

## No More Sacrifice (Part 3)

Will the sins we commit after salvation be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ? In [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) we gave six truths that demonstrate God judges sin in the realm of man's soul but does not judge sin in the realm of man's spirit. We discover one more truth in this final article.

### **Truth #7: The blood of Christ continues to cleanse us when we are walking in the light**

*6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:*

*7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

*8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:6-9*

What does it mean to walk in the light? According to v. 6, it is the opposite of walking in darkness. To walk in darkness is to sin, to walk in the flesh. In fact, God gives an example of walking in darkness in 1 John 2:11 – hating your Christian brother. Walking in the light, then, is not sinning, for it is walking in the Spirit.

Consider the powerful truth of v. 7. When we are walking in the light, not sinning, the blood of Christ is continually cleansing us from all sin. That being the case, what does this suggest when we are walking in darkness? The blood of Christ is not continually cleansing us from sin. How can this be for a blood-bought saint? It is obviously speaking on the soul plane. On the spirit plane, you are completely righteous. The blood of Christ has cleansed you completely, and you are eternally secure. But the soul plane is up to you and affects rewards at the Judgment Seat.

On that note, let us turn our attention again to the passage in Hebrews where we began.

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Hebrews 10:26-27*

In the context of the truths presented above, this verse becomes clear. Here is what God is saying to you. If you persist in willful, fleshly, carnal sin; if you draw back from living by faith and live for yourself, then there remains no more sacrifice for sins. This has nothing to do with

justification. It is all about progressive sanctification.

Notice what happens for those who have no more sacrifice for sins. God judges, perhaps here and now, but certainly then. The fiery testing furnace at Christ's Bema will devour their soul, just as it did the body and soul of those who died under the Mosaic law without mercy. The judgment will be even greater for New Testament saints.

*Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?  
Hebrews 10:29*

Christians that continue in willful sin will be punished – yes, punished! –for essentially trampling Christ under foot. They have discounted the blood of Christ and insulted the Holy Spirit, and for that they will be punished more severely than the Old Testament Israelites who defied the Mosaic law.

How do we know this is addressed to the saints? Verse 26 specifically says they received the knowledge of the truth, and knowledge in this verse is not merely the Greek word *gnosis*, or basic knowledge. It's *epignosis* – full, experiential knowledge. This implies saving knowledge. This person has been saved, justified, and positionally sanctified (per v.29).

The writer to the Hebrews is admonishing the saints to live uprightly, to persevere in their Christian walk – not persevere unto salvation, but persevere unto reward. Interestingly, the writer is speaking on two planes in this chapter. On the spirit plane, back in v. 10, he reminds that they have been positionally sanctified because of Christ's sacrifice – once for all.

*By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 10:10*

He says it again in v. 14:

*For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Hebrews 10:14*

Then in v.17, quoting from Jeremiah 31, he shares with them the blessing of the New Covenant.

*And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Hebrews 10:17*

How can he say this in v. 17, and then make a seemingly contradictory

statement in v. 26?

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, Hebrews 10:26*

The key is understanding that in v. 17 he is speaking of justification in the spirit of man. But in v. 26 he is making application to progressive sanctification in the soul of man – two entirely different planes of man's being. The writer transitions from justification to sanctification, starting in v.19 and continuing through v.21, then he starts making application in vs. 22ff:

*19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,  
20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;  
21 And having an high priest over the house of God;  
22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.  
23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)  
24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:  
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:19-25*

By the time the writer reaches v. 25, it is clear that he has transitioned to the matter of sanctification.

Here's the point of the book of Hebrews and this chapter in particular. Since you have been declared righteous and sanctified positionally, draw upon the provision God has given you, and be sanctified progressively, experientially in your soul. If you do not persevere in progressive sanctification but live in willful, persistent, fleshly sins, then the blood of Christ will not continually cleanse your soul. Instead, God will judge you – maybe now, but certainly at His Judgment bar, and you could lose your soul (Matt. 16:24-28).

Thus we can conclude, based on Scripture, that unconfessed sins will be judged by Jesus at the Judgment Seat.

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## No More Sacrifice (Part 2)

Will the sins we commit after salvation be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ? If so, how do we reconcile this with passages of Scripture such as Heb. 10:17, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"? If not, how do we explain verses such as Heb. 10:26, "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"? In [Part 1](#) we gave three truths that demonstrate God judges sin in the realm of man's soul but does not judge sin in the realm of man's spirit. We continue with three more truths in this article.

