:18) so complete that God can say, "I will remember them no more" (10:17)

2b. The interpretation of the judgment seat:

Is the Judgment Seat a *Protestant purgatory* or a *Christian's coronation*?

Is the Judgment Seat primarily a time of

tears or triumph?
gloom or glory?
remorse or rejoicing?
regret or recognition?
recrimination or recompense?

1c. The punitive view:

The judgment seat is a time of chastisement and shame:

1d. George Dollar says about Christ's action toward the believers:

He's going to take the good and faithful servants with Him; they will rule with Him over the earth. But He's going to send all of the wicked, lazy, unprofitable Christians. . .to outer darkness for one thousand years and they shall weep and there shall be gnashing of teeth (cited by Hoyt, *Bib. Sac.*, January-March 1980, 33).



2d. Kenneth Dodson also writes of punishment at the judgment seat:

Justice toward His children demands that God reward them for both good works and bad works at the Judgment Seat of Christ. There will be crowns and rewards for good works. *There will be chastisement and stripes for bad works* (*The Prize of the Up-Calling or Paul's Secret of Victory*, 82 [emphasis added]).

Dodson further writes of God:

He has a videotape of every human life, with all the lines of human influence that have gone from that life into other human lives, and He will play back all of these videotapes of all humanity. This will be "God's Drama of History" (*Ibid.*, 77 [emphasis added]).

2c. The positive view:

Theologians holding this positive position maintain that Scripture teaches that all sins, both confessed sin and unconfessed, have been borne by Christ on the cross and that the Christian will never be faced with either at the Judgment Seat of Christ. (*Hoyt, Bib. Sac.*, January-March 1980, 36)

1d. Chafer and Walvoord support this view:

With reference to sin, Scripture teaches that the child of God under grace shall not come into judgment (John 3:18; 5:24; 6:37; Rom. 5:1; 8:1; 1 Cor. 11:32); in his standing before God, and on the ground that the penalty for all sin—past, present and future (Col. 2:13)—has been borne by Christ as the perfect substitute, the believer is not only placed beyond condemnation, but being in Christ is accepted in the perfection of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:6; Col. 2:10; Heb. 10:14) and loved of God as Christ is loved (John 17:23) (*Chafer, Major Bible Themes*, 1974 ed., 282).

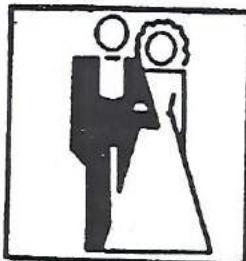
2d. Those who take a positive approach do not minimize the consequences of the believer's sins. Hoyt has well written on the subject:

The Bible does teach that there are and will be temporal and eternal consequences for the believer's sins. First, present unconfessed sin results in a *loss of desire* for service as one is out of experiential fellowship with God. Second, unconfessed sin also results in *loss of power* in the believer's life because sin grieves the Holy Spirit. Third, unconfessed sin results in *loss of opportunity* since the sinning believer is not living according to the will of God. These are three very real present consequences of unconfessed sin in the believer's life (*Bib. Sac.*, January-March 1980, 84, emphasis in the original).

3b. The individuals at the Judgment Seat:

1c. The individuals have experienced the rapture:

Would not the comfort of the blessed hope turn to consternation if the believer were to anticipate public humiliation after the rapture?



2c. The individuals constitute the Bride of Christ:

They are about to be joined eternally to the Bridegroom. What earthly bridegroom criticizes and chastises his bride just prior to the wedding and actually expects her to be at the ceremony? Instead of joining him joyfully at the altar, she will withdraw tearfully to her parents. Who could blame her?

3c. Some of the individuals have been in heaven for hundreds or thousands of years:

Will the saints who have enjoyed the splendors of heaven and the fellowship of the Savior for ages suddenly have that blessedness terminated by an event that will have the carnal ones among them in a state of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth?

