

A CONSIDERATION OF THE BHMA EXPERIENCE
BASED ON I CORINTHIANS 3:14 AND 15

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In I Corinthians 3:14 and 15, there are four concepts relating to the believer's experience at the βῆμα of Christ. They are work, judgment, reward, and loss. This thesis is an examination of these four concepts in the process of determining their nature and meaning as they relate to each other.

The believer's work is that which, upon evaluation, determines the degree of reward or loss. Therefore the work which is to be evaluated is exceedingly important. Paul's concept of "work" consists of the aggregate accomplishment of a man's life. This involves one's internal fruit of character as well as the external products that flow from these internal qualities. It is with this that every believer will stand before the βῆμα of Christ.

The nature of the evaluation or judgment, referred to by Paul as the βῆμα, is somewhat of an enigma! This is because the Scripture presents both joy and shame as being present there. The judgment is thorough and penetrating as one's life will meet him in fulness as he stands before the Lord. In proportion to the faithfulness of the believer there will be reward.

The reward is not to be thought of as something to be held in the hand literally to cast at Jesus' feet. It involves one's capacity to enjoy heaven, to glorify God, to give and receive praise and honor, etc. as well as one's ability to serve the Lord in religious, judicial and administrative capacities. Glorified saints will eternally reflect their earthly faithfulness in the functions that they will be able to perform and in the glory that they will have the capacity to reflect.

It is difficult to conceive of any "loss" in the eternal state of blessedness. Nevertheless, the revelation of God proclaims that there will be a loss incurred as a result of unfaithfulness during a believer's earthly existence. The "loss" consists of a diminished reward or capacity to reflect God's glory. It will be an eternal loss and indeed very tragic.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a widespread apathy in the church today concerning the βῆμα judgment in general, and reward or loss of reward in particular. This is partially the result of teaching popularized in the twentieth century that has not dealt thoroughly with all of the aspects of the βῆμα as presented in Scripture. To play down one aspect of the βῆμα over against another aspect of the same is inevitably to fabricate a distorted image of that all-important event. It is of primary importance that believers understand thoroughly the nature of the evaluation that will be the church's common experience. The βῆμα stands out as being one of the greatest events in the eternal existence of every believer.

The βῆμα is to serve presently as a strong incentive for faithful living and diligent service. To view the βῆμα as a time when God will "let by-gones be by-gones" and in essence, will conclude that "boys will be boys" is woefully inadequate. Yet, to suggest that this is the unspoken mentality of many Christians today is not overstating the case by very much.

Furthermore, the βῆμα will be the day when every believer's work will be made manifest. At this time, a recompense of reward or loss will be meted out according to the deeds that were done while in the body. The impor-

tance of this event needs to be felt in lives today.

Many have considered the revelation of Scripture concerning the βῆμα and yet there seems to be some loose ends or problems with the popularly held view. It is the primary purpose of this study to reconsider the biblical data relating to the βῆμα to formulate a thesis that more adequately handles both the positive and the negative aspects of this judgment.

It is this author's contention that some have failed to form an accurate view of the βῆμα largely because they have misunderstood the concept of reward. Many see reward as being totally extrinsic to themselves. Therefore, this study is also an attempt to shed light on the concept of reward and then to harmonize this with the information concerning the βῆμα.

In this study, four concepts relating to the βῆμα will be derived from I Cor. 3:14,15 to be examined. First, the believer's work will be studied to determine what it is that, upon evaluation, results in reward or loss. The author proceeds upon two presuppositions at this point. The first is that the βῆμα is for believers only. The proof of this is germane to a study other than this one. The second presupposition is that in I Cor. 3:14,15, Paul has in mind the leaders of the church. This is the primary application of the passage. However, it is evident from this and other passages (II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10: et.al.) that Paul also has all believers in mind when he speaks with

reference to the βῆμα of Christ. Thus the secondary appli-³
cation of the passage is to all believers.

Second, the nature of the judgment will be given consideration. The procedure at this point will be to examine the arguments for and against the popularly held view.

Third, the concept of reward will be examined to determine from Scripture what will be the nature of the recompense. A survey of the major terms employed in Scripture will be given.

Fourth, the concept of loss will be considered in light of the discussion of reward to determine the nature and extent of the loss that will be sustained at the βῆμα.

All Scripture passages, unless otherwise noted, will be taken from the New American Standard Version.

CHAPTER I

WORK

Introduction

There are differing views as to what shall be evaluated at the βῆμα of Christ. In I Corinthians 3:10-15, Paul chooses the metaphor of a building to show that as the master-builder, he laid the foundation and now others were erecting a superstructure upon this foundation. Paul recognizes that there are varying qualities of material being used. The βῆμα will evaluate the quality of the work. This section of the study is to determine what Paul meant by "work." The four main views will be considered.

Work Equals People

Some scholars have suggested that Paul uses "work" in I Corinthians 3:10-15 to refer to people. Thus, the "work" that is to be evaluated at the βῆμα is the people who make up the churches. There are several arguments given to support this view.

First, it is pointed out that in verse 11 the foundation is said to be Christ, a person. It follows then that to be logically consistent to the metaphor being used by Paul, one should see the superstructure built upon that foundation as being people also. However, it is debatable

whether the foundation is Christ as a person or Christ's work as Savior along with His doctrine as Master-Teacher. The foundation of the church at Corinth was obviously not the literal second person of the Trinity who had ascended from the earth long before the church came into existence at Corinth. Furthermore, Paul says that he laid the foundation. It is not logically understandable to say that Paul laid the person of Christ, but it is understandable to say that he laid the doctrine of Christ, concerning his identity and sacrificial work.

In I Corinthians 3:11 Paul says, "no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid." κείμενον (present participle) could be translated "the one which is laying there." The foundation which was laying there was the doctrine of Christ, not the person of Christ.

A second argument for seeing "work" as equaling people is that Paul uses the term in that way in another place in Corinthians. I Corinthians 9:1d says, "are you not my work in the Lord?" This usage by Paul, however, is rare and does not at all necessitate that the I Corinthians 1:3 passage has the same meaning. More often Paul uses the word to mean fruit in character or conduct (cf. Philippians 1:6, II Corinthians 10:11, Titus 1:6, Romans 2:6).

A third argument is that the fire is often used as a symbol of people being tested (cf. Job 23:10, Psalm 66:10, Proverbs 27:21, Malachi 3:3). This particular evaluation that is symbolized by fire is the βῆμα of Christ (II Corin-

thians 5:10), at which only believers will appear. It does not follow then to say that some people will be burned up (v. 15), as is necessary to say if one holds that the work is people. Patrick Henry says, "The works that shall be burned are people who profess to know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour from the guilt of sin and yet there is no genuine regeneration in the heart."¹ This view is not supportable in that the βῆμα is exclusively for believers.

Work Equals Doctrine

Without question, Paul laid the foundation for the church at Corinth by preaching the doctrine concerning Christ's person, ministry and substitutionary death, etc. The foundation cannot be explained otherwise. Based on this premise, Calvin says, "If the laying of the foundation refers to the preaching, then the construction work must also refer to the preaching."² Similarly Grosheide comments, "he means by 'gold, silver and jewels' teaching that is not only in keeping with Christ, but is also a superstructure in harmony with such a foundation...the teaching which is described as 'wood, stubble and hay' does not conform to the foundation; teaching, that is, which is

¹Patrick David Henry, "What are the Works That Shall be Burned as Mentioned in I Corinthians 3:15?" (B. D. monograph, Grace Theological Seminary, 1946), p. 42.

²John C. Calvin, Commentary on I Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 86.

fabricated in men's minds, and then thrust upon us as the oracles of God."¹ Lenski also comments, "Thus gold, silver, and costly stones are the teaching of the 'wisdom' of the gospel which is full of the everlasting ἀλήθεια or truth; wood, hay, and stubble are teachings and church practices that are devoid of this wisdom and this truth."²

He later makes an important comment with regard to the connection between doctrine and living people. "The teachings here referred to are not systems of doctrine that are set down in books but kinds of teaching that are put into men's minds and hearts, which therefore produce certain results in their lives."³ Boyer also recognizes that the work must mean more than doctrine. He says,

Thus the minister's work is two-fold: He builds (1) by getting new people into the building, and (2) by getting those in the building to increase in stature and maturity. And since both of these tasks are accomplished by a ministry of teaching, there is some truth to the interpretation often encountered in the commentaries that the works here refer to the doctrines of the church leaders.⁴

However, there is more that will be evaluated at the

¹F. W. Grosheide, Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 75.