### **Truth #4: God bestows His mercy and forgiveness upon those who fear Him**

*1 Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

*2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

*3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

*4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;*

*8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

*9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*

*10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

*11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward **them that fear him.***

*12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

*13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth **them that fear him.***

*17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon **them that fear him**, and his righteousness unto children's children;*

*18 To **such as keep his covenant**, and to **those that remember his commandments to do them.***

*Psalms 103:1-4, 8-13, 17-18 (emphasis mine)*

Many have made the mistake of taking v. 12 out of context and applying it soteriologically. In other words, they say v. 12 is referring to the salvation of our spirit. But the context does not bear that out. Look carefully at the preceding verse (v. 11) and the succeeding verse (v. 13) – in fact, numerous places in this psalm. Virtually the entire chapter is about God bestowing His mercy upon **those who fear Him**, and forgiving **those who fear Him**. So this is obviously a conditional reward related to experiential sanctification, not an unconditional promise for all who are saved (i.e., positionally sanctified). These verses apply to the saving of the soul.

Now consider the implication. If God bestows His mercy and forgiveness upon those who fear Him, then what is the converse? He does not bestow His mercy and forgiveness upon those who do not fear Him. Which means that v. 12 is not a promise to all saints, but only those saints who fear Him, those who obey His commandments (v. 18).

Interestingly, the psalmist clarifies that God forgiving and forgetting and bestowing His mercy is, according to v. 2, a benefit. The word "benefits" is defined as recompense or rewards. Notice that one way God rewards those who fear Him is by forgiving and forgetting. In fact, v. 4, He "crowns" them with His lovingkindness and tender mercies. Furthermore, according to v. 17, His reward of mercy and forgiveness is eternal!

Consider one shocking conclusion of this passage. If God forgives and forgets all the transgressions of those who fear Him, and if He does so eternally, as a reward, then what does that mean for those saints who do not fear him? As a very minimum, it means God does not forget their transgressions in this life or at the Judgment Seat. Which means, of course, they will receive a negative reward. Which will probably mean they will not be included in the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of Reward. They will, instead, be in the darkness outside. It may also mean they will not glow with Christ's brightness and that will be the case throughout eternity. It could mean they will not be allowed entrance into the new Jerusalem. The extent of the negative reward is not clear. But we must understand that the consequences for not fearing God as a Christian are dire.

Incidentally, what does it mean to fear God? Fearing God involves four things:

1. Having a tremendous awe or reverence for Him
2. Dreading the thought of displeasing Him
3. Hating sin as He hates it
4. Submitting self to Christ

That is what it means to fear God. The consequences are eternal for those who fear and those who do not.

**Truth #5: There is no judgment for those saints who are walking in the Spirit**

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:1*

Of course, that begs the question: What about those saints who are walking in the flesh? Apparently, there is condemnation for them! "Wait a minute!" someone might interject, "Are you suggesting some Christians may go to hell?" Of course not!

For some reason, many Christians have been trained to think of condemnation as hell. However, the word in the Greek simply means a negative verdict – presumably, at the Judgment Seat. In fact, the verb form of the word is used

several times in the New Testament in reference to saints, as in the following verse:

*Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. James 5:9*

Yes, even Christians can be condemned, in the sense that they can be judged. Ultimately, they can be given a negative verdict at the Bema if they persist in sinful, fleshly living.

From chapter six of Romans onward, the apostle Paul has been addressing matters of sanctification, not justification. Romans 8:1 is set in that sanctification context. I always used to essentially end the verse after the words "Christ Jesus." But it continues. There is no condemnation – no negative verdict at the Judgment Seat – for those who are in Christ and who are walking in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh.

To suggest the verse is referring to salvation (i.e., justification) is to take the position that in chapter seven Paul is describing his struggle to become a Christian. That is not correct! Paul, in chapter seven, is describing his struggle, as a believer, to get victory over sin. He could not get victory of his own self-effort, but once he depended on Christ, he obtained the victory. In that context, Romans 8:1 is saying there will not be a negative verdict for those saints who walk in the Spirit, the life of victory.