2A. THE SUBLIMITY OF THE JUDGMENT SEAT:

It is safe to say that many believers are anything but anxious for the rapture because they have been taught to dread the *bema* after the rapture. A right understanding of the Judgment Seat puts an aura of anticipation over one's present and future life.

1b. The believer's recognition:

At the Judgment Seat the believer will be recognized by his Lord for his service. Hated by the world and misunderstood by other believers, the true worth of his character and conduct will receive divine recognition.

2b. The believer's rewards:

The New Testament revelation concerning the Church as a special company includes statements about the glorious destiny of the Bride of Christ, a company blessed in this life beyond any other group in human history (Eph. 1:3) and rewarded in glory in ways uniquely wonderful.

1c. Special rewards:

At the *bema* special
Rewards are bestowed
For faithful service.
They are called crowns,
or better, victor's
garlands.

2c. Individual rewards:

A second category of
rewards involves the
recognition of every
action. The most routine
activity of the life of the
believer will either
receive a reward or forfeit a reward. Even "eating and drinking," if done
for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), will be rewarded. Paul encourages
both bond slaves and free servants (Eph. 6:8c) that every good activity
will be rewarded. While recognition and remuneration in this life may be
minimal, the Lord will grant every good action "the reward of an
inheritance." An action is worthwhile in God's eyes and suitable for
reward if it is done from the heart (*kardia*, Col. 3:22) with the whole being
(*ek pseuches*, Col. 3:23) and with the proper attitude (*eunoios*, Eph. 6:7).

Col. 3:22-24

²² Servants, obey in all things your
masters according to the flesh, not
with eyerservice, as men-pleasers, but
in sincerity of heart, fearing
God. ²³ And whatever you do, do it
heartily, as to the Lord and not to
men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord
you will receive the reward of the
inheritance; for you serve the Lord
Christ.

The Judgment Seat of Christ



1. The Incorruptible Crown, to those who practice self-control (I Corinthians 9:24-27).
2. The Soul-Winner's Crown to those who are faithful in witnessing for Christ (I Thessalonians 2:19, 20).
3. The Crown of Righteousness to those who love and look for Christ's appearing (II Timothy 4:5-8).
4. The Crown of Life to those who endure trial because of their love for Christ (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10. See also John 21:15-17).
5. The Shepherd's or Pastor's Crown to those who faithfully feed their flocks and live exemplary lives before them (I Peter 5:1-4).

Eph. 6:5-8

⁵ Servants, be obedient to those who
are your masters according to the
flesh, with fear and trembling, in
sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not
with eyerservice, as men-pleasers, but
as bondservants of Christ, doing the
will of God from the heart, ⁷ with
goodwill doing service, as to the
Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that
whatever good anyone does, he will
receive the same from the Lord,
whether *he is a slave or free*.

The most routine matters of life take on a new meaning for the believer who realizes that every action may be, and if done properly, will be rewarded of God. A bitter spirit and a complaining attitude will forfeit reward. How glorious to know that if we "give it all we have," even housework and homework, not just "holy" work will someday receive "the reward of the inheritance."

3c. Universal rewards:

Some rewards are promised to every believer by virtue of the gracious provision of Christ in the atonement. Even carnal believers are blood-bought and may anticipate certain rewards. These rewards are not as a result of faithfulness in this life, but in response to God's gracious salvation. They belong to every Church Age believer who has been baptized into Christ.

1d. Divine appointment:

1 Cor. 6:2-3

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

Paul reminds carnal believers that they would participate in the millennial rule of Christ (rather than be excluded from the millennium). In addition, they would have the privilege of judging the angels.

2d. Divine affection:

1 Thess. 4:17

Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

The experience of the eternal presence of Christ and His everlasting love would be sufficient for the Bride of Christ. Every believer will be forever with the Bridegroom. What a comfort!