²R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1957), p. 140.

³Ibid.

⁴James L. Boyer, For A World Like Ours: Studies in I Corinthians (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1971), p. 50.

than what one proclaimed as the Word of God. I Corinthians 4:5 says that "the things hidden in darkness" and the "motives of men's hearts" will also be disclosed and brought to light. Therefore the "work" does refer to doctrine but also to much more than that.

Work Equals Fruit In Character

The context of chapters three and four of I Corinthians would lend support for this view. I Corinthians 3:13 says that "each man's work will become evident" (emphasis mine). If the work consisted simply of external, tangible accomplishments such as a certain number of assembled people or a system of doctrine proclaimed, then it would already be evident. There would be much less need for a future declaration.

Paul's argument in chapters three and four is aimed at the factious spirit that was becoming apparent at Corinth. Their external works were inseparably connected to the character of the individuals. In chapter four, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for judging the motives of different men. He exhorts them to leave this to the Lord who will "bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts." Here, reference is being made to those things in man that are now hidden to the physical eye, such as motives of the heart.

Commenting on I Corinthians 3:12, Pache says,

The works compared to wood, hay and stubble are the actions, even the religious ones, which are motivated

by selfishness, pride, envy, and self-will. One can pray, give alms, or preach in a self-seeking way (see for example Matthew 6:1, 2, 5; 7:22; Philippians 1:17; etc.). Those works will not survive the judgment fires. Others, however, are like gold, silver, and precious stones. They are inspired by love, sincere zeal, and the pursuit of the will of God; they undergo victoriously the judgment test (I Corinthians 3:12, 14).¹

Chafer, on the other hand, maintains that,

There is no reference here to 'character building' since Christian character, under the economy of grace, is produced in the child of God as a fruit of the indwelling Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 23). It is the believer's works or service which he is building, that are in view. These are the works foreordained that he should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).²

It does not necessarily follow that because Christian character is produced as a fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit that this therefore cannot be what is being evaluated at the βῆμα. Certainly no one would suggest that the Holy Spirit's ministry is being evaluated. But, it is the believer in his responsiveness and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that produces not only fruit in character but also external products that will withstand the fire of judgment (John 15:5). In this regard, Rosscup says,

When the qualities of his disposition are the fruit of the Spirit, he manifests these virtues in works. The gracious, God-given attitudes inspire, permeate, flavor, and give tone and value to the works themselves.³

¹Rene Pache, The Future Life, trans. Helen I Needham (Moody Press: Chicago, 1962), p. 223.

²Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. 4 (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), p. 405.

³James E. Rosscup, Abiding in Christ: Studies in John 15 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), p. 91.

Chafer draws too much distinction between the character of the individual and the works that directly result from the person's character. It is unthinkable to suggest that a man whose character could be metaphorically described as "wood, hay, and straw" could produce consistently works of "gold, silver, and precious stones" (cf. Matthew 7:16-20). A man's character is inseparably connected to his external actions and Christ will make manifest at the judgment not only the external aspect of a believer's work but also those "hidden things" (I Corinthians 4:5). Rosscup says,

Some have sought to maintain a distinction between the fruit of the Spirit (disposition) and the fruit of the Christian himself in service (works). But this has not been thought through carefully. Actually there is a beautiful coordination in which the fruit of the Spirit is the fruit of the believer himself in the power of the Spirit.¹

To this issue, Preisker says,

Thus the whole moral action of the Christian is for Paul the totality of capacity and volition on the one basis of life, the development of the spiritual power with which he has been endowed. It is all the fruit of the Spirit of God, and consequently the gift of grace, Gal. 5:22; Phil. 2:13; cf. I Thess. 3:12; Col. 1:22; Eph. 5:9.²

This is not to say that the manner of building is Paul's sole concern to the exclusion of correct doctrine. Lenski appropriately comments in this regard:

It will not do, then, unduly to stress the manner of

¹Ibid., p. 92.

²Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s. v. "μίσθος," by H. Preisker, 4:720.

building by laying all emphasis on $\pi\acute{o}\varsigma$, 'how' in verse 10 and at the same time assume that all six materials may be used equally in building on the 'foundation' just so the manner be right. Such an interpretation loses sight of the test by fire to which each man's structure must eventually submit, v. 13. Moreover, if the manner of building is the chief consideration and the material used only an incidental feature, why does he say nothing at all about differences regarding the manner of building?¹

Stanley identifies the "work" as fruit of character. He says, "Some say that these words are spoken in reference to doctrines; to me, however, it appears that he speaks concerning practical virtue and vice, and that he is preparing for the accusation of the incestuous person."²

To say that Paul was speaking with reference to fruit of character is not wrong, but it appears that it is a more complete answer to say that Paul had a combination of things in mind. A discussion of this view follows.

Work Equals A Combination of Things

A further possibility as to the identity of the work that will be evaluated at the $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$ is to suggest that Paul had a combination of things in mind in writing the metaphor of the building in I Cor. 3:10-15.

This view seems preferable in that it is somewhat arbitrary to separate a minister's work into categories such as the doctrine proclaimed, the people reached and

¹Lenski, The Interpretation of First and Second Corinthians, p. 138.

²Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, The Epistles of St Paul to the Corinthians with Critical Notes and Dissertations (London: John Murray, 1876), p. 60.

built up, and the fruit in character. It is even more arbitrary to say that Paul maintains that Christ will judge one of these aspects of the minister's work to the exclusion of the others. In context, Paul is stressing the thoroughness of Christ's βῆμα. The work does refer to the building up of a local assembly of people by the use of doctrine that builds on the foundation of the person and work of Jesus Christ. The doctrine is designed to influence the lives of people. This, by the very nature of the case, requires external activity such as preaching, teaching, etc. It would have been unthinkable to Paul, however, to consider merely the message as accomplishing the work. It had to be incarnated before people (I Cor. 2:3-5; 4:4).

Godet expresses this combination very well when he says,

The spiritual life of the members of the flock is, in a certain measure, the teaching itself received, assimilated, and realized in practice. Either the pastor, by his preaching, his conversation, his example, the daily acts of his ministry, succeeds in developing among his flock a healthy religious life, drawn from communion with Christ, abounding in the fruits of sanctification and love; and it is this strong and normal life which St. Paul describes under the figure of precious materials; or a pastor, by the pathetic discourses, his ingenious explanations, succeeds indeed in attracting a great concourse of hearers, in producing enthusiastic admiration and lively emotions; but all this stir is only external and superficial; with it all there is no real consecration to the Saviour. This faith without energy, this love without the spirit of sacrifice, this hope without vanity: such are the wood, hay, stubble.¹

¹F. Godet, Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, trans. A. Cusin (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1893), p. 183.

Henry, although wrongfully designating the people as unregenerate souls rather than believers, does recognize that "works" has a broader meaning than has often been given it. "So, the answer, as to what works shall be burned, is a threefold answer; unregenerate souls, the lack of moral fruit of the individual minister's life and the unscriptural doctrines which he holds to in his preaching."¹

The concept of "work" that Paul says will be evaluated becomes clearer when it is seen in light of several features that are being emphasized in the context of his argument against factions in I Corinthians 1-4. The recurring emphases give insight into the central thrust of the building metaphor in chapter 3:10-15. The salient features that will be considered are Paul's exhortations, contrasts and the emphases drawn from his own example of work.

Exhortations

Paul gives seven exhortations in I Corinthians 1-4, each relating in some way to the Corinthian's responsibility to correct the factious spirit that was existing.

The initial exhortation comes in 1:10 where Paul urges them to have a spirit of unity: "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment." Second in

¹Henry, "What are the Works that Shall be Burned as Mentioned in I Corinthians 3:15?", p. 43.