Walking is the idea of taking reiterated steps. Thus we have action in this verse, behavioral action. So we dare not relegate this to justification. Clearly, this is progressive sanctification. To be sure, there is no condemnation to believers in a soteriological sense either, for we are eternally secure, but that is not the point of this particular verse.

Now consider the implication. If there is no negative verdict for those who are walking in the Spirit, then what about those who are walking after the flesh? We must conclude there is a negative verdict for them.

**Truth #6: Judgment begins at the house of God, here and now, and culminates at the Bema**

*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? 1 Peter 4:17-18*

God's judgment begins at His house, with His people. What does He judge? Certainly our service for him and also our motivations – the thoughts and intents of the heart. But if we look back at the Scriptures we get a good glimpse at what God judges. He primarily judges sin!

In Exodus 32 God's redeemed people, who had been saved by the blood at the Passover, made a golden calf in direct disobedience to the second commandment. God would have killed the people, but Moses interceded and God judged by sending a plague instead. Then Jehovah showed Moses His glory while making this proclamation:

*And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; Exodus 34:6-7*

Yes, God forgives sin, but only for those who confess their sin. He does not clear the guilty.

Think of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, priests who chose to offer incense improperly, in defiance of God's instructions. God killed them. He judged their sin.

In Numbers 14 the people of Israel listened to the discouraging, evil report of the ten spies who did not believe God about taking possession of the promised land. As a result, the nation rejected God's will and sinned through their unbelief. Moses pleaded with God to spare them, for God was about to kill them all. In fact, Moses quoted what God had said to him back in Exodus 34.

*The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty ... Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy ... And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word: But as truly as I live ... all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. Numbers 14:18-23*

What was the problem with the wilderness generation? Was it merely motivation? No, it was blatant behavioral sin. They repeatedly refused to believe God. They tested Him ten times, and did not hearken to His voice. What was the consequence of their sin? God killed the ten spies and consigned the remainder of that generation to wander and die in the wilderness. They were never able to enter the promised land, because of the sin of unbelief. The faithful spies Caleb and Joshua, on the other hand, were exempted from the punishment and rewarded abundantly.

King Saul was judged by God for refusing to kill all the Amalekites, as God had instructed. He lost his kingdom and died in battle because of the sin of disobedience. King David was judged by God for the sin of adultery with

Bathsheba and murdering Uriah the Hittite.

Granted, these are Old Testament examples, but we serve the same God in the New Testament era, and He describes Himself as a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29). Examples can also be given from the early church.

Ananias and Sapphira were judged for lying to the Holy Spirit. God instantly killed both of them. Though God doesn't typically judge so swiftly and severely, He can if He so desires. In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul admonished the church to discipline a member who was living incestuously. The church was not to tolerate his sin; rather, they were "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:5)." If the man did not repent, then Satan would tear up his soul. Yes, he would be saved, but it would be so as by fire.

In 1 Corinthians 11 some who had partaken of the Lord's Supper unworthily were sickly and others had died because of God's judgment upon them. Every one of these instances of God's judgment was due to specific sin.

Furthermore, God disciplines His children, according to Heb. 12 to purge us from the sins in our life that keep us from fellowshiping with Him. The purpose of discipline is to produce in us the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Which implies that God disciplines us when we are not living in righteousness; when we are living in sin. Some might argue that God's discipline is not the same as His judgment. But 1 Corinthians 11:32 says "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord." In other words, chastening and judging are essentially the same, or as very minimum, judging is one form of chastening.

If God judges and disciplines us *now* for sin, why would he not do so at the Judgment Seat? The point is that He *will* do so, for those sins that remain unconfessed; sins in which we persist, presumptuous sins. Perhaps that is why the psalmist cried out:

*Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Psalm 19:13*

We will discuss truth #7 and arrive at our conclusions in Part 3.

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## [No More Sacrifice \(Part 1\)](#)

Will the sins we commit after salvation be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ? Some say an emphatic "no!" because our sins are completely covered under the blood of Calvary. Some say an emphatic "yes!" because the nature of



Christ's judgment of our sins at the Bema is not legal, as if to determine our position in Him, but rather it is disciplinary, like a father determining the necessary punishment for his child's misbehavior. Others say "yes and no," and some aren't sure. But what saith the Scriptures?