3d. Divine approval:

1 Cor. 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Paul concludes the most lengthy discussion of the Judgment Seat with the observation that Christ at that time will reveal the innermost aspects of the human heart, not for the purpose of condemnation—"there is therefore now no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1)—but for the purpose of commendation. He will find something good to say about each one of us: "and then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Cor. 4:5) Will there be regrets at the *bema*? Certainly! But the overall emphasis is that of rejoicing.

How will the believer feel moments after the Judgment Seat? Paul concludes the most lengthy passage on the Judgment Seat with these arresting and comforting words (1 Cor. 4:5):

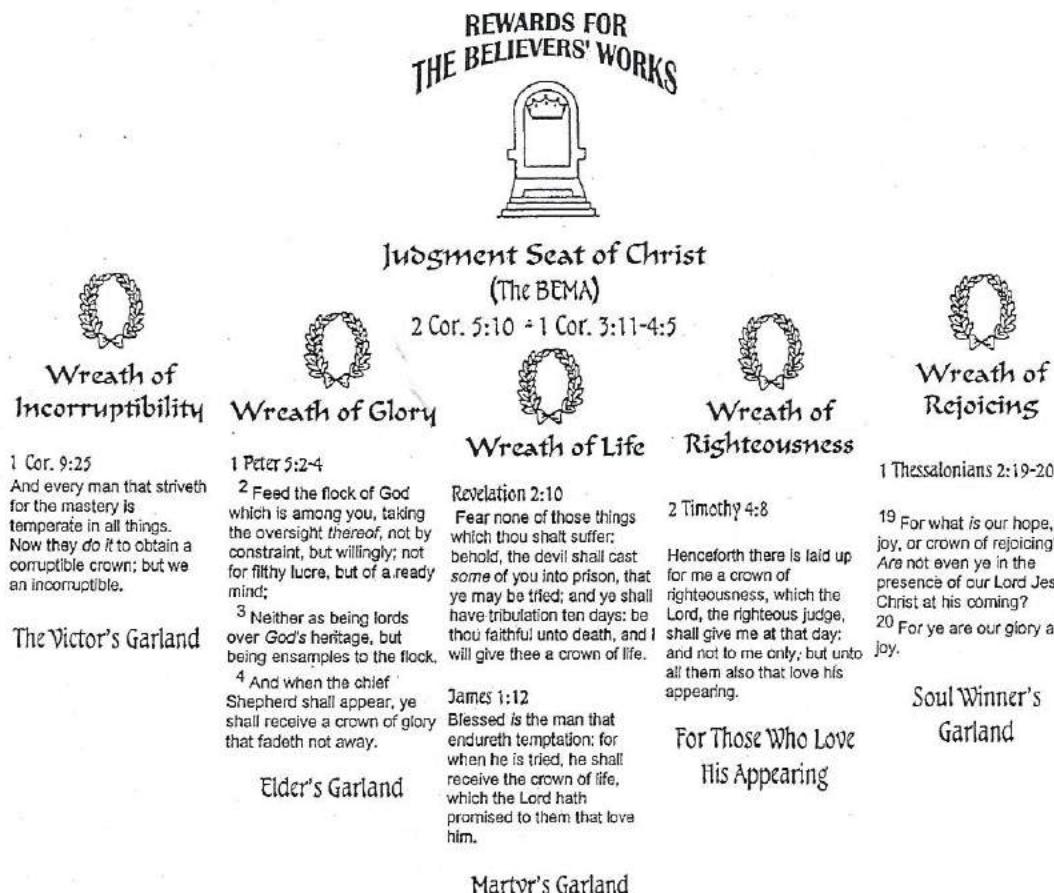
"And then shall every man have praise of God."

