***Rewards

RV55-01***

Please open your Bibles once more to Revelation 3:7-13 in the letter to the Philadelphia church. This is segment number 31.

**Satan**

As we have observed, the Bible reveals to us that the archenemy of God is Satan, who leads the demon angels in opposition to the angels of God. This angelic conflict is rapidly intensifying as we approach the return of Jesus Christ to earth to take out from this planet the living and dead Christians. Satan is running out of time, and he knows it. Therefore, his activity is mounting considerably. We live in the intensified stage of the angelic conflict. Satan is trying to run this world on his own, and to take God's place of supreme authority in the universe, and the world is not being run very well. It's coming apart on him no matter how he tries to put it together.

Satan captures the allegiance of people with religions which he creates, which are based on a salvation by human doing. We call those "the cults." Once a person is born again, Satan tries to keep him ignorant of Bible doctrine truth so that he will forever remain a spiritual infant. Most of the people that you know in your circle of acquaintance as church members, in the run-of-the-mill church that you're acquainted with, are spiritual infants. They come into the Christian life; they're born again; they understand justification by faith; they receive Christ as savior; and, that's where it ends. They never take another step in the direction of personal spiritual development and maturity.

**Spiritual Maturity**

Without spiritual maturity in the soul, a Christian cannot perform service for Jesus Christ, which produces divine good results, and which, therefore, earns rewards in heaven. This is the bottom line. A person is either producing divine good or he is producing human good. Human good counts for nothing with God. It means a lot with people, but it's nothing with God. Divine good is something that only God the Holy Spirit can produce through us.

**Bible Doctrine**

Unfortunately, preachers help Satan's cause of trying to replace God by failing to feed believers on the spiritual truth of Bible doctrine. I want to remind you again that the Bible lays a great deal of dignity upon the doctrines of Scripture. Remember that when we use the phrase "Bible doctrine," we're not talking about a certain code of dogma as such. We're talking about what the Bible talks about when it uses the word "doctrine" in the Greek. It means "teaching" – Bible teaching. Bible doctrine is a good term for that. 1 Peter 5:2 gives us God's point of view concerning Bible doctrine. Here, Peter is saying to the elders (the pastor-teachers) that he's writing to: "Feed the flock of God, which is among you. Take the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." He says that it's not because of the money that's involved. That's what filthy lucre means. Rather, do it because you've been called to the ministry of a pastor-teacher, and you feed the flock of God. You feed them the food of doctrines.

In Matthew 4:4, we have that dramatic statement by the Lord Jesus Christ when, in combating the temptation of Satan, He said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." The words that have proceeded out of the mouth (of the mind) of God are now recorded for us in Scripture.

Then in Hebrews 4:12, we're told something very important about the written record of Scripture: "For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even through the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." What he's talking about there is Bible doctrine.

Then finally, in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, there is that important statement concerning the nature of the Bible: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect (mature), thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This is the whole point of learning doctrine – that the man of God (the person of God, or the man or woman of God) may be thoroughly furnished to do what? To produce good works. That is the name of the game. God has some good works for you to perform. He has lined these up for your execution from eternity past.

In Ephesians 2:10, we read, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (divine good works), which God before ordained that we should walk in them." It's a very great temptation for people in local churches to do something just because it needs doing. But God says, "I have a plan of doing for you in terms of good works. That's where you will serve. That's where you will be successful."

So, the whole concept of the Word of God in the soul of the believer, in order to give him a base from which he can serve, is very important. Preachers are guilty of failing to dignify the Word of God in the minds of the people. This was the heart of the Reformation. It was when the reformers went back to the living and powerful Word of God that the superstition of the Middle Ages, dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, was finally broken. We had tended to veer away from that. Instead of feeding people on the Word of God, so often, preachers are feeding them on corncobs – not the grain. And they're trying to doll-up those corncobs. They say, "Here's one. Put a little catsup on this. Try this. You'll like this. Here's one with mustard. Oh, here's one with barbecue. Have you ever had a barbecued corncob? You'll love that. Try this one." And here are these poor Christians trying to get some spiritual nourishment from these spiritual corncobs that they're being fed.