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Hebrews 10:26-27*

What a frightening prospect! It is the expectation of no more sacrifice for sins for those who continue in willful, persistent sin. To whom does this refer?

Those of an Arminian theological persuasion interpret this to mean a Christian who persists in heinous sin can lose his salvation. Another view is held by some from the Calvinist theological tradition, who believe this admonition refers to so-called, professing Christians that have demonstrated by their lifestyle they were never saved in the first place. I believe both of these theological positions are incorrect biblically. However, the Arminian position appears to be closer to the truth than the Calvinist position. For the Arminian sees something as being lost, and he is right about that. But to suggest salvation is what is lost is a doctrinal error. How can that which is eternal be lost? The Bible very clearly teaches the doctrine of eternal security. Those who are saved have passed from death unto life. That transaction happened at a point in time in the past, and can never be lost or forfeited. Once saved, always saved. You, dear child of God, have been credited with the righteousness of Christ in your spirit, and you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God.

How, then, do we understand what is being lost, according to this verse? The key is to remember the scriptural concept of [The Three Tenses of Salvation](#) and then to determine in every scripture passage which salvation is in focus. Is it the salvation of the spirit, resulting in instantaneous justification and positional sanctification – that is, salvation from eternal condemnation (soteriology)? Or is it salvation of the soul, resulting in progressive sanctification over one's lifetime and positive reward at the Judgment Seat? Unfortunately, many Bible students fail to distinguish between the two and assume all references to salvation in the New Testament refer to salvation of the spirit, that is, salvation by grace through faith alone. Thus, they assume the phrase "saving of the soul" at the end of this passage is soteriological.

*But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Hebrews 10:39*

It is not hermeneutically accurate to insist that the "saving of the soul" is referring to justification. Our soul is saved (i.e., sanctified) only to the extent we cooperate with God's working in our lives. There is the prospect of

a believer's soul not being saved (i.e., sanctified) in this life because of foolish, carnal choices to live for self. When that believer stands before Jesus at the Judgment Seat, his soul will be forfeited in the sense that any positive reward will be lost and only negative reward will be given. Instead of hearing, "well done, good and faithful servant" that believer will hear "thou wicked and slothful servant." And so this passage is not speaking of lost people and their need for justification. It is warning saved people of their need for sanctification, so that that their soul can be deemed "saved" at the Judgment Seat.

How can we know when salvation references are justification-oriented vs. sanctification-oriented? Here is a clue to interpreting salvation passages in the New Testament. Typically, when salvation is mentioned as in the **past** tense, it is referring to salvation from eternal condemnation, or the salvation of the spirit. But when salvation is mentioned as in the **future**, it is referring to the salvation of the soul, discipleship that leads to rewards.

The key to answering the question, "Will my sins after salvation be judged at the Bema?" is specifying which aspect, or plane, of man's being is affected by the judgment. If we are speaking of the plane of our spirit becoming justified, then we must emphatically say, "no!" Our sins after salvation will never be judged at the Judgment Seat, for they are under the blood of Calvary and, therefore, eternally forgiven. However, if we are speaking of the plane of the soul becoming sanctified, then we must emphatically say "yes!" Our sins after salvation will be judged at the Judgment Seat, if we do not confess them as sin, here and now, and put them under the continued cleansing blood of Jesus – 1 John 1:7. We will attempt to substantiate this point scripturally as we go along.

In the extreme case of someone who lives willfully, carnally, and selfishly (however God judges that), there remains no more sacrifice for sins. We must understand this statement in reference to the plane of the soul and the matter of rewards, not as a reference to the plane of the spirit and the matter of eternal security. Over the course of the next three articles we will examine seven truths that have bearing on our question.

### **Truth #1: God does not listen to the prayers of saints who continue in known sin**

*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me: But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me. Psalm 66:18-20*

*Behold, the Lord 's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. Isaiah 59:1-2*

If you have known sin in your life and continue to harbor that sin, God will not hear your prayers. However, if you confess your sins and keep short accounts with God, he will hear your prayers.

What is the implication of verses like these? By not listening when we are praying, God brings a form of temporal judgment upon us. Why? Because our fellowship with Him is marred. Are these verses speaking of the spirit plane of man or the soul plane? Obviously the soul plane, because on the spirit plane we are completely righteous and all of our sins have been forgiven; they are under the blood of Calvary legally and positionally. They are no longer an issue. But on the soul plane there is the matter of fellowship with God, and that fellowship is damaged by sin.