To hear these words of commendation ringing in our ears will make it worth it all. **As the rapture is the believer's FONDEST HOPE, the Judgment Seat is the believer's FINEST HOUR.**

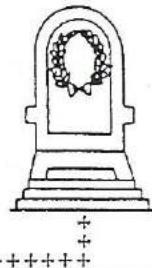
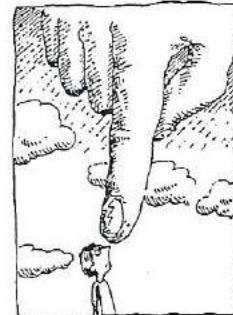
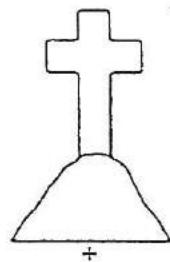
CONCLUSION:

Hoyt has well said:

The Judgment Seat of Christ might be compared to a commencement ceremony. At graduation there is some measure of disappointment and remorse that one did not do better and work harder. However, at such an event the overwhelming emotion is joy, not remorse. The graduates do not leave the auditorium weeping because they did not earn better grades. Rather, they are thankful that they have been graduated, and they are grateful for what they did achieve. To overdo the sorrow aspect of the judgment seat of Christ is to make heaven hell. To underdo the sorrow aspect is to make faithfulness inconsequential (Bib. Sac., April-June 1980, 131).



The Believer's 3 Judgments



As a Sinner at the Cross
Gal. 3:13
1 Pet. 2:29

As a Son During Life
1 Cor. 11:31-32
Heb. 12:5-7

As Servant at the Bema
Rom. 14:10-12
1 Cor. 4:1-5

1

2

3

THE PICTURES OF THE JUDGMENT SEAT

The Picture

The Passage

The Purpose

The Prospect

The Believer Is A:

Our Life Is A:

1. Servant

Romans 14:10-12

LOYAL STEWARDSHIP

PROMOTION



But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? 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.

2. Builder

1 Corinthians 3:11-13

LASTING STRUCTURE

PRAISE



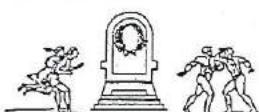
For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble - every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

3. Athlete

1 Corinthians 9:24-26

LAWFUL STRIVING

PRIZE



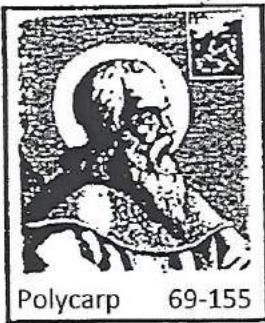
And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body; and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

CHRISTIANS THROUGH THE CENTURIES



1

Apostle Paul +66



2

Polycarp 69-155



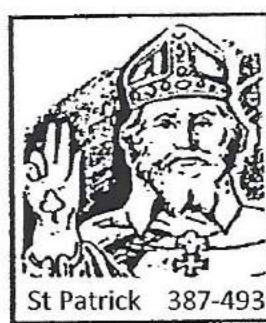
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Tertullian 160-220



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St Augustine 354-430



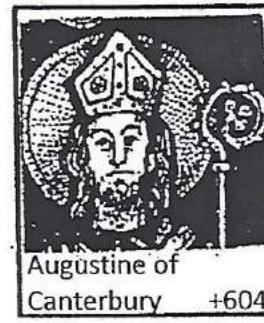
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St Patrick 387-493
or 460



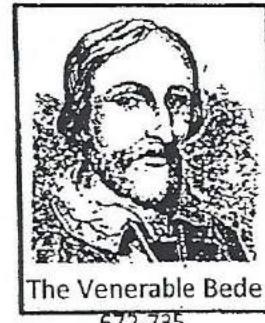
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Boethius 480-524



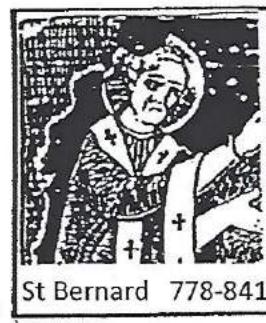
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Augustine of Canterbury +604



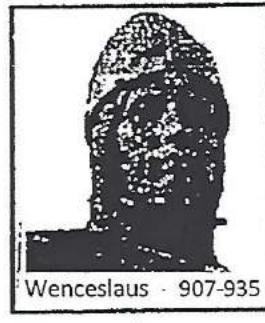
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The Venerable Bede 672-735