Christians have to be aware of this. Those of you who have heard this series, you're in deep trouble, because God says, "You're responsible now." When you stand before the Lord, you might try to say, "But, Lord, I can't believe that I'm going to be so poverty-struck in heaven, and that I'm going to have so little. I didn't understand this. My preacher didn't teach me this. They didn't explain this to me." Do you know what the Lord is going to say? He is going to say exactly what he told the man in hell who wanted Lazarus to go back and tell his brothers that hell was a real place, and there was a real God out there. He's going to say, "They had the Word of God. You had the Bible. You should have known." Don't ever make the mistake that God does not hold you responsible for knowing what's in the Bible. It is a satanic device to give people the impression that the Bible is a closed book.

How many times do you hear people preaching on the book of the Revelation? Most preachers look at you, and I've seen them sometimes in certain groups. They ask me, "What are you preaching on?" I say, "The book of Revelation." They say, "Oh, boy." And I know what their "Oh, boy" means. That means, "I don't know what that book is saying. I can't make up from down for that." What they're telling us is that there are some parts of the Bible that God gave in a confused way that we can't profit by. And that is not true. This is the manual for living – the Word of God. It's alive and powerful.

But Satan wants to keep Christians from fulfilling the Lord's command to store treasures in heaven, so he keeps them ignorant of the contents of Scripture. In Matthew 6:19, the Lord Jesus says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust corrupts, and where thieves do not break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It is possible to store treasures in heaven. This is exactly what God calls upon His people to do. And it will be a great loss to you if you do not do it now.

Christians without a spiritual maturity structure in their souls, built through the Word of God, cannot effectively serve, and cannot effectively store rewards in heaven. These are victims of every false doctrine that comes along, and I have had contacts with plenty of them. They are forever coming and saying, "Hey, I heard this speaker. Here's a brand new idea, and they've got some way-out crackpot notion of what the Bible has revealed, and they're off and running after some quirk of doctrine. Or these are the people who are ignorant of the four divine institutions that God has provided for the protection of the human race. They don't understand the institution of personal freedom of volition and of responsibility for your acts. They don't understand the divine institution of marriage. They don't understand the divine institution of the family. And, they certainly don't understand the divine institution of national government, and the place (the role) of that government in human society today.

The Christians who do not have a spiritual maturity structure are forever running around to get some counseling from somebody. Do you know why they're going to somebody and saying, "I need counseling on this subject and on that subject?" It's because their preachers have not taught them the Word of God. Every time we open the doors in this church, we are counseling. That is exactly what we're doing. We're telling you what God has said, so that you'll know what to do. That's the only counseling that's worth anything.

These are the people who are subject to the poisonous ideas of ignorant intellectuals of our day. God's plan for frustrating Satan's attempt to make us ignorant of the Word of God has to be clearly understood. So, we're looking at that in Ephesians 4:12. This is a brief review of what we have seen there in previous sessions. Here is the divine plan for undermining Satan's attempt to keep us ignorant of Scripture.

**Face-to-Face Instruction**

This verse says, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." This is what is provided by God in the form of a pastor-teacher. The first "for" ("for the perfecting of the saints") in the Greek language was "pros." This means face-to-face instruction in Bible doctrine truths by the pastor-teacher. It is designed to equip believers (who are saints) for spiritual combat in the angelic warfare. It provides us with divine viewpoint thinking.

**Christian Service**

The second "for" says "for the work of the ministry." However, in the Greek language, that is the preposition "eis." That means "resulting in," which means that after face-to-face teaching, this will happen. What will happen is activities of divine good Christian Service. This phrase (the second "for") depends upon the execution of the first "for." Christians with a spiritual maturity structure in their souls are able to enter spiritual combat successfully, and not become spiritual casualties. It is a very terrible thing to encourage people to get into Christian service before step number one has been executed, because the devil will shoot them down every time, and they become spiritual casualties.