### **Truth #2: God removes His hand of spiritual blessing when we continue in sin**

*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Proverbs 28:13*

Notice the implication of this verse. The Lord does not show mercy to those saints who conceal their sins and refuse to confess and forsake them. He deals in judgment, not mercy.

Furthermore, from Psalm 1 we learn that God's hand of spiritual blessing is upon the righteous – those who live uprightly, without sin in their lives – but He judges those who walk in sinfulness. Clearly, these are references to the soul plane and not the spirit plane.

### **Truth #3: God does not forgive the sins of those saints who refuse to forgive others**

*For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:14-15*

Wait a minute! How can God not forgive the sins of saints when we are told plainly, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17)? Again, we must think on two planes, not merely one. On the soteriological plane we are forgiven, but on the sanctification plane we are not forgiven if we do not forgive others. Thus, we are eternally secure, even if we don't forgive others, but we face God's judgment, both here and now and at the Judgment Seat, if we refuse to forgive.

We will discuss additional truths in [Parts 2](#) and 3.

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## Reward or Loss? (Part 2)

Sadly, the expectation of multitudes of Christians is that the Judgment Seat of Christ will essentially be an awards ceremony, where all will be rewarded in some degree. Phrases like “suffer loss” ([1 Cor. 3:15](#)) and “receive for the wrong ... done” ([Col. 3:25](#)) are ignored or re-interpreted to mean there will be a moment of regret, but all will be quickly forgotten as Christians enter the Millennium and live happily-ever-after. Nothing could be further from the truth!

In Luke 12 Jesus uses a parable to illustrate the prospect of either reward or punishment for believers, based on whether they are faithfully awaiting their Lord’s return. Those whom Jesus deems faithful stewards at the Judgment Seat will be rewarded with ruling in the millennial kingdom. See Part 1 for more detail.

Those who are unfaithful in how they live here and now will be surprised at the Lord’s sudden return – like a thief in the night – and will be punished, to some degree, at the Judgment Seat. We now turn our attention to the punishment aspect in this parable.

*But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. ([Luke 12:45-48](#))*

The reader is reminded of two important facts. First, parables are intended to be metaphorical in nature. Some Christians react rather violently to the prospect of a child of God being “cut asunder” or “beaten with many stripes,” concluding that such harsh treatment could never be the lot of a saved person. Thus, they instantly assume the unfaithful servants in the parable must be referring to those who are unsaved. As we shall see, the entire parable applies to the saved, and one of the keys to interpretation is understanding that parabolic language is figurative.

Second, throughout the parable Jesus repeatedly refers to “that servant” and “his lord” (master) – see v.42, 43, 45, 46, 47. The Lord is obviously Christ and the servant is a saved person. Unsaved people are never referred to as servants of Christ. Furthermore, the repeated use of the phrase “that servant” clearly indicates that Jesus is not referring to four different

people (one saved, three unsaved, or some other combination). Instead, this is one servant, who has four possible lifestyle choices.

## The Rebellious Servant

The second possible lifestyle a Christian can choose is rebellion to the Lord in some degree. In this particular parable Jesus describes an extreme servant who mistreats those under his care (beats them) and indulges himself (becomes drunken). The parable is clear that this servant behaves thusly because he rationalizes, "my lord delayeth his coming." In other words, he is not convinced that Jesus is coming any time soon. He doesn't take seriously the eternal realm. He is more focused on the here and now.

Some may wonder, "How could this be a Christian? No Christian would do this kind of thing!" Oh really? Do you know any Christians that get drunk or abuse drugs? Do you know any Christians who are abusive? Do you know any Christians who live in adultery? Do you know any Christians who have major outbursts of anger? Do you know any Christians who, because of continued selfishness, have destroyed their marriage and family? Do you know any Christians who live like the devil? Do you know any Christians that deny their Lord? In a Bible sense, think Lot, think Peter, think Ananias and Sapphira, to name a few.

Yes, even Christians can live carnally for a period of time or even a lifetime. That is why God disciplines His children who are living rebelliously. *Whom the Lord loves He chastens (Heb. 12:6)*. Incidentally, those being disciplined do not always respond favorably – and so we are given strong warnings in *Heb. 12:25*, *see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh*, and *Heb. 12:29*, *our God is a consuming fire*.