1:31, Paul exhorts them, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." The third exhortation appears in 3:10d, "Let each man be careful how he builds upon it (foundation)." The fourth is in 3:18, where Paul argues against the worldly wisdom that was a characteristic of the factious spirit. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish that he may become wise." The fifth exhortation is found in 3:21, "So then, let no one boast in men." This exhortation completes the thought expressed in 1:31. Not only were they to boast only in the Lord, but they were not to boast in men such as Apollos, Cephas, Paul, etc. This had been at the heart of their divisive spirit. The sixth exhortation is in 4:1, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." The final exhortation comes in 4:16, "I exhort you, therefore, be imitators of me."

An analysis of the exhortations used by Paul shows that he is dealing with primarily a problem of spiritual nature that was manifesting itself in division within the church. Paul's emphasized concern is not with regard to correct doctrine or methodology so much as it is with proper attitude and spiritual mind-set. This is the setting in which the metaphor of the building is couched (I Cor. 3:10-15).

Contrasts

Perhaps the most helpful element in gaining an under-

standing of the primary thrust of Paul's argument against factions is the contrasts that he uses. These are shown in the following table:

TABLE OF CONTRASTS IN I CORINTHIANS 1:10-4:21

REFERENCE	CONTRAST
1:10-12	unity/disunity
1:18	word of the cross is... foolishness/power of God
1:25	foolishness of God/wiser than men
1:25	weakness of God/stronger than men
1:27	foolish/wise
1:27	weak/strong
1:27	things that are not/things that are
2:4	persuasive words of wisdom/demonstration of the Spirit and of power
2:5	wisdom of men/power of God
2:6, 7	wisdom of this age/God's wisdom
2:12	spirit of world/Spirit of God
2:13	words taught by human wisdom/words taught by Spirit
2:14, 15	natural man/Spiritual man
3:1	Spiritual men/men of flesh (babes in Christ)
3:2	milk/solid food
3:9	God's fellow-workers/God's field, God's building
3:12	gold silver, precious stones/wood, hay, straw
3:14, 15	reward/loss
4:10	fool's for Christ sake/prudent in Christ
4:10	weak/strong
4:10	distinguished/without honor
4:19	words/power
4:21	rod/love and a spirit of gentleness

Contextually, the contrasts make it apparent that Paul is drawing distinctions between the spirit of this world and the Spirit of God. This spiritual difference was being evidenced in their relationships in that there was carnal competition to be the wisest, most prestigious, best debater, biggest leader, etc. These worldly standards of spiritual maturity and wisdom are masterfully refuted by Paul throughout I Corinthians 1-4.

Emphases Drawn from Paul's Own Example

In 3:10, Paul says, "According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it." Here Paul gives us some insight as to how he laid a foundation at Corinth. The implication by Paul's several references to his example is that those who build on the foundation should do so in a manner that is consistent with the laying of the foundation. Paul serves as the best example of what he calls others to be and do.

First, the work was done according to a certain standard, κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ. κατὰ with the accusative denotes the standard by which something is done. Grace, according to Paul's estimation, is that upon which the Christian life depends. It is grace that empowers the Christian to perform the work that leads to reward (Rom. 12:3,6; 15:15; I Cor. 1:4; Gal. 2:9). When Paul turns the

spotlight upon himself he puts weight on the fact that any accomplishments were according to God's grace.

Second, Paul uses an adverbial clause to stress the manner in which the work was accomplished, "ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκεν." The word ἀρχιτέκτων is used only here in the New Testament. Arndt and Gingrich translate ἀρχιτέκτων as "master-builder."¹ The reference is to one who actually does the building as opposed to a supervisor. Apgar says, "As a σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων (wise master-builder), the apostle was not merely overseeing others in their work, but he was the one person initially active."²

In 1:17, Paul says that his preaching was "not in cleaveriness of speech." In 2:1-4 he says again that he did not come with "superiority of speech or of wisdom" and also he ministered in Corinth "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling," and his message and preaching were not "in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." In 2:6-9, Paul says that they spoke wisdom, but not a wisdom of this age. They spoke God's wisdom in a mystery. Paul gave them milk, not solid food because of their spiritual immaturity (3:1,2).

It becomes apparent by analyzing the emphasis that

¹William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 113.

²Ronald M. Apgar, "The Pauline Concept of Reward and Judgment According to I Corinthians 3:10-15" (B. D. thesis, Talbot Seminary, 1974), p. 38.

Paul gives concerning his own ministry at Corinth that he is concerned with the manner in which the superstructure is being built upon the foundation of Christ. The grace of God, the wisdom of God and the power of God are necessary to halt the factious spirit that may have been in part caused by individuals building with tools of human wisdom (3:13) and superiority of speech (2:1).

Conclusion

Paul's concept of the "work" that is to be evaluated is much more than doctrines proclaimed and lives built. It consists of that, but goes beyond to the fruit of character being exemplified by the minister in wisdom and power. Paul points to the aggregate accomplishment of a man's life as consisting of internal capacity for grace, wisdom and power along with the external products that flow from this inner capacity of character. It is with this that every believer will stand before the βῆμα of Christ. The next section is given to a study of this βῆμα judgment.

CHAPTER II

JUDGMENT

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to consider the revelation of Scripture given with regard to the nature of the βῆμα judgment. There is considerable disagreement among scholars as to the nature of this examination. There are good conservative men who are poles apart with regard to this issue. The views suggested could be grouped into three categories. One group sees the βῆμα as sort of an awards ceremony. They maintain that all believers will at this time receive some reward from the hand of Christ. The result of this will be a time of exceeding great joy and elation in the grace of God. At this time there will be some degree of real shame for not having done more while in the body. This, however, will be short-lived and the common experience of all believers. In the final analysis, the ecstatic joy caused by the reality of heaven and realization of reward will greatly overshadow the relatively small degree of sorrow caused by the forfeiture of potential reward.

A second group at the opposite end of the spectrum with regard to this issue, sees the βῆμα as a time of great

sorrow and deep remorse. They interpret the biblical data as pointing toward a time of chastisement and a day of reckoning. It is at this time that God will mete out negative retribution for unconfessed sins and unfaithful living. Therefore the judgment is a place of terror and intense sorrow.

Another group maintains that the βῆμα will be a penetrating and thorough examination of one's life. The negative retribution will not be physical punishment or some form of chastisement as such, but rather the consequences of one's unfaithfulness will confront the believer in stark reality. There will be realized at this time an eternal loss. Degrees of reward will be meted out according to a strict and impartial judgment. The presence or absence of reward corresponds in direct proportion to the faithfulness and work of the individual.

The procedure for this chapter will be to examine the major arguments for and against the first view, that of the awards ceremony. This view has been popularized in the twentieth century, whereas it was not held by theologians in previous centuries. Today, the majority of conservative Bible teachers espouse this view.¹

¹One possible explanation for the popularity of this view is the footnote in the New Scofield Reference Bible. It says, "The judgment of the believer's works, not sins, is under discussion here. His sins have been atoned for and are remembered no more forever (Heb. 10:17); but every work must come into judgment (Mt. 12:36; Rom. 14:10; Gal. 6:7; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:24-25)." Many have taken this as the final word on the subject and consequently have not considered the possibility of a more adequate understanding of the βῆμα.

Because of this view's popularity, the information supporting and refuting it will be examined in some detail. The two remaining views deal more adequately with the negative element that Scripture reveals as also being present at the βῆμα experience, therefore those views will be covered in chapter four regarding the loss.

Awards Ceremony View

Those proposing this view maintain that the βῆμα of Christ will be a time of great rejoicing as believers receive their eternal reward. The loss will consist merely of not receiving all that one could have received.