**Building Spiritual Maturity**

Then there is this third "for" in the translation. The last phrase is "For the edifying of the body of Christ." This again in the Greek language is this preposition "eis," meaning "resulting from," which means that it is hooked to the previous phrase. So, you have a chain reaction. This third "for" refers to the building of spiritual maturity in the soul of the believer. Spiritual maturity is the basis of all divine good production. Believers with this kind of a structure in their souls are able to do the work of witnessing and of teaching the Word of God to fulfill the great commission. That great commission is not the job of just the preachers. It is the job of all the people. The spiritually mature believer stores his treasures in heaven through the Holy Spirit leading him in Christian Service. But the Holy Spirit cannot lead him in Christian service unless instruction has been executed in his life by the pastor-teacher. He has been taught the Word of God, and that has resulted in his understanding of Scripture to prepare him for the ministry, and the execution of divine good works then follows. The spiritually mature believer is the one who stores treasures in heaven.

Revelation 3:11, therefore, says, "I come quickly." The Lord says, "I'm about to return. Hold fast that which you have." It is referring to the divine viewpoint doctrine that they already possess. The people in the Philadelphia church had a lot of it. The Lord Jesus Christ promises soon to return, to reward them for their service. So, He says, "Hang onto doctrine, and function accordingly, so that no one takes your crown or your reward." There is no reward for mere religious service kind of stuff that any unbeliever could do. There is only reward for that which God the Holy Spirit enables only you (an informed mature believer) to do.

Now, God's work is going to be done. That's what this verse is indicating. Ephesians 2:10 says that God has a plan of good works for you. If you don't do it, somebody else will be raised up to do it. You will lose the reward, and they will gain it. There are going to be a lot of people in heaven who are enjoying somebody else's wealth by default.

So, now let's take a look at this business of rewards for divine good production. Turn to 2 Corinthians 5:10 that we began looking at last time: "For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." All Christians will have their works as believers evaluated by Jesus Christ. This takes place after the rapture of the church, while the tribulation era is in progress on the earth. 2 Corinthians 5:10 speaks to believers of a divine evaluating of their service. This is not related to the issue of salvation, but to the issue of eternal rewards. The Judgment Seat of Christ does not deal with anybody's sins. It only deals with the consequences of sins to your divine good production.

This word "Judgment Seat" (we've already seen) in the Greek language looks like this: "bema." The "bema" refers to a platform upon which the judge sits. Here, the judge is Jesus Christ. The phrase "We must all appear" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "dei." That means it is necessary. There is no escape. I can guarantee you, on the authority of the Word of God, and this little word "dei," that there is nobody in this room who will not stand before the "bema" platform of Jesus Christ someday. What is necessary is that we appear. The Greek Bible says "phaneroo." This means more than just to be there. You might be there, but you might be there conning somebody. You might be there under some pretense of being something that you're not. The word "phaneroo," unfortunately, means a lot more than that. It means to be there and to be exposed.

Here within church circles, we have plenty of people who are all the time putting on fronts and pretending to be something they're not. They can get up and give us very glowing and wonderful testimonies. But when it comes down to getting in there with the troops in the field, and fighting it out in the angelic conflict, they're off someplace in their ivory towers, and in their goony-land world, but they're not in there fighting the battle and putting their shoulder into the combat at the moment. There are people who are forever putting on great pretenses of being great devoted Christians. A lot of them like to parade around as Christians who know a lot, and who are informed. But up there, we're going to find out that they were fakes; that they were putting on a front; and, that they were not performing faithfully. This is such a thing as just being in church Sunday after Sunday, morning and evening, faithfully, as the Scripture says we should be, so that we can be prepared for the spiritual combat in which we're engaged, and so that we can maintain our professional soldiering capacity, once we've achieved it. "Phaneroo" doesn't mean you're just going to be at the "bema" seat. It means that you're going to be there in a disclosure that will show the real "you."