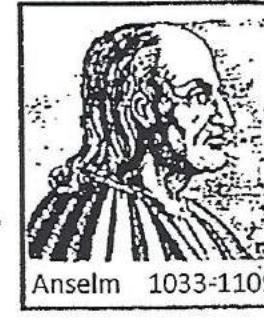
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St Bernard 778-841



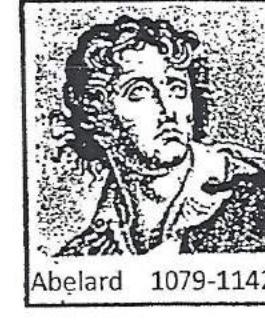
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Wenceslaus 907-935



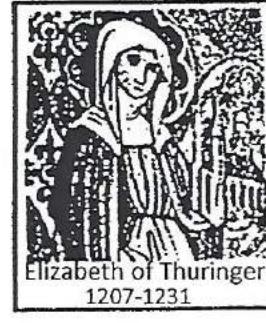
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Anselm 1033-1109



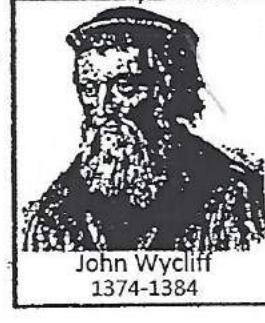
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Abelard 1079-1142



13

Elizabeth of Thuringer
1207-1231



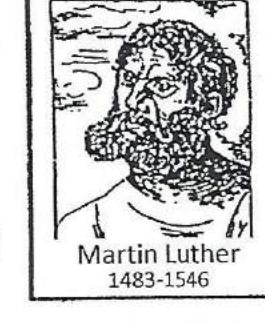
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John Wycliff
1374-1384



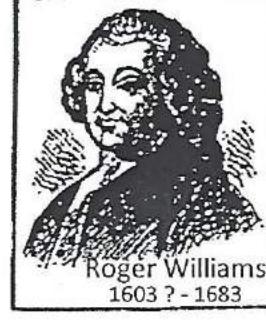
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Savanarola
1452-1498



16

Martin Luther
1483-1546



17

Roger Williams
1603 ? - 1683



18

Johann S Bach
1685-1750



19

Charles H Spurgeon
1834-1892



20

Robert T Ketcham
1889-1978

I have attempted to select one representative saint for each century of the Christian Church. These glorified saints revel in the presence of God and the holy angels. Are we to assume that their joy is overshadowed by a gnawing fear as to what awaits them at the yet future judgment seat of Christ? Will those like St. Patrick have their joy abruptly end at the bema, possibly followed by weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth? 8

Understanding The Bible

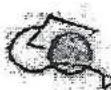
STUDY REFERENCE.

Clarence E. Mason's "ESCHATOLOGY 3"

ADDENDUM 5

"THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"

1 Corinthians 3:9b-4:5; cp. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10



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SECTION: Addendum 5

"THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST"

1 Corinthians 3:9b-4:5; cp. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

1. Observe the costly foundation of God's temple (11)

Would argue for care (10b) in building with suitable fire-resistant materials (12a), rather than evident combustibles (12b).

How silly a log cabin or a hay mound or lean-to would look on a large foundation laid down at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars. Yet, that is what most Christians are doing.

2. It is clear that this is a judgment of Christians (only) (15-16)

There is no question of a test to see if a person has done enough to be saved. Even when, regrettably, the works are burned up (because done unsatisfactorily), the person under discussion is "saved, yet so as through the flames."

3. The purpose of the evaluating fire is twofold:

a. To make apparent those works which are of praise to God (12,14; 4:5c).

b. To remove by purging anything and everything which would mar the believer's enjoyment of the Lord in heaven (12b, 15a). How could one be happy in eternity if there remained the memory of his many failures to do the Lord's will, and his many shameful sins committed after receiving Christ as Saviour? God graciously removes all such awareness of sin's effects (Rev. 21:4).