Argument from the Word βῆμα

One of the arguments used to support this view is Paul's usage of the word βῆμα in II Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10. Paul's usage of this particular term is significant in that he borrowed from the cultures of Corinth and Rome a term that was familiar to them and would have produced certain specific mental images. Paul's reference to the βῆμα was undoubtedly drawn in part from the athletic usage of the term (cf. I Cor. 9:24-27; II Tim. 2:5; 4:7, 8). Since the Isthmian games were held at Corinth every other year, the mention of the βῆμα would have pictured in their minds the elevated platform upon which ten judges, dressed in purple robes, observed the contestants as they competed. These judges were known as the 'Umpire.' Sauer says,

When the race ended and the name of the victor was

announced by the herald, he had to appear before the raised seat of the Umpire. From their hand he received the victor's wreath. In this the judges acted in the name of the god in whose honour the festival was held.¹

Paul's use of the term βῆμα in Romans 14:10, however, would have provided a somewhat different mental image to the Romans. They would have thought of the august judicial system of the Romans in that the term βῆμα referred to the "official seat or tribunal of a Roman magistrate."² Concerning the Roman βῆμα Stanley says, "This tribunal of the Roman magistrate was the most august representation of justice which was in existence at that time."³

The word βῆμα is used twelve times in the New Testament. Twice it is used to refer to the future judgment of believers (II Cor. 5:10 and Rom. 14:10). With only two exceptions (Acts 7:5 and 12:21) all of the occurrences can be associated with three specific situations: Paul before the βῆμα (Acts 18:12, 16, 17; 25:6, 10, 17), Christ before the βῆμα (Matt. 27:19, John 19:13), and believers before the βῆμα (II Cor. 5:10, Rom. 14:10). There is a great deal of difference between the βῆμα of a Roman proconsul and the βῆμα of Christ. It matters whose βῆμα it is. The nature of

¹Erich Sauer, In the Arena of Faith: A Call to a Consecrated Life (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955), p. 60.

²W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words with their Precise Meanings for English Readers (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1940), p. 282.

³Stanley, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians with Critical Notes and Dissertations, p. 418.

the βῆμα very much reflects the one who is judging. The various usages of the term point the necessity for determining the nature of the particular usage from the context in which it is found.

Much has been made of the very technical sense that βῆμα may have in passages such as II Corinthians 5:10. Some have pressed Paul's illustration too far by suggesting, in essence, that there could be no real emphasis upon sorrow or sense of shame at the βῆμα of Christ because the Corinthian βῆμα was a place of great joy with no sorrow. In this regard, Hoyt says,

Paul was picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual contest. As the victorious Grecian athlete appeared before the βῆμα to receive his perishable award, so the Christian will appear before Christ's βῆμα to receive his imperishable award. The judge at the βῆμα bestowed rewards to the victors. He did not whip the losers.¹

This, in the opinion of this author, is to fail to realize the intent of Paul's comparison. Paul uses the imagery to stress the element of evaluation.

The nature of the particular βῆμα has to be determined by the context and by whose βῆμα it is. Pritchard points to the basic concept in Paul's mind when he says, "The Grecian use suggests that of evaluation in a judgmental sense, but in both cases, though different in application, the basic

¹Samuel L. Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," Bibliotheca Sacra (January-March 1980), p. 37.

idea of evaluation is clear."¹ It is most appropriate then to conclude that Paul is conveying the central concept that the βῆμα of Christ will be an authoritative and thorough evaluation of the believer's life. One must refrain from drawing conclusions with regard to the technical aspects of the nature and activity of the judgment from Paul's illustration. The more technical aspects of the βῆμα are to be arrived at in light of other passages that describe this eschatological event.

Argument from Having all Sins Forgiven

A second argument given in support of the awards ceremony view is that of having all sins forgiven. The argument proposes that when a person accepts Christ as his Savior, all sins--past, present, and future--are forgiven.

Evidence is put forth for this view from Colossians 2:13, "And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (emphasis mine). Also, Hebrews 10 speaks with regard to the finality of Christ's payment for sin. Verse 12 says, "but He, having offered one sacrifice for sin for all time, sat down at the right hand of God." In verse 14 this truth is applied with reference to believers, "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."

¹John W. Pritchard, "The Scope and Nature of the Judgment Seat of Christ in II Corinthians 5:10" (M. D. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1978), p. 41.

The conclusion of the matter is seen in verses 17 and 18, "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin."

Several passages are often cited to build upon this forgiveness by showing that what God forgives, He completely forgets. Passages are used such as:

Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Isaiah 38:17, "It is Thou who hast kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, For Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back."

Isaiah 44:22, "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, and your sins like a heavy mist."

Jeremiah 31:34, "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother saying, 'Know the Lord' for they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."¹

Micah 7:19, "He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. Yes, Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

¹It should be understood that when the Lord says in Jeremiah 31:34, "and their sin I will remember no more," He is not saying that He will erase all knowledge of such an action. It is not possible for God to forget anything! He will always know every action of everyone. It should be looked at rather as a figure of speech meaning that God will not impute their sin to them.

The argument continues that if God has forgiven all of the believer's sins, then it cannot be true that sin will have any bearing upon the βῆμα experience. Many Bible teachers attempt to elevate the forgiveness of God by suggesting that only a Christian's service is going to be evaluated. Sin is not in question since that was paid for by Christ. In this regard, Chafer says, "Though in infinite faithfulness--which Christ has borne (cf. John 3:18; 5:24; Rom. 8:1, R.V.), it yet remains true that the believer will be brought into judgment concerning his service for God--the use he has made of his ransomed powers after he has been saved."¹ In this same regard Walvoord says, "Although some have attempted to make this a Protestant purgatory, i.e. a time of punishment for unconfessed sin, it seems clear from the general doctrine of justification by faith that no condemnation is possible for the one who is in Christ."²

In response to this argument, it is a logical necessity that if there will be a real loss, as I Corinthians 3:15 declares, there must be a negative element to the βῆμα judgment. What causes the loss if unfaithful (sinful) works are not being judged? Were not these sins forgiven when the believer accepted Christ? Concerning this Hoyt says,

The issue at the βῆμα is, therefore, not a question of sin to be punished, but rather a question of service. The believer's life will be examined and evaluated in

¹Chafer, Systematic Theology, p. 404.

²John F. Walvoord, "The Church in Heaven," Bibliotheca Sacra 123 (April-June 1966), p. 99.

regard to his faithfulness as a steward of the abilities and opportunities which God had entrusted to him. Faithfulness will be graciously rewarded while unfaithfulness which is sin according to James 4:17, will go unrewarded (emphasis mine).¹

It is a logical necessity, therefore, to conclude that a believer's unfaithfulness or failures which are sins--morally, spiritually, etc.--will be brought to light and considered at this judgment. They will play a large role in the outcome of the βῆμα for each believer.

Colossians 3:25 speaks with reference to that which shall be received by believers from the Lord (verse 24). It says, "For he who does wrong (ἀδικῶν) will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality." Arndt and Gingrich define ἀδικέω as being "to do wrong of any violation of human or divine law."² The ἀδικῶν (present participle) is one who practices ἀδικία, which means "unrighteousness, wickedness, injustice."³ I John 5:17 says, "All unrighteousness (ἀδικία) is sin." Therefore it is necessary to say that believers before the βῆμα will in some way "receive back" (κομίσεται) the consequences of the wrong which he has done.

Commenting on Colossians 3:25, F. F. Bruce says,
While salvation in the Bible is according to grace,
judgment is always according to works, whether good or

¹Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," p. 118.

²Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 17.

³Ibid., p. 17-18.

bad, for unbeliever and believer alike...It may seem difficult to understand how one who by grace is blessed with God's salvation in Christ may yet before the divine tribunal 'receive again the wrong that he has done.' But it is in accordance with the teaching of Scripture throughout that judgment should begin 'at the house of God;' and even if the tribunal be a domestic one, for members of the family of God, it is none the less a solemn reality.¹

II Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (emphasis mine). The word translated bad is φᾶυλος. Paul's choice of this word is significant in that it is not the more common term. He could have used κακός or πονηρός. Some have tried to suggest that φᾶυλος has no moral connotation to it, therefore Paul's choice was purposely to avoid the possibility of sin being an issue at the βῆμα. This, however, is not a supportable view! Vincent says, of the translation 'evil' for φᾶυλος in James 3:16:

...an inadequate rendering because it fails to bring out the particular phase of evil which is dominant in the word: worthlessness, good-for-nothingness. In classical Greek it has the meanings slight, trivial, paltry, which run into bad. In the New Testament it appears in this latest stage, and is set over against good.²

Achilles says:

φᾶυλος (six times in N.T.) is used as a synonym of

¹F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Book of Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), p. 295.