Look at another person. Have you ever wondered about the real "you" of that person? That real "you" is going to be exposed. To that extent, it's going to be a little uncomfortable at the "bema." Our sins are not going to be paraded. Our sins are not going to be laid out. But the real "you" is going to be laid out. All those of you who have developed the finesse of fakery are going to find that the finesse has left you overnight.

This word, "phaneroo" is in the aorist tense in the Greek, which means that it's a point action, when your name is called out at that platform, and you step up before Jesus Christ. Remember that all this is going on during that seven-year period when the tribulation is going on back here on earth. We're up there getting our names called, and our record set out for rewards or loss of reward. It is in the passive voice, which means that you are brought to that seat by God. You don't bring yourself up to the "bema." A lot of us would like to slither away from it and say, "Forget it. I'd like to just walk around the streets of gold up here. That's OK with me." God says, "No, I'm bringing you there. You're going to stand here, and we're going to open the books, and we're going to check things out." It is infinitive in mood, which means that this is God's purpose for believers.

The reason for this, He says, is, "That everyone may receive." The word "receive" is "komizo." This means "to recompense." This means to get what you've got coming. The purpose of the "bema" seat of Christ is to give you what you deserve. This is something that you have earned, or not earned. This is something that you have a right to claim – to see that you receive what you have due. It is aorist – at the point of the Judgment Seat of Christ. And it is middle voice. And you know that the middle voice in Greek means that you personally will be benefited by this act. This is so that you will be benefited to the extent that you deserve to be benefited. Then it is subjunctive mood, which means this is potential. Here is a potential event of what you will receive of something that will benefit you.

This is on the basis of what? You will receive what you've got coming on the basis of the things done in the body; that is, the things done by means of the body. Obviously, the only time you're going to do things by means of your body is right here on earth. This is talking about your life as a Christian – how you invested your life during your stay here on earth as a believer. The idea is in proportion to the things done in the body.

Then we have the phrase in 2 Corinthians 5:10, "According to what he has done, whether it be good or bad." This is not a reference to whether it was morally good or bad. When people read this verse, they right away think it is based upon whether you behaved yourself, or you didn't behave yourself. He's talking about the quality of a believer's works. The word "good" is "agathos." "Agathos" means good in the sense of being beneficial in its effects – that what you did produced beneficial effects. The word bad here in the Greek is "phaulos." You can see how we get our English word "foul" from that. "Phaulos" means bad in the sense that it's worthless.

**Your Works**

So, you're standing up for the Judgment Seat of Christ. They call out your name. You can't hide. You can't pretend to be something you're not. They open the record, and they list the works. These are good works. They were beneficial in their effect. They were divine good. The Lord will reward you for them. Then over here, they read a list of works that are worthless. They're human good, and God will not reward you for those things. It refers to whether they're usable or not – whether they're acceptable or not. It all is an estimation (an evaluation) of your lifestyle here on earth.

So, we would translate this verse in this way: "For it is necessary for all of us to be revealed as we really are before the Judgment Seat of Christ, so that each one may receive recompense in proportion to the things done through the body, whether good or bad (whether beneficial in effect, or worthless)."

With that background, that's the reality. That's where you're headed for, the moment the rapture takes place, whether you're in the grave or on this earth. The Lord catches you up to meet Him in the air. You go into heaven, and that's the first thing that's going to happen. They're going to line us up, and the Judgment Seat of Christ will begin operating.

Now, what's going to happen there? We have to go back to 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 to see the details of what happens up there: "According to the grace of God, which is given unto me as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let every man take heed how he builds upon it." Paul says that He has laid the foundation of salvation in the lives of the Corinthians Christians. Others have built upon the spiritual foundation that Paul has laid, and they have instructed in the Word. Now Paul warns every believer to take care of what he erects in the form of Christian service upon the foundation of his own regeneration; that is, upon the foundation of his own eternal life which they secured as the result of Paul's preaching to them. Paul says, "I got you started. I gave you the foundation of Jesus Christ. Now you better pay attention to what you do in building upon that foundation."