If God disciplines (i.e., judges) now, why wouldn't He do so at the Judgment Seat, of all places? *Judgment must begin at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17)*. Indeed, the very idea of a Judgment Seat suggests that some will not live as they should on earth and so they will give an account to Jesus.

How do we explain the awful punishment of the rebellious servant, who is "cut asunder?" Remember, this is a parable. God doesn't literally hack him in pieces. Even if that punishment were literal, it would be inconsistent with the crime of abusiveness and drunkenness. It would not be an eye for an eye-type punishment.

Arndt and Gingrich say that the Greek word (dichotomeo) translated "cut asunder" is "metaphorical in *Luke 12:46*, 'to punish with utmost severity,' like the modern threat 'I will tan your hide.'" To be "cut asunder" is a metaphor for the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, which severely rebukes, *dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12)*.

Why would God want to divide asunder one of His rebellious children in this manner? Think of it. The spirit of even a rebellious child of God is righteous. But the soul (mind, will, emotions) of a saint who is not submitting to ongoing sanctification is far from righteous. Perhaps God divides apart the righteous spirit from the corrupt soul in order to fully

make manifest to His rebellious child the awfulness of his heart. *Every man's work shall be made manifest (1 Cor. 3:13). The Lord ... will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts (1 Cor. 4:5).*

Imagine the horror of standing at the Judgment Seat and hearing Jesus, the living Word of God divide between your soul and spirit so you can see your innermost being. Then imagine the awfulness of the verdict as the fire of God's judgment burns away all that is corrupt, leaving nothing. If that were all of the punishment, it would be horrid enough, but that is not all.

The rebellious servant is also appointed a *portion with the unbelievers (Luke 12:46)*. This punishment, at face value, has prompted many an unwitting interpreter – despite the many textual evidences to the contrary – to conclude that the rebellious servant is consigned to an eternity in hell. But the passage does not say that. In fact, the word translated *unbelievers* here is often translated *faithless* elsewhere in the New Testament. So it doesn't have to mean an unsaved person. It can legitimately refer to an unbelieving Christian, and context determines the usage. When Jesus met Thomas on the day of his resurrection, and Thomas doubted, Jesus used this very Greek word to describe Thomas, calling him *faithless (Jn. 20:27)*.

In the context of Luke 12, we must interpret this usage as an unbelieving Christian; in other words, a Christian who is not depending on God for victory. He is faithless, like Thomas, living in defeat. He is saved, but he is not trusting God to live a holy life. Thus, his life is displeasing to his master, and he will be punished at the Judgment Seat. This servant is the opposite of the faithful servant in v.42.

Incidentally, the faithless servant is appointed a *portion*. The same word is used in v.42 of the faithful servant. A *portion* is an allotment or share. Unlike the faithful servant, whose portion is blessing and ruling and reigning with Christ, the portion of the faithless servant is no opportunity to rule or reign, a very mundane form of existence in the millennium, and no blessing.

According to the parallel passage in [Matt. 24](#), the rebellious servant's punishment results in weeping and gnashing of teeth. Unfortunately, many Bible teachers have relegated that phrase to suffering in hell. However, in oriental thinking, gnashing of teeth is simply conscious regret. That's all it means! A person could gnash his teeth because he is in hell, and consciously regretting it, or a person could gnash his teeth because he receives punishment at the Judgment Seat and it affects his entire millennial existence – and he consciously regrets it! It is unwise to let a phrase determine the interpretation of an entire passage. Rather, one should let the passage dictate the way the phrase is being used.

Imagine being harshly rebuked by Jesus at the Judgment Seat, seeing your soul for what it really is, not receiving any rewards, and having to live throughout the millennium without an inheritance, constantly weeping and regretting the fact that you did not live for God in this life! This is serious! Thankfully, after the Millennium Jesus will wipe all tears from the

eyes and presumably erase all painful memories as we all prepare to enter heaven, but that does not occur until after the millennium.

### **The Indifferent Servant**

Perhaps you are relieved that your lifestyle is not represented by the rebellious servant, but are you acting as an indifferent servant, focusing on self and forgetting about the return of Christ and the world to come?