²M. R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. 1 (Mc Lean, VA: Mac Donald Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 359.

κακός and means evil, bad. In Titus 2:8 it is used in a judgment on people. Otherwise it is used for actions (Jn. 3:20; 5:29; Rom. 9:11; II Cor. 5:10; James 3:16 (R.S.V. 'vile')). Its opposite is agathos.¹

Therefore, on the basis of the preceding discussion, it may be said that a believer's experience at the βῆμα is going to be affected by the sins he has committed while in the body. There are two possible explanations as to how this truth can be combined with the teaching that a believer's sins are all forgiven at the moment faith is placed in Christ. These views more adequately represent the presence of a negative element at the βῆμα than to simply say that only one's service is examined.

The first explanation is that post-conversion, unconfessed sins will confront the believer at the βῆμα. It is generally believed that at the time of salvation all sins (past, present, and future) are forgiven. Automatically, tension arises between that thought and a passage like I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Is there a different forgiveness in view? Chafer says,

At this point a distinction is called for between this abiding judicial forgiveness and the oft-repeated forgiveness within the family of God. The seeming paradox that one is forgiven and yet must be forgiven, is explained in the ground of truth that there are two wholly and unrelated spheres of relationship between the believer and God. Regarding his standing, which like his Sonship, is immutable since it is secured by his place in Christ,

¹The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s. v. "Evil," by Ernst Achilles.

he is not subject to condemnation and will never be unjustified or separated from God. Regarding his state, which like the daily conduct of a son is mutable and is wholly within the family relationship, he must be both forgiven and cleansed (I John 1:9).

Sproule clearly maintains that unconfessed post-justification sins cannot condemn a believer since Christ has forever settled the matter of eternal damnation for sin. He says, "It should also be re-emphasized that a believer's salvation is in no way endangered (cf. I Cor. 3:15) for this issue has been settled once and for all by Christ's atoning work and a true believer can never again come under the fiery indignation or wrath of God."² At the same time, Sproule accurately recognizes that unconfessed post-justification sins will have to be faced in some way, either through present confession or by God at the $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$. He writes,

In view of I John 1:9, post-justification sins are not automatically forgiven anticipatively at regeneration, but the basis (Christ's work upon the cross) for the forgiveness of post-justification sins is established when a believer comes to faith. The outworking of that forgiveness is contingent upon confession.³

Some would explain this forgiveness as relating only to fellowship in this life. They would maintain that the Epistle of I John is a 'family' epistle. Thus I John 1:9 deals only with family or experiential fellowship. Hoyt,

¹Chafer, Systematic Theology, pp. 238-39.

²John A. Sproule, "The Christian and Future Judgment" (term paper for the course CTA 302, Grace Theological Seminary, 1974), p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 41.

commenting on Colossians 2:13 says,

The point Paul makes is that the believer is completely forgiven legally before the sin is even committed. The question that arises concerning a believer's sins is between the Father and a son, and not between a judge and a criminal. The legal side has already been settled. The question is now of a contemporaneous relationship between the Father and a son. If there is a barrier which arises through the son offending his Father, there must be family forgiveness. It is not forensic forgiveness for that has been eternally granted and efficaciously applied the moment he became a son.¹

The second explanation for the presence of a negative element is that the consequences of a believer's sins will confront him at the βῆμα. All sin has consequences. For example, an alcoholic can be regenerated, have his sins forgiven, and yet there are physical consequences in that he may have liver problems for the rest of his life. David's sin with Bathsheba was clearly forgiven by God (Psalms 32, 51), and yet there were consequences such as the death of the unnamed child, Uriah's death, and the rebellion and sinfulness of David's other children. Also, even though David's sin was forgiven, it is eternally recorded in Scripture. Besides this, there were also physical, spiritual, moral, and eternal consequences even though the sin was forgiven.

Peter's sin of denying Christ was undoubtedly forgiven (Luke 22:31, 32) and yet it too is eternally recorded. Custer says,

Confessing a sin does not solve all of the consequences involved, When I do it, I'm going to face it, and

¹Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sin," p. 115-16.

confessing it doesn't remove it from the list of things I'm going to face God for and give account of.¹

When a believer's life is characterized by sinful patterns, one of the first consequences is that his capacity to understand and appreciate the things of God diminishes (I Cor. 2:12-16). This diminished capacity causes a loss of spiritual desire and power as well as the inability to recognize spiritual opportunity. All of these consequences are easily recognizable in the lives of believers today. In several different passages, Paul and other biblical writers are trying to get across the concept that what is taking place in the lives of believers in this life has a strong continuity with what awaits that person in the eternal state. There is a reciprocal principle that is being worked out in the lives of people in that they are presently, and will in the future receive back for those things which were done while in the body. This concept will be more fully discussed in the following chapters.

Conclusion

The awards ceremony view of the judgment seat of Christ does not adequately represent the revelation of Scripture. Paul's usage of the term βῆμα should not be forced beyond the natural limits of Paul's comparison. He emphasizes that the βῆμα will be an authoritative evaluation

¹James Custer, "The Judgment Seat of Christ," in The Summer Bible Conference Series (tape of message from Blackhawk Baptist Church, Summer 1980).

with Christ as the judge. To go beyond this, solely on the basis of the term βῆμα, is to do violence to the illustration. The nature of the βῆμα must be determined by whose βῆμα it is and by more specific revelation.

Also, the concept of having all sins forgiven does not validate the awards ceremony view of the βῆμα. The negative element at the judgment logically requires that sin and/or its consequences are instrumental in the experience of those present. The results of this soul-piercing judgment of Christ will be reward or loss. These concepts will now become the subject of this study.

CHAPTER III

REWARDS

Introduction

It is vital to an appreciation of the importance of the βῆμα to have a biblical view of "reward." If one views reward as nothing more than a little tinsel crown that one places on his head for a time and then takes off to cast at Jesus' feet, there is little, if any, motivation to faithful service. The thought of reward was a key to the diligent labor of the Apostle Paul. Several passages imply that it was a driving force that inspired him to press on through extreme circumstances (I Cor. 9:24-27; II Cor. 5:9-10; et. al.). It becomes necessary when attempting to arrive at a biblical view of reward to gather information from various authors of Scripture. In this regard Hoyt says,

The New Testament contains many allusions and explicit references to the nature of the Christian's eschatological rewards. Although there are no protracted passages dealing with this subject, taken together they provide glimpses of the rewards that are in store for faithful Christians. The New Testament writers were suggestive rather than exhaustive in their individual contributions to the reward motif.¹

¹Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," p. 198.

Degrees of Rewards

One misconception that is popularly held among Christians is that all saints in heaven will be equal. The apparent line of reasoning is that if there will be differences, some being greater than others, the result would be a potential dissatisfaction. Since there is to be perfect contentment in heaven, it must follow that there will be no differences so as to cause discontentment. Or, another slant to the argument is to say that since there will be perfect contentment in heaven, the distinctions are totally irrelevant anyway. Everyone will be satisfied completely, therefore there is no need to be concerned over degrees of reward even if it could be shown that the Bible teaches that concept.

Further support for this misconception is drawn (erroneously) from the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16). The parable says that the landowner hired men at the beginning of the day, at the third hour, the sixth hour, and the ninth hour. The men did not work equal amounts of time and yet the landowner paid them equal amounts. Some suggest that this teaches that God will reward all laborers the same, hence equality in heaven. This interpretation does not fit well with other teachings of Christ concerning reward. Others suggest that the main thrust of the parable is that of "equal compensation for unequal opportunity."¹ A better interpretation, however, is in seeing that Jesus is responding to Peter's question of Matthew 19:27,

¹Ibid., p. 155.