Verse 11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." So, the foundation of a Christian's spiritual life and his service is Jesus Christ. This foundation was laid when you accepted Christ as personal Savior. I cannot stress that again too much. This foundation was not laid when somebody gave you water baptism, or you took water baptism. I can't believe how many people I have, in recent times, baptized again when they became believers who said they were in some religious system where they were baptized either as infants or as children – a total meaningless picture of salvation. Now they have been born again, and they say, "Now I know what it is, and I can really stand before that congregation, and I can really receive baptism, and it is a testimony to my regeneration, and I want to do it over again. And we have re-baptized many people. ... A lot of them want to do it because it means a real testimony.

Verse 12: "Now if any man builds upon this foundation (salvation through Jesus Christ), gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." The Christian life is a matter of service which is a building process. Verse 12 says, "If any man build." You know that the word "if" here in the English Bible tells us that we are dealing with this little word in Greek: "ei." But, in the Greek language, there are four different meanings for "if." You can't tell that from English. Any time you see this word "if," you have to ask: which of the four conditions does this specify? Then you can translate it. Then you know what God the Holy Spirit is saying here. Well, this is condition number one. This is the first class condition, which is a condition of "if" which says that it's true. It isn't "if" as if doubting. It means *since* you are doing this. "If any man builds, and that means any one" (not a male person). "If anybody is building, and you are building" is the idea. Everybody is.

You're building something worthless, or you're building something profitable on your Christian life. The Christian's works are going to fall into two categories. One category is indestructible: gold; silver; and, precious stones. Fire does not affect those. It may refine them, but it does not destroy them. On the other hand, there are destructible works which are described as: wood; hay; and, stubble. When you put fire to those, they turn to ashes. The indestructible gold, silver, and precious stones stand for divine good production – what you have built in Christian service as the result of God the Holy Spirit being able to lead you because you had spiritual maturity to be led. Hay, wood, and stubble are destructible things. That is human good, which you produced in your own capacity. Any unbeliever could produce the same thing. You've done it on your own in the capacities of your sin nature, and it is worthless with God, and He will burn it up.

Verse 13 gives us the testing of your works. You're standing at the "bema." You're in heaven. All hell has broken out on earth. The tribulation is in process. You're standing there. Your name has been called. You stand up before the "bema." The Lord Jesus Christ is sitting there. Your works are all listed there. Then there is the test of divine judgment. The fire is the evaluation that Jesus Christ has put to those works, and then they're going to be revealed for their true nature (their true value). They are either destructible or indestructible.

Verse 13 says, "Every man's (or every Christian person's) work shall be made manifest. The word "every man" is "hekastos." I want to show you that word, because that has nothing to do with a male person or a female person. It just means person (a man or a woman). Men aren't the only ones who face this judgment. The women do as well. It's going to be a testing to make something manifest. That's the word "phaneron." "Phaneron" means "exposed to their true value." This is the same word that we just saw on 2 Corinthians 5:10 as "appear."

Verse 13 says, "Every person's work should be made manifest for the day shall declare it." That day is the day of the Judgment Seat of Christ. The word "declare it" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "deloo." "Deloo" means "to make something plain." The Judgment Seat of Christ is going to clarify what your Christian service amounted to. That's all. It is going to show what your offerings amounted to; what your praying amounted to; what your witnessing amounted to; and, what all of your helping with the building and construction around the church properties amounted to. This will cover everything: all of your teaching ministry; all of your office ministry; and, whatever you have been involved in, it is going to be revealed for the kind of ministry that it was: divine good; or, human good. It's going to be made plain.