According to v.47, this servant knows His Lord's will but does not live accordingly. I personally think this servant describes the vast majority of fundamentalism. We know what God expects of us. We are well-taught people. But many dispensational Christians have been taught that the Judgment Seat will involve a few moments of pain, then it will be over and all will be joyful in the Millennium. Not so!

Those who do not have an eternal focus will be beaten with many stripes. Again, this is a parable and the stripes are figurative. In [Heb. 12](#) we are told that whom the Lord loves He scourges. Have you ever been literally flogged by God? No, "scourging" is a metaphor for God's divine discipline in your life. He sends appropriate punishments when you are living unto yourself, in order that He might get your attention and your heart be turned completely to Him. Sometimes those punishments continue on for a lengthy period of time, perhaps even years.

The punishments dispensed at the Judgment Seat are even more consequential, and apparently continue on for the entire Millennium. Then they are wiped away after the millennium so that heaven will be glorious for all saints.

Are you indifferent to your Lord's return? Are you living for yourself? Are you materialistic? Are you bearing fruit for the Master? Have you left your first love? Do you have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof? Will you be punished at His judgment seat?

### **The Ignorant Servant**

We find one final type of servant in v.48. This servant is also beaten, but not as intensely as the indifferent servant, because this particular servant is ignorant. I personally do not think this last punishment will apply to anyone reading this article. Because you have been warned. Indeed, I think fundamentalism has been warned, even if it has unwittingly arrived at incorrect interpretations of many passages, such as this very parable. To whom much is given, much is required. I cannot fathom that ignorance will be a valid excuse for western Christians at the Judgment Seat.

Will you be rewarded at the Judgment Seat or will you be punished? If punished, do you realize what that means? It means forfeiture of millennial inheritance, a portion with the faithless or "scourging" of some sort. It means you will not take full possession of the glories and blessings of the millennial kingdom as you could have. It means you will not glow with the brightness of the Savior. It's time that Christians awake to righteousness! Jesus is coming soon!

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## Reward or Loss? (Part 1)

Many Christians believe that all born-again believers will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ – some more, some less. They arrive at that conclusion in spite of the clear language in passages such as [1 Cor. 3:13-15](#):

*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. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

The mistake often made is defining “suffer loss” as merely a loss of rewards. The interpretation is based on an assumption that since believers are positionally righteous, their sins will never be judged and, therefore, the Judgment Seat will be more of an awards ceremony. Is that accurate?

While the *spirit* of every believer *has been saved* and declared righteous, the best that can be said of the *soul* in this life is that it *is being saved*, to the extent the believer submits to spiritual growth. The process is called sanctification (in the progressive sense). Because of the positional work of God in the *spirit* of a saved man, he will not be judged for his sins, per se. Those sins have already been judged at Calvary. Hallelujah! However, an account will be given as to how the *soul* progressed in sanctification throughout life. Outright rebellious and even indifferent servants of Christ who are not able to give a good stewardship account to their Master will be punished. Thus, at the Judgment Seat there is the possibility of reward (in varying degrees) or punishment (in varying degrees).

The idea of suffering loss is not only missing out on receiving rewards. It is a setback, a punishment. In fact, the two words in English, *suffer loss*, are actually one word in Greek, and the word means *to injure, to experience detriment; to be cast away, to receive damage (Strong's)*. That's a radically different understanding than what many Christians have about the Judgment Seat. Perhaps there will be shock and surprise at the rapture.

[Colossians 3:23-25](#) also confirms the prospect of punishment at the Judgment Seat.

*And whatsoever 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.*



This passage clearly confirms that “suffering loss” at the Judgment Seat is not merely receiving less rewards; it is the idea of being recompensed for the wrong one has done. While specific sins will not be judged, lifestyle will be judged, and that includes philosophy of life, motives, fruitfulness, faithfulness, etc. In contrast, the passage above indicates that another possibility at the Judgment Seat is receiving *the reward of the inheritance*. In other words, inheriting millennial blessings is not automatic.

Jesus shared a parable with His disciples, illustrating the possibility of reward or punishment for believers. In this article we will examine the potential for reward. In Part 2, we will look at the prospect of punishment.

*Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. ([Luke 12:41-44](#))*

Why does Jesus use parables? To reveal truth about the kingdom to those who are ready and eager to receive it, and to conceal truth about the kingdom from those who are blind and hard-hearted. The disciples are in the former group, and the Pharisees and chief priests in the latter. Thus, we have part of the answer to Peter’s question *in* his question. Because Jesus is speaking in parables, we know He is not addressing the apostate religious leaders. Furthermore, because Jesus is speaking in parables, we know He is not giving the Gospel, for Jesus would never conceal the Gospel!

In His answer, it becomes obvious that Jesus is speaking to His disciples (the twelve). In fact, the reader is explicitly told this in [Luke 12:1,22](#). By extension, Jesus is speaking to all saved people, and that includes us. His will is that all saved people go all the way through to discipleship. Keep in mind that disciples are not merely saved people. Disciples are saved people who have chosen to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost. To that end, Jesus shares a parable to motivate us to live in such a manner that we will be able to give a good account to Him one day in the future.

In order to understand the parable contained in the verses above, it is important to first grasp the context that prompts Peter to ask his question. The immediate context is [Luke 12:31-40](#). I will not quote the entire passage here, for sake of space considerations, but at the center of Christ’s teaching is His desire that we be like something. What does He want us to be like?

*And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. ([Luke 12:36](#))*

Using an earthly illustration to make a spiritual application (the essence of parables), Jesus wants us to be like servants who are awaiting their Lord's return, ready to open the door immediately when He knocks. In the next verse, He says, *blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching (v.37)*. Jesus wants us (saved people) to be like servants eagerly awaiting their Lord's return. This parable cannot be referring to lost people, because lost people are not awaiting their Lord's return; that is only true of saved people.

According to v.31, He wants us to be seeking His millennial kingdom. According to v.32, He wants us to be conscious that the glorious millennial kingdom is, indeed, coming. According to vs. 33, He wants us, not to have the focus that this world is our home, but rather that we are mere pilgrims on earth, awaiting our heavenly home. The way multitudes of Christians live, it is obvious they do not have this focus. They are attached to the here and now and spend their money on material things rather than eternal causes. Finally, according to v.35, Jesus wants our loins to be girded about and our lights burning (a reference to the parable of the ten virgins in [Matt. 25](#)). In a spiritual sense, Jesus wants His disciples to be detached from earth, not ashamed at the rapture, ready to meet Jesus at His Judgment Seat. Are you truly ready to give a good account?

It is obvious throughout the parable that Jesus is speaking to saved people because He repeatedly refers to servants and their lord (master). Christ is not the Lord of unsaved people. Rather, Satan, the god of this world, is the master of lost folks. Indeed, a lost person can never make Christ the Lord of his life.

Saved people, on the other hand, are servants of Christ by default, so this parable applies to all who are born-again children of God. Jesus promises we will be blessed (v.37) if we are faithfully awaiting His return. In fact, He promises to gird himself and serve His faithful servants!

How does a faithful servant act? As a steward of Christ on earth, he manages his affairs obediently. He serves God faithfully (i.e., full of faith). He does not live like the rich fool – see the parable in [Luke 12:16-21](#) (incidentally, this parable refers to believers). The faithful servant does not become consumed with the things of the here and now. He does not look at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen. His life is about seeking first the kingdom of God. He bears fruit. He does not live unto himself, but unto Him who died for him. This Christian is a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. He has counted the cost and paid the price of discipleship.

On the contrary, the return of Christ (i.e., the rapture) will come as a thief in the night for those who are not ready, those who have lived for self.

*And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. ([Luke 12:39](#))*

While unfaithful Christians will be shocked at Christ's return, those who are faithful servants will be expecting His "knock" at their door, so to speak. The parable is clear (in later verses) that the unfaithful will be punished while the faithful will be handsomely rewarded. The reward for faithfulness is more than we could imagine!

*And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. ([Luke 12:42-44](#))*

The faithful steward is rewarded, for his works are deemed to be of the caliber of gold, silver, and precious stones. He will hear "well done, good and faithful servant." He will rule and reign with Christ in the Millennium. That is not true of unfaithful servants.

Every child of God ought to take heed to the warning of Christ in v.40, *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.* Are you doing what the Master expects of you? Are you depending on the Spirit of God for living the Christ life of victory? One day you will give an account. While the reward for faithfulness is unfathomable, the punishment for unfaithfulness is overwhelming. We will explore that in Part 2.