4. It is evident that the Judgment Seat of Christ will be a painful experience to many Christians (15a)

There is an element of truth in the Roman Catholic contention that the incident of death does not remove the harvest of sin's sowing (Gal. 6:5-6a). How then is it removed? Rome says by an indeterminate period of suffering in a place called Purgatory (to get the thought, pronounce Purge-atory). Rome believes all who will eventually be in heaven will pass through Purgatory.

But Rome is wrong in the major points of this thesis. Christians will indeed be purged at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and some will suffer, but it is an event, not a period of time; it takes place in heaven, not in a place people go to before they go to heaven. Of course, nothing can be done by others to affect our status (e.g.,

Masses said). Our status is determined entirely by the degree of faithfulness with which we have served the Lord since He saved us. Calvary purged sin's guilt; the Bema purges sin's effects (harvest). This might be called the "Protestant Purge-atory."

5. Our deeds will be truly and infallibly evaluated by God

The issue is not quantity of works, but quality ("of what sort it is"). One jewel will be worth more than 10 truck loads of hay in that day.

It has been suggested that the symbols Paul used mean:

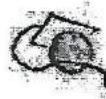
a. Good Works - abide the fire

- i. Gold - works which have been done to the glory of God.
- ii. Silver - speaks of redemption, i.e., the cross. So, these are deeds done in the spirit of Calvary, i.e., sacrificial, self-denying sin-repudiating works.
- iii. Precious stones - reminds us of Mal. 3:16-17 and the stones in the High Priest's breastplate bearing the names of the twelve tribes. These would suggest souls won as jewels for Christ's crown.

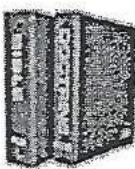
b. Worthless Works - burned by fire

- i. Wood - chopped-down trees; trees are often used as a symbol of the pride of man (Dan. 4:20, 22-23, 27; Isa. 2:12-13; 37:24). These are works done for the glory of man, denominations, etc.
- ii. Hay - man at his human best--still fit only for the flames--i.e., works done in the energy of the flesh (Isa. 40:6-8; James 1:10-11).
- iii. Stubble - chopped up grass, i.e., man at his worst, the worthless dregs of that which the old nature can produce. Of course, utterly unacceptable to God and removed forever from His sight and our remembrance.

6. If we would judge ourselves down here, we would not have to face shame and loss at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Secret sin on earth (unconfessed) will be open scandal in heaven. All this urges regular and immediate confession of sin.



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"Mason's Notes"



Cairn
UNIVERSITY

Walk a Different Path

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Philadelphia College of Bible.)
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**The Kingdom, Power & Glory--
The Overcomer's Handbook**
by Chuck & Nancy Missler
Dividing All Believers Into
Two Distinct Groups

This book was published in 2007 under the same title, but the author was listed as Nancy Missler. It was 324 pages long. The new and revised edition (2009) is nearly 400 pages and the authors are listed as Chuck and Nancy Missler. I would assume that Nancy wrote most of the material in the book, and that Chuck is the minor contributor, but I assume he is in full agreement with everything in the book. When I wrote to the Misslers and shared some of my concerns with them, the letter I received back from them was written by Nancy, although she wrote that both she and her husband reviewed my letter together.

The Misslers are the founders of *Koinonia House*, an international publishing house, and also *The King's High Way Ministries*, a local outreach with emphasis on teaching, counseling and discipleship. Their desire is to help believers "walk out" their faith in a practical way.

I do not know Chuck and Nancy Missler apart from some limited correspondence, and the things shared in this review are not intended to be a personal attack. We share the same desire to encourage believers to walk in a godly manner, well pleasing to Christ, so that they might gain a full reward and not lose out on what God has for them, both in this life, and in the life hereafter. There are many helpful principles in this book regarding Christian growth, sanctification and victory. The Misslers truly want to encourage believers to walk in the Spirit, abide in Christ, manifest the life of the Saviour and persevere in the faith regardless of the difficulties along the way. For this I am thankful.