This is in the future tense, which means when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is active, which means that our works are going to be clarified to us. It's indicative. Here is a statement of a great divine truth. It's going to be revealed by fire. The analogy to building materials is used here with the analogy of fire. The judgment of God is compared to fire, and it will be revealed by fire. The word "revealed" here is "apokalupto." "Apokalupto" means "to unveil" or "to uncover." It is in the present tense. Yet it is a future event. Our works are going to be uncovered. When the Greek wants to make it very clear to you that, boy, you can count on this happening, he talks about a future event using the present tense, as if it were happening right now, even though you know that it's going to be hundreds of years in the future. Yet, he talks about it as if it were right now. That's just a device that the Greek language uses, and he uses present tense. God the Holy Spirit says, "I'm going to make it very clear to you that what your works amounted to is going to be revealed."

It is in the passive voice, which means that this evaluation is going to be done to us by God. We're not going to make our own evaluation. We're getting away with that now. We go around, and we pretend that we're doing this for the Lord; it's for the Lord's glory; and, all that. But up there, the evaluation is done for us. That's what passive means. Then again, it's subjunctive in the mood. That means that's a potential judgment. Subjunctive always means something possible. It is a possibility that we're going to realize: Because the day shall be revealed (or unveiled) as by fire. The day of the Judgment Seat of Christ will manifest what we have done.

It says that the fire shall test everyone's work of what sort it was. The fire will test. The word "will test" is "dokimazo." "Dokimazo" means to test something with the purpose of finding what good there is to approve it. That's kind of a nice word for the Holy Spirit to use. The Lord isn't up there at the Judgment Seat trying to embarrass us. He is testing, and the Holy Spirit says, "I want you to notice the word I used. I used the word to indicate that I am testing to see what divine good there is, because I want to reward you. I want to bless you. But I have to have the basis upon which I can do that in preserving My own integrity when I do it. So the word "dokimazo" indicates that there's going to be a testing which is given in order to find what good there is. This is going to be future again, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is active. The Lord is doing this. So, again, "Every man's (or every individual person's) work." And there we have that old word "ergon" again for "work," which simply means our Christian activity: "of what sort it is." That is the Greek word "hopoios" "Hopoios" means "what sort of," or "quality." This is the quality of the work that we have done – human good or divine good. We would translate it "such as it was."

So, God is going to test in order to determine what kind of works we have produced. He is going to seek out what divine good works we have. It is not a test for quantity. It is a test for quality. There are dead works that the Bible refers to. These are human good works (Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 9:4). Then there are the devil's works (John 8:41, 1 John 3:8). All of that is useless. Christians who have done dead works, and who have produced the devil's work have been in human good.

**Rewards**

Now, 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 give us the results. After the judgment of God has been applied, here's what happens: "If any man's (anybody's) work abide which he has built upon it the foundation of his salvation, he shall receive a reward." There you have the word "if" again. The Greek word is "ei." What class condition? First. So, right away we know that this is referring to something that will occur. There are certain people whose works will abide, which they have built upon their salvation. For this divine good production, certain Christians "will receive." The Greek word for "receive" is "lambano." This is future, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is active. It will be given to you personally. It is indicative of statement of fact. It's individually to be received after the rapture. You are to be given what he calls "a reward."

What is the reward? The Bible does not specifically tell us. It does not lay that out to us. Part of that reward will be the Lord's commendation. Matthew 25:21 tells us that: "Well done, thy good and faithful servant." Part of the reward will be to enjoy the fellowship of believers who have been saved through our ministry and who have matured spiritually through us (1 Thessalonians 2:19). That's going to be a great reward in heaven. Part of it will be our position in the eternal state. Luke 19:17 gives us a little clue on that kind of reward. Let's look at that one: "And he said unto him, 'Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." So, here the servant is rewarded by authority over cities. Some of you are going to be rulers of cities. God is going to make you administrative rulers. In Daniel 12:3, some of us will have a great capacity to radiate the glory of God. But I do know this: when the Lord gives us our rewards, it means that we are going to enjoy our eternity just that much more – to a degree that others, who have not received those rewards, will not.