"Behold we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?" Peter's attitude was that of one who was strictly calculating his merited reward. Jesus, rather than blasting Peter, gives a parable to help him get the concept of reward into perspective. The key verse of the parable is verse 15, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?" The thrust of the parable is that reward is based on God's generosity, not man's deserving. Man does not merit reward with God. All reward is the gracious result of the Spirit of God working in the individual. Reward can only be received by unworthy servants (Luke 17:7-10) in that all of the hours of every day of a believer's life belong already to the Master. Only that which is due can be given. Preisker says,

Achievement and reward stand in a mutual relation which is incomprehensible to those who think in terms of a correct schema of merit and reward, and who thus regard God's relation to man as that of a precisely calculating employer to his employees. The parable radically discards all thought of merit. Its core is the message of the generous love of God for highly imperfect man: *ὅτι ἔγω ἀγαθός εἰμι* v. 15. So great is this love of God that those who think in correct human terms, and for whom God is simply King and Judge, cannot understand it, and are confused by the mystery of the glad tidings of Jesus.¹

Preisker then concludes by saying, "Thus the reward is simply the divine glory undeservedly received. This is the distinctive new revelation of Jesus as compared with Judaism and

¹Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s. v. "ζημία," by H. Preisker.

all other religions."¹

Thus to use Matthew 10:1-16 as an argument against degrees is not acceptable. Several arguments from Scripture can be brought forth to formulate the teaching that there will be degrees of reward.

1) Positions for the apostles suggest gradations for other believers. In Luke 22:24-30 (cf. Matt. 19:28) a dispute has arisen among the apostles as to who is greatest among them. Jesus used the opportunity to teach that true greatness consisted of serving. This serving would be rewarded by Christ Himself. Jesus said in verses 28-30, "And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The unique positions of authority granted to these apostles suggest that there will be graduations below them.

2) Degrees of punishment suggest the opposite, degrees of reward. Luke 12:47-48 says, "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." Hebrews 10:28 and 29 also suggest degrees of punishment: "Anyone who has set aside

¹Ibid., p. 719.

the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?" If there are degrees of punishment for unbelievers, it seems consistent logically to suggest that there are degrees of reward for believers.

3) The 'least' and 'greatest' in the kingdom suggest degrees. Matthew 5:19; 11:11; 18:3-4 make reference to the least and greatest in the kingdom. This implies the reality of distinctions and degrees.

4) References to reward for distinct persons such as a prophet imply degrees in reward. Jesus says, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward" (Matt. 10:41). The distinctions spoken of by Jesus suggest that there are degrees.

5) The parable of the pounds suggests degrees of reward in proportion to faithful service (Luke 19:11-27). Jesus spoke this parable because those listening to Him thought that since they were approaching Jerusalem the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. The parable was designed to let them know that there would be a period of time before the kingdom was established and to exhort them to faithfulness prior to His return. To those who were

faithful in very little things there would be authority over cities granted in His kingdom. The number of cities differed according to the degree of their faithful use of that which had been entrusted to them.

6) The parable of the talents also suggests degrees of reward in proportion to faithfulness (Matt. 25:14-30). This parable and the parable of the pounds both convey the principle that reward is based on one's faithfulness and since no two people are faithful to the same degree the corresponding reward will be in degrees.

7) The principle of II Corinthians 9:6 suggests degrees of reward. Paul says, "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully" (II Cor. 9:6). This principle can apply both to reward now and later.

8) I Corinthians 15:40-42 suggests degrees of reward. Paul says, "There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for stars differ from stars in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:40-42). As one star differs from another, Paul says that the glorified bodies of believers will also differ from each other in glory. The glory is part of a believer's reward for faithfulness to the Lord.

9) In Revelation 19:7, 8, John writes of what he

heard a great multitude in heaven saying: "Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

It is significant to note that verse seven says that the bride has made herself ready. It is something that the church as the bride of Christ has done. In connection with this it is important to see that in verse eight the bride has been clothed in fine linen representing the righteous acts of the saints. The word translated "righteous acts" is δικαιώματα . It is a word used of concrete acts or deeds.¹ Thus this passage is an explicit reference to the saints which compose the bride being dressed in their righteous acts. This is most likely a symbolic statement of the truth that the saints will manifest their capacity for glory. The saints individually will, in some sense, wear their righteous acts in heaven.

Ample Scriptural evidence has been given to show that there will be degrees of reward in heaven. The degrees are determined by the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of the believer while alive in the body (II Cor. 5:10). The importance of restoring this principle of Scripture to its proper place of emphasis is succinctly stated by Forrest. Kennedy

¹Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 198.

cites him as saying,

It is neither according to Scripture, nor to moral instinct, to depict the Final Judgment as implying that all in whom the same set of character exists receive an equal reward or penalty. It is strange how much the doctrine of a destiny proportionate to the measure of fidelity or failure, so perpetually on our Lord's lips, has become a 'lost theological principle'. It must be recovered, if we are to bring the fundamental conceptions of a final Judgment and a final Kingdom of righteousness into relation with the moral facts of life.¹

Duration of Rewards

A second misconception is that the reward is only a temporal recompense. A popular notion is that the rewards will be meted out according to faithfulness, at which time that which was received will be cast at Jesus' feet. Believers will then walk away from Christ on an equal basis, having given to Him who is worthy the reward that was only for a moment of glorious worship before the Lord. This view is not consistent with the larger context of Scripture. Several passages give allusion to the fact that the reward is not short-lived, but rather eternal.

1) Peter says, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (I Peter 5:4). The word translated "unfading" is ἀπαύαντον of which Arndt and Gingrich say, "its unfading quality may typify eternal glory."² The term literally means "composed of

¹Cited by H. A. A. Kennedy, St. Paul's Conception of the Last Things (London: Hodder Stoughton Company, 1904), p. 204.

²Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 42.

amaranth" which is a flower so named because it never withers or fades, and when plucked off revives if moistened with water. Hence it is a symbol of perpetuity.¹

A discussion of the particular crown will follow later in the study. Suffice it for now to say that Peter is urging the leaders to strive after a crown that was eternal and would not fade (cf. I Pet. 1:4).

2) Paul says, "And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (I Cor. 9:25).

Concerning this crown, Rosscup says,

This crown lasts eternally. It is also the same as the 'crown' of glory which is unfading (I Peter 5:4; cf. 1:40). Though 'unfading' and 'imperishable' are different Greek words, both stress enduring quality. The crown which is imperishable is the crown of life; another characteristic is its glorious nature.²

Thus in Paul's mind there is the clear concept of reward as being eternal, not temporal.

Identity of Rewards

A third area where there is much confusion is with regard to the nature of the reward. An analysis of the terms used to describe rewards reveals that the exact nature has not been told. The reward is described in metaphorical terms such

¹C. L. Elibald Grimm, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, trans. Joseph Henry Thayer (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p. 30.

²J. E. Rosscup, "The Christian and Rewards," Talbot Bulletin 25 (Winter 1977): 6-10.

as crowns, garments, banquet, prize, et. al., and general terms of blessing such as authority, glory, inheritance, honor, righteousness et. al. In order to formulate a biblical understanding of reward it is necessary to survey the major terms used. Each term contributes an element to the total concept of reward.¹

Glory

An awesome truth that is often repeated throughout the pages of Scripture is that saints have the capacity to reflect the glory of God. Paul speaks of the growing capacity when he writes, "But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (II Cor. 3:18). Hoyt comments on this verse in saying, "Since there is a relative mutable glory in this life, it is not difficult to accept the fact of relative immutable glory in the eternal state, especially in light of explicit Biblical revelation."²

As believers behold the glory of the Lord there is a growing capacity to reflect this glory. In this life, the capacity is ever changing, but the $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$ will be the event that changes the mutable capacity of glory into an immutable capacity with which to glorify God for eternity by reflecting

¹For a thorough listing of terms related to 'reward' see Appendix A.

²Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," p. 200.