My concern is with the overall teaching of this book. Today in the evangelical world there is a mushrooming movement which professes to champion the "free grace position." However, many others see this position as dangerously approaching antinomianism. Those who embrace this doctrinal position insist that a true believer can depart from the faith, deny Christ totally, persist in sin (including homosexuality, drunkenness, adultery, etc.), abandon Christianity, and yet still be counted among those who are truly saved. According to this view, such apostates will gain heaven, but will be penalized greatly at the judgment seat of Christ and during the kingdom reign of Christ. Indeed they teach that there will be a sizable group of saved people during the kingdom age who will be put into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The Misslers promote these kinds of doctrines.

Consider the following:

1) The Dual Destiny of the Body of Christ

The Misslers divide the body of Christ (all true believers) into two distinct groups (documentation of these points will come later):

The Overcomers	The Overtaken
Those who will inherit the kingdom (the righteous believers)	Those who will merely enter the kingdom (the unrighteous believers)
Those who enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb	Those who will be cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth
Those who enter into God's millennial rest	Those who fail to enter into God's millennial rest due to unbelief

Paul Benware's Payday

Dividing All Believers Into Two Distinct Groups

Dr. Paul N. Benware is Professor of Bible and Doctrine at Philadelphia Biblical University. He has also taught at the Moody Bible Institute and at the Los Angeles Baptist College. He has written a book entitled *The Believer's Payday—Why Standing Before Christ Should Be Our Greatest Moment*.

Brother Benware is to be commended for seeking to write a detailed theology on the Judgment Seat of Christ. Very few, if any, have even attempted to do this. It is a crucially important future event and Benware has given it the attention it deserves. He is correct in suggesting that most believers do not give the doctrine of the judgment seat of Christ enough careful consideration. Benware has done this, and most of the book is very practical, helpful and Biblical, and serves as an incentive to faithful Christian living in the light of our awesome accountability when we someday will stand before the One who bought us with His own blood.

Benware makes a good distinction between salvation which is a free gift and rewards which are earned. He does a good study on what the Judge will be looking for and how the Judge evaluates. He presents some interesting case studies regarding the sin of certain men (David, Peter, the Apostles, Zerubbabel), and how they repented, recovered and someday would be rewarded. He offers practical suggestions as to how believers may prepare for the judgment seat of Christ. His discussions of all of these important issues are profitable.

The main problem of the book is that Benware follows the "free grace" view that all believers will ultimately be placed into two distinct groups:

Group #1 The Faithful Believers	Group #2 The Unfaithful Believers
Believers who persevere to the end and are willing to suffer for Christ. They will be rewarded by ruling with Christ in the kingdom.	Believers who will depart from the faith, who will refuse to suffer for Christ, and who will live carnal, immoral lives.
Believers who are joint-heirs with Christ and who will reign with Him.	Believers who are heirs of God but not joint-heirs with Christ and who will not reign with Him.
Key passage: Romans 8:17	
Believers who will inherit the kingdom.	Believers who by their wicked way of life (drunkenness, adultery, homosexuality, etc.) will not inherit the kingdom.
Key passages: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5.	
Believers who are partakers (sharers) of Christ and who will participate with Him in His kingdom rule.	Believers who are not partakers (sharers) of Christ and who will not participate with Him in His kingdom rule. These believers do not continue in the faith.
Key passage: Hebrews 3:14	

Let us deal with these issues, one at a time.

- 1) Will only some believers be joint-heirs with Christ or is this true for all of the blood-bought children of God?

It is true for all of God's saints. Every believer is an heir of God and every believer is a joint-heir with Christ. Every believer is a partaker of Christ's sufferings and every believer will also share in Christ's glory. Suffering is not optional for the believer; neither is glorification.