So, verse 14 says, "And some people's works, after receiving God's fire of evaluation, will abide by (the works that they have built upon their Christian life), they will receive a reward." They already have salvation. This is something more.

But on the other side of the coin is verse 15: "If any person's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet as by fire." That's a sobering verse of producing human good. Oh, you'll go to heaven alright. That is not dependent on your works. You have that secured. You are going to suffer loss. There are always some Christians who say, "Oh, I don't like that idea? I don't think that there are going to be some Christians who are going to enjoy having more than other Christians – that some Christians are going to have more in heaven than other Christians." I'd like to know what that verse means if it doesn't mean some Christians are going to suffer loss, and they can have less than other Christians do. That's exactly what it's saying.

In verse 15, there is another "if." Again, it's first class condition. It's true. Some Christians will have their works burned. Their human good will result in suffering a loss. The word "burn" is "katakaio." When "kata" is added to a Greek verb, it intensifies it. It means "down." Here it means that it will be utterly burned up. You won't have a smidgen left from any human good you produce. It's going to be completely destroyed, in the future, after the rapture. It's in passive voice. God does the burning up. It is indicative – a statement of fact. The result is that you are going to suffer "zemioo." "Zemioo" is a loss. That means "to forfeit." That's what this word means. It means to forfeit something. You will forfeit reward that could have been yours. You will forfeit an enrichment of your eternity that could have been provided for you.

This is experienced in the future at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is passive. It's going to be done to you. You are going to experience this. It is indicative – a statement of fact. You are saved. That continues, through the judgment of God, just as you were saved by the judgment of God concerning your basis of coming to heaven. God looks at you and says, "Do you have absolute righteousness? Are you as good as Jesus Christ?" You say, "Yes, I am. I received His righteousness." God says, "Come into My heaven." His fire of judgment decided whether you are saved. His fire of judgment will decide what you did with your life. Salvation is secure. Your works are not.

This loss stems from the fact that you have been functioning without a spiritual maturity structure built in your soul through the ministry of a pastor-teacher, or because you were negative to the instruction that you received. So, you function in the old sin nature. So, you have permitted yourself to drift into religion and into legalism, and to destroy your opportunity to build rewards.

Very briefly, what are the works that survive? It is not entirely what you do that determines this. It is whether you are doing it under the motivation of God the Holy Spirit, or whether you are doing this under the motivation of the sin nature. If you come up and give $100 in that offering box, and you do it under the motivation of the old sin nature, and you let everybody know about the fact that you're giving this money, and you take great personal pride in this, and you feel that God is really lucky to have you around to help Him out, that is the sin nature. That $100 will be zero value in rewards. If, on the other hand, you exercise your priesthood; you give $100; you give it as unto the Lord; you give it in quietness; you give it without fanfare; you direct it to a certain source; and, you do it as unto the Lord and for the Lord's glory, because God the Holy Spirit is leading you, that $100 will receive reward in heaven. Everything we do is determined by who is leading us: the sin nature; or, God the Holy Spirit.

Just remember that the old sin nature can produce everything that a Christian can as he is led by the Holy Spirit. The counterfeit is in. The fix is in. And Christians are doing it all the time. Whether it's the Spirit of God leading you or not, you will have very little ability to discern unless the pastor-teacher has made you terribly smart in doctrine. Then you will have the capacity to discern.

**The Timing of the Judgment Seat of Christ**

The timing of the Judgment Seat of Christ is of great interest to us. Luke 14:14 says that reward is associated with resurrection. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 tell us that the Christian's resurrection is part of the rapture event. So, since rewards are associated with resurrection, and since the rapture is the time of our resurrection, we conclude that the time of these rewards will be at the rapture of the church when we are taken home to heaven.