His glory. Several passages reflect this concept of the believer's reward. In Romans 8:18 Paul says, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to (ἐἴς) us." The preposition ἐἴς is better translated "in" as does the King James Version and the New International Version. A very similar thought is expressed by Paul in II Corinthians 4:17, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison." Jesus associates this blessedness with a radiance of appearance. In Matthew 13:43, He says, "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Concerning this Pentecost says,

Inasmuch as reward is associated with brightness and shining in many passages of Scripture (Dan. 12:3, Matt. 13:43, I Cor. 15:40-41, 49), it may be that the reward given to the believer is a capacity to manifest the glory of Christ throughout eternity. The greater the reward, the greater the bestowed capacity to bring glory to God.¹

Another verse that reflects this aspect of reward is Romans 9:23, "And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory." Thus the "insignificant" trials and events of this life are actually touching the very fabric of eternity. Every day a person's capacity to reflect God's glory is either enlarged or diminished according to one's faithfulness to Christ. There is a great continuity between one's faithfulness in this life and the capacity

¹John Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), p. 226.

for glory that will be one's eternal reward.

Praise and Honor

The believer's reward is also described by the terms praise (ἑπαινος) and honor (τιμή). Praise is only of value as it represents the approval of God upon man (Rom. 2:29, I Cor. 11:2, 17, 22) and the government (Rom. 13:3, I Pet. 2:14). Schultz says,

...the word group in the New Testament does not mean praise for a special achievement, it is applied to the whole man, and not merely to acts. The manner in which epainos and epaineo in particular are used shows clearly that ultimately only God can give this recognition (Rom. 2:29, I Cor. 4:5, I Pet. 1:7).¹

Thus praise does not come solely as a result of external accomplishments, but rather as one has lived a life of faithfulness which results in conformity to Christ's image. God praises the man in his totality.

Honor (τιμή) is generally used to represent "the recognition of the dignity of an office or position in society."² Jesus often spoke of the genuine servants as being those who would be honored (Matt. 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45). In John 12:26, Jesus says, "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall my servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him." Also in John 5:44 Jesus says, "How can you believe, when you

¹The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s. v. "Thank, Praise, Eucharist," by H. Schultz.

²The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, s. v. "Glory," by S. Aalen.

receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?" A distinction can be drawn between praise and honor as seen in the New Testament. Hoyt says,

Honor is apparently public acknowledgment in contrast to praise which can be public or private in nature. Honor suggests a recipient and an audience, whereas praise needs only a recipient. Honor will be bestowed upon those who have been found worthy of public esteem through faithfulness in their earthly sojourn.¹

Authority

In the parable given by Jesus in Luke 19:11-27, Jesus compares Himself to a certain nobleman who went to a distant contry to receive a kingdom. Upon returning, the nobleman granted authority (ἐξουσία) over cities in his kingdom in proportion to the faithfulness of his slaves. Arndt and Gingrich define ἐξουσία as "ruling power, official power."² The implication that is drawn from this teaching of Christ is that when He returns, He will assign places of authority in His kingdom according to the faithfulness of His slaves. Revelation 20:6 also presents believers as reigning in Christ's kingdom: "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

¹Hoyt, "The Judgment Seat of Christ and Unconfessed Sins," p. 205.

²Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 278.

Christ's kingdom will not end at the close of the Millennium, but will continue on eternally. The bond-servants of Christ will reign forever with Him as Revelation 22:3 says that, "His bond-servants shall serve (λατρεύουσιν) Him." Concerning λατρεύω, Arndt and Gingrich say, "in our lit. only of the carrying out of religious duties."¹ Thus one aspect of a believer's activity will be involvement in religious service.

Another function of believers during this time is mentioned in I Cor. 6:2, 3: "Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, matters of this life?" Thus, another aspect of a believer's authority will be exercised in the judging of this world of men and angels.

One further function that believers will be involved in will be that of having authority over cities as has been previously mentioned in discussing the parable of the pounds (Luke 19:11-27). There is, therefore, much reason for believers to abide in Christ and serve Him faithfully. The capacity for eternal service for the Lord is directly in proportion to one's faithfulness in this life. In this light, how important every minute of every day becomes.

¹Ibid., p. 468.

Crowns

Scripture does not suggest that there will be literal crowns for believers. This is rather a figurative way of picturing a spiritual reality. The crown is not a literal wreath, but is rather comparable to the "helmet of salvation" (Eph. 6:17). Christians are not wearing a literal physical helmet; this is a figure to depict a great spiritual reality.

There is disagreement among scholars as to whether there are five different crowns or five descriptions of one crown that all believers will receive in varying degrees according to their faithfulness. An analysis of the five crowns is necessary to determine which view best fits the biblical data concerning reward.

Imperishable crown

Paul writes, "And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable" (I Cor. 9:25). There is question as to whether this crown is a separate reward for more diligent Christians or is describing the imperishable nature of all the crowns in contrast to the perishable wreaths of the Isthmian games. Rosscup is most likely correct in saying,

This is, in essence, the same as 'the crown of life'. It is eternal, imperishable life. Paul emphasizes that it will not wilt as victor's wreaths did at the Isthmian games near Corinth (they were fading by the time they were placed on the winner's heads!). This crown lasts eternally. It is also the same as the 'crown of glory' which is 'unfading' (I Pet. 5:4; cf. 1:4). Though 'unfading' and 'imperishable' are different Greek words, both stress enduring quality. The crown which is

imperishable is the crown of life; another characteristic is its glorious nature.¹

Crown of life

This crown is mentioned in James 1:12, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." And also in Revelation 2:10, "Do not fear what you are about to suffer ... Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." It seems likely that John was not limiting the crown to martyrs only, but rather he carried the example to the extremity. He is drawing a stark contrast to what they may receive at the hands of men and what they will receive at the hands of God.

"Of life" is a genitive of apposition and therefore should be understood as 'the crown which consists of life.' Dana and Mantey describe a genitive of apposition: "A noun which designates an object in an individual or particular sense may be used in the genitive with another noun which designates the same thing in a general sense."²

This is a crown that is awarded to those who love the Lord (Jas. 1:12b). Difficulty arises in saying that only some believers will receive this crown in that all

¹Rosscup, "The Christian and Rewards," p. 7.

²Dana and Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1927), p. 79.

all genuine believers love the Lord to some degree. Paul says in I Corinthians 16:22, "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed" (see also Psalm 145:20, Rom. 8:28, I Cor. 2:9). Therefore, it seems preferable to view this not as a separate crown, but rather as another aspect of the general sphere of blessedness symbolically pictured as a crown. Rosscup sees the crown as being the crown of eternal life. He says, "Just as faithfulness eventuates in (does not earn!) eternal life in other passages (Matt. 19:29, Rom. 6:22, Gal. 6:8), it leads to the crown, eternal life."¹ So, in contrast to trial and persecution even unto death will be given the eternal crown which consists of life.

Crown of righteousness

Prior to his martyrdom Paul writes, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all who have loved His appearing." This is the crown that is awarded those who have lived a life of hungering and thirsting after righteousness such as verse seven describes. To those who live in anticipation of His coming there is a practical righteousness developed (I John 3:2) and an increased capacity to reflect the righteousness of Christ in eternity

¹Rosscup, "The Christian and Rewards," p. 8.

(Rev. 19:7, 8; Phil. 3:21).

Crown of glory

Peter writes, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory" (I Pet. 5:4). He writes as a "fellow-elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed" (I Pet. 5:1, emphasis mine). He exhorts the leaders to shepherd the flock in an exemplary fashion. This is not to exclude the other church members from qualifying for this crown, but rather to have an example of those who will qualify. All who serve faithfully can anticipate glory ahead (I Pet. 1:7; 5:10; II Cor. 4:17).

Crown of rejoicing

Paul writes in I Thessalonians 2:19, "For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming?" Paul obviously speaks figuratively in saying that these Thessalonian believers were his crown of rejoicing. The concept he communicates can be experienced by Christians in this life, but will reach its ultimate element of rejoicing in the presence of God when the reality of seeing others won and built up in Christ will be fully realized. This crown also should be thought of not as an individual wreath but rather as another aspect of the glorious life that will be the believer's experience in that state of blessedness.

Conclusion regarding crowns

The crowns are not to be understood as literal wreaths that will be worn on one's glorified head. They are figurative expressions of great spiritual realities. They should not be viewed in a literalistic way in saying that the crown of life comes to martyrs, the crown of glory comes to shepherds, the crown of rejoicing is only for soul-winners, etc. It seems preferable to view these crowns as five aspects of the general sphere of blessedness known as eternal life. Believers already have entered into this eternal life (I John 5:11-13). Thus some of the characteristics of life after the $\beta\eta\mu\alpha$ can be the experience of believers, to a small degree, in this present life.

