

**Revelation**  
**A Wednesday Night Bible Study**

Lesson #83

5/21/2008

**Following Armageddon Comes the Millennium: Part 19**

**The Resurrection**

**19:21-20:10**

This lesson will be a continuation of Lesson #82. The previous lesson focused on those who will not be allowed into heaven by virtue of their own choice to either openly reject Jesus Christ as their King or because they have indulged in deceit, i.e., pretending to be followers of Christ when they were not. The lesson provoked a solemn response from some, as it should for the subject is a very serious one indeed. In fact, the subject is so serious, that Paul never really gets away from it, even when his focus is on another subject.

The matter before us in this lesson, the believer's appearance before **"the judgment seat of Christ,"** sometimes called by its Greek name, **bema seat**, has not received sufficient attention. A believer will not have to appear before **"the great white throne"** for judgment regarding his guilt as a sinner because, having accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord, the death of Jesus on the cross paid the sin-debt he owed to God. He has been pardoned and forgiven because he has been redeemed, purchased by Jesus and set free from the bondage of his guilt. His debt has been paid. In Colossians 2:10-18 Paul addresses (1) the basis upon a person's freedom from sin is based, (2) the fact that what is seen is **"but a shadow of things to come,"** (3) and the matter of **"reward"** for the person who has accepted Jesus' death on the cross as the payment for his sin-guilt which allows him to be freed from his deserved punishment.

It is from the writings of Paul that we glean most of our information about a subject of the King appearing before the **bema seat** to receive his rewards. Even in many of these passages, Paul also refers to the matters that distinguish the one who is a true subject from the one who is not. In the Colossian passage it is clear that the recipients of Paul's letter were those whose **"transgressions,"** violations of God's law, had been nailed to the cross and paid for when Jesus defeated the enemy, Satan, and conquered him by dying on the cross, thus paying for any debt or guilt accrued as a result of those **"transgressions."**

The **bema seat** was common in the cities of Paul's day. It seems to have had two purposes. **First**, as an elevated platform placed in the center of the city square, it was the place where rewards were given to those victorious in athletic contests. **Second**, it was the place from which the city magistrates exercised their authority over the citizens, to either reward them or to administer punishment. It should be emphasized that its use was always regarding the affairs of the citizens and never pertained to others. In Corinth, and the other cities of that day, the chief magistrate of that city would be seated upon that **bema seat** from which he would exercise his authority to either dispense praise or discipline to his citizens. On the **"judgment seat of Christ,"** His **bema seat**, He will do likewise with the citizens of His Kingdom.

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In this lesson several critical facts will be addressed which are:

1. There is a time of accounting or judgment for those who have become subjects of the King and citizens in His Kingdom.

As we proceed we remind ourselves that it is expected and normal for the King to require His subjects to appear before Him to account to Him for matters regarding their citizenship in His Kingdom. It is something that should govern the way each subject lives. Though, as pointed out above, the subjects of the King are not to be treated as enemies and required to appear before **“the great white throne”** to be judged, condemned and sentenced as His enemies are to be, they should expect and be prepared for this time of accounting or judging by their King.

The details regarding the manner and time of this accounting has not been made clear to us, likely because we could not comprehend it even if we were told, for these are matters, which take place after we leave this life and world, and the things outside of this temporal/material existence are beyond us.

Having left this dimension of time, time is no longer a factor there as it is here, and events have neither duration nor sequence as we know here. Even so, to the best of our understanding, the appearance of the believer before the **bema seat**, **“the judgment seat of Christ,”** likely happens in conjunction with his resurrection experience and his receiving of his newly resurrected body, so that he is then ready for whatever His King assigns to him.

2. This accounting regards how the subject lived and utilized the resources of the life which was given to Jesus Christ, and therefore, became His property. It is called **“stewardship”** for it is the accounting of a steward of the use of something that belongs to another, i.e., to Jesus Christ.

Having been redeemed and purchased by Jesus, the saved person belongs to Jesus. His life belongs to Jesus. Everything in his life including, but not limited to, time, material possessions, talents, opportunities, etc. Therefore, the redeemed **MUST** give an account to his Master as to how he has lived and used that life which was purchased by Jesus.

Paul wrote in Romans 14:12, and 2 Corinthians 5:10:

***“... every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”***

***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”***

Notice that Paul wrote, **“we shall give account”** and **“we must all appear.”** It is not something that is optional. It will happen!

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As noted above, our accounting regards everything in our lives. When we gave our lives to Jesus to be saved, we gave him everything. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20 *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* And in Philippians 1:21 he meant what he said: *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* To be even more specific, he wrote to the Corinthians: *“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

To sum it all up, he also wrote to the Corinthians:

*“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. 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”* (1 Cor. 4:1-5).

To be even more specific, he also wrote to the Corinthians: *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God”* (2 Cor. 5:20). Indeed, we are Christ’s ambassadors. In a sense, we are strangers here, representing our King. In everything we say and do, we represent Him. Some day He will summon His ambassadors to Him to give an accounting of how they have represented Him. It will be at the bema seat.

3. This accounting is to the King Who has His own system and standard of measurements which are not like, subject to, or affected by the measurements used in this world.

Not only had Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 4 that he was not concerned about their opinion of him because he wasn’t subject to their judgment or evaluation, but, in addition to telling them that he would be judged by the Lord, he also told them that the Lord’s judgment was different from theirs. Like all men, what they could make an evaluation on was very lim-

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ited, but the Lord is not so limited. He actually *“will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”* What Paul says is not different from what Jeremiah had once wrote: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings”* (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Furthermore, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 3:13-14: *“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.”* Paul added *“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire,”* explaining that some followers of Christ will indeed be resurrected to spend eternity with Him, but will barely have made it. Apparently, they will not have lived in a way that pleases the Lord and will not receive any heavenly rewards when they enter His presence.

Yes, the Lord’s basis for making an evaluation of His servant-subject-stewards is quite different from any thing that man does or is able to do. Therefore, Paul also wrote to the Corinthians

*“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. ... Not boasting of our measure, that is, of other men’s labors; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly”* (2 Cor. 10:12-13,15).

4. The determinations of the King are without appeal, irrevocable, eternal in nature, and accomplished solely according to His will and pleasure and regard His eternal plans for the life of His subjects and the rewards beyond anything man can know on this earth.

There will be some wonderful news for many of the King’s subjects. He has some marvelous rewards to distribute.

The Lord has some rewards for His faithful witnesses: *“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him”* (Psalm 126:6) as well as *“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firma-*

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*ment; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever”* (Daniel 12:3).

For those who remain faithful to Him while going through the trials of life, He said: *“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him”* (James 1:12). In addition to that He said: *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Mat. 5:10). Added to that is this commendation: *“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”* (1 Cor. 9:25).

For those who are faithful in service to their King, He has a special word as we learn from Paul: *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing”* (2 Tim. 4:8). Paul, and many other faithful servants of the Lord, particularly those who serve as ministers and preachers, can also look forward to another wonderful reward: *“...when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”* (1 Peter 5:4). For all of His servants who faithfully use the talents He has distributed to them, He says: *“His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (Mat. 25:23).

To all those who serve Him faithfully, always attempting to bring glory to Him, and, in the process, become weary and worn out, He says: *“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”* (Heb. 4:9), a time when it is finally finished and done and then that faithful servant will hear his Lord say: *“...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord”* (Mat. 25:21). Each one who has truly given his life to Jesus and lives to serve Him and bring glory to his Lord, can look forward with unbridled anticipation and excitement to that which his Lord has prepared for him. As Jesus said to His faithful on the night just before He went to the cross, He also says to us: *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”* (John 14:1-3).