If you'll turn to Revelation 19:7 there is a picture of you – all those of you who are coming back to this earth with the Lord. You're His bride. While you've been in heaven during the seven-year period of the tribulation, having your works judged and evaluated, you have also been married to Christ. The marriage has taken place. So Revelation 19:7 says, "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." What this is referring to is that the bride has prepared herself for this event of the return. Verse 8 says, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." If this passage were referring to the absolute righteousness that you receive when you trust in Christ as Savior, it would be in the singular. It would be the *righteousness* of the saints, which you have been given. When it's in the plural, it's talking about rewards.

So, here you are: coming back as part of the bride of Christ. You're coming back to earth now for the Second Coming. Remember that there is no such nonsense as a judgment day in the Bible, where God comes and everything comes to an end. There is first the coming to meet the saints in the air. Seven years later, He comes and actually touches down on the Mount of Olives; puts his feet down there on this side of the Kidron Valley; walks down; goes in through the Golden Gate; and, enters the city of Jerusalem as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When He does that, you and I return with Him, and the Bible here indicates to us that our rewards are already on us. That is our righteousnesses. That is the blessings that have been added to us. So, they have to be given between the rapture and the Second Coming, and that takes place in heaven.

There is a final statement in Revelation 22, at the very end of the Bible, as God the Holy Spirit is about ready to close the canon of Scripture. He makes very interesting statements in two consecutive verses: Revelation 22:11 and Revelation 22:12. He says, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still. He that is righteous, let him be righteous still. He that is holy, let him be holy still." This verse refers to absolute righteousness. Verse 11 says, "Face up to the fact. You need the righteousness of Jesus Christ to go into heaven." The first thing that God has provided for every human being is absolute righteousness. The first thing that a human being must seek is to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ credited to his account. You get that by receiving Christ as Savior. To those of you who refuse, God the Holy Spirit says, "You will remain unjust. You will remain spiritually filthy. But those of you who believe the gospel, you will receive the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You will be declared holy. You will be declared, in God's eyes, as perfect as Jesus Christ."

I want to tell your, friend, if you don't have that, you're never going to heaven. It takes absolute righteousness – the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ credited to your account, or you'll never see heaven.

That's the first thing every human being must have. It's the first thing God has provided. The second thing is in the next verse. The Lord says, "And behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give everyone according as his work shall be." Isn't that amazing? The Lord says, "First of all, get the business of righteousness straightened out. Receive Christ. Get eternal life. Then, having done that, apply yourself to producing divine good works because I am coming to reward you. I think that that's significant. Right here at the end of the Bible, God the Holy Spirit is saying, "Now what shall I say to close the Bible? What emphasis shall I make?" And God the Holy Spirit says, "I'm going to emphasize the two most important things for a believer, in that order. First, to be born again; and, secondly, to store treasures in heaven." Your eternal life is the basis of your divine good production. That divine good production is going to receive rewards.

So, in Revelation 3:11, when the Lord Jesus says to this church, "Let no man take away you crown" (meaning rewards), He is talking about what He will give for divine good service.

Now, that leaves one other thing. For some believers, there are four medals of honor. Nothing is more exhilarating in the military service, and nothing is more esteemed than to have gone above and beyond the call of duty, and to have bestowed upon a military person the Congressional Medal of Honor – the highest decoration of the United States government. In heaven, there are four Medals of Honor, and we shall look at those for next time. The thing that's interesting about this is that most of you can qualify for at least three of these Medals of Honor. That is fantastic. It is very rare that anybody ever earns the Congressional Medal of Honor twice, but to get three Medals of Honor is outstanding. A few of you are eligible for four.

This is what is behind this statement. Do not let your reward be taken from you. Do not forget that God has an eternity for one person that's going to be infinitely greater than it is for the next person. It all goes back to the pastor-teacher doing his job, and you progressing in spiritual maturity. If you have not been doing this, I suggest that you storm up those stairs to that tape room with both hands, and start grabbing and start learning.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Revelation index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/revelation.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)