Rosscup appropriately says,

There is one crown, not five. The crown has various component characteristics, such as life, glory, exultation, and imperishability. It is not literal but a figure for spiritual realities more wonderful than we can imagine. The crown in every instance is the outlook for a faithful life. We never merit it, for our life is a gift of grace, but where that grace is genuinely at work it shows its dynamic in certain life-shaping characteristics (cf. Titus 2:11-14). And so 'you have your fruit with respect to sanctification, and the end (or outcome) eternal life' (Rom. 6:22; cf. Gal. 6:8).¹

The crowns which characterize the state of blessedness stand in stark contrast to the experience of believers in this world. Thus the exhortations to faithfulness in light of the gracious reward serve to motivate believers to "set their minds on things above" (Col. 3:2).

¹Ibid., p. 10.

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated from Scripture that the believer's reward is not a temporal distinction having little significance. The reward is eternal and will be given out in direct proportion to the faithfulness and accomplishment of the individual Christian. Reward should not be thought of as being purely extrinsic to oneself. There will be degrees of capacity for glory, honor, authority, and service. Although every believer will be included in the general sphere of blessedness, there will be eternal distinctions within that sphere. The saints will be serving in several capacities. Among those, there are judicial and administrative responsibilities. The capacity for effective service in these areas is being worked out in this present life. The crowns represent various aspects of the eternal life which the believer has entered into. The βῆμα will be the event that establishes the eternal degrees of these various aspects for the individual believers. It changes the mutable characteristics of a believer's life into an immutable capacity for glory, honor, authority, and service.

CHAPTER IV

LOSS

Introduction

The evaluation of a man's work, according to I Corinthians 3:14, 15 will result in reward or loss. The nature of the reward has been examined in the preceding section. It is not easy to formulate any concept of loss being the experience of the believer at the βῆμα. It is popularly held that just to be inside the gates of heaven will mean that everyone is as grand and glorious as they could potentially have been. It is evident from various passages that this is not an adequate understanding of life after the βῆμα. It is an oversimplification of the eternal state of the believer, which results in incorrect thinking. In some way, believers will receive back the consequences of the wrong which they have done (Col. 3:25). In some way, there will be a real loss suffered at the (I Cor. 3:15). It now becomes the subject of this study to consider the possibilities with regard to the nature of the loss. Four major views will be considered in this regard.

Preservation View

This view was popularized by the very influential writer of the Eastern church, Chrysostom. Townsend summarizes

Chrysostom's view as follows:

He understood these words to mean that the Christian who built badly upon the foundation of Christ would suffer the fires of Hell. He further maintained that the inept builder would 'be saved' only in the sense that he would 'be preserved' from annihilation so that his suffering would not come to an end.¹

This view has been largely discredited as being an erroneous interpretation. The issue that Paul is discussing is not salvation but reward. The fire is not literal but metaphorical and it is testing the quality of each man's work (v. 13) not punishing the man. The burden of proof is on the unusual meaning of σωθήσεται. To say that σωθήσεται has the meaning of being kept from annihilation and preserved in torment, as Chrysostom does, is to necessitate a usage of the term that Paul does not do elsewhere.

Purgatorial View

The Roman Catholics have used I Corinthians 3:15 as a proof text for a doctrine of purgatory. J. F. X. Cevettello gives a concise statement of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory:

According to the teaching of the Church, (purgatory is) the state, place, or condition in the next world, which will continue until the last judgment, where the souls of those who die in the state of grace, but not yet free from all imperfection, make expiation from unforgiven venial sins or for the temporal punishment due to venial and mortal sins that have already been forgiven and, by

¹John T. Townsend, "I Corinthians 3:15 and the School of Shammai," Harvard Theological Review 61 (1968): 500.

so doing, are purified before they enter heaven.¹

Several arguments can be presented to disapprove the use of I Corinthians 3:15 as a proof text for a doctrine of purgatory. Edwards gives several good arguments:

"(1) He (Paul) speaks of a probation, not of a purification; (2) the reference is to the second coming, not to what takes place in the intermediate state between death and the judgment; (3) the work of every man, even the best, must be tried in the fire; a notion not admitted into the definition of purgatory."²

Stanley comments concerning the use of I Corinthians 3:15 as an argument for purgatory. He says,

But this argument is contrary to the whole context, which represents the salvation as taking place at the same moment as the conflagration and the coming day of the Lord. It will probably no longer be used even in controversy, since its formal condemnation by the great Roman Catholic commentator Estius.³

Furthermore, to view this passage as teaching a doctrine of purgatory is to do violence to the whole analogy of faith. There are numerous passages that teach that a believer cannot be purged from his sins by making personal payment for them. Thus the use of I Corinthians 3:15 as a support for the doctrine of purgatory must be rejected.

¹New Catholic Encyclopedia, s. v. "Purgatory," by J. F. X. Cevetello.

²Thomas Charles Edwards, A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1886), p. 82.

³Stanley, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, p. 62.

Punishment View

Another view with regard to the loss sustained at the βῆμα is that there will be a negative retribution meted out for sin and unfaithfulness. There are several verses that lend support to this view. The phrase "suffer loss" in I Corinthians 3:15 is a translation of the Greek word ζημιωθήσεται . Concerning ζημιόω Stumpff says, "As the word 'disadvantage' carries a measure of comparison with a preceding advantage, so it is with ζημιόω in Greek,"¹ Furthermore, he says,

Loss, or the missing of the reward, is the result, or even more directly the experience, of the κατανασθῆναι of his work. As Paul does not give any material description of the reward, so we cannot depict the ζημιωθῆναι in detail. The context gives us only one hint, namely, that the salvation of the ζημιωθείς takes place οὕτως ὡς διὰ πυρός , i. e., by the same way as his work is consumed.²

Verses 14 and 15 of I Corinthians are parallel verses. This could be illustrated as follows:

(v. 14) work- remains- reward

(v. 15) work- burns up- loss (of reward)

Arndt and Gingrich favor the translation "he shall be punished."³ Hoyt responds by saying, "Arndt and Gingrich are wrong and do violence to the analogy of faith when they indicate ζημιόω in I Corinthians 3:15 means to 'be punished'

¹Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s. v. "ζημία," by Albrecht Stumpff.

²Ibid., p. 890.

³Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 339.

even though the word means to 'suffer damage or loss, to forfeit, sustain injury' every other time it occurs in the New Testament."¹

II John eight complements I Corinthians 3:15 in providing additional thought regarding the loss of rewards. The apostle writes, "Watch yourselves that ye might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward." John's desire was that they would continue to walk in the truth (v. 4) and not be mislead by deceivers (v. 7) with the result that their capacity for reward would not be diminished, but continue to be enlarged.

There are other passages that raise further questions with regard to a negative retribution at the βῆμα. Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:10, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Paul indicates that everyone will 'receive back' (κομίσηται) the things done in the body whether good or bad. This is also stated in Colossians 3:25, "For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality." The question that is raised by these verses is, 'How does one receive back the bad which he has done?' Plummer clarifies the meaning of κομίζω in saying, "In all three passages,

¹Samuel L. Hoyt, "The Negative Aspects of the Christian's Judgment," Bibliotheca Sacra (April-June 1980): 126.

II Corinthians 5:10; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:25, κομίζεσθαι, 'to get what is one's own,' comes to mean 'to get as an equivalent,' 'to be requited.'"¹

It is apparent from these verses that there is to be a paying back involved in the βῆμα. The explanation of the negative aspect of this paying back is not easily understood. To say that men will receive back for the bad that they've done does not necessitate punishment or chastening. One searches the Scriptures in vain to find one clear passage stating that the believer's 'receiving back' comes in the form of punishment or chastening. It is significant that no specific term normally used for chastisement appears in the strategic texts dealing with the βῆμα experience. Chastisement is only one possible way that God could justly return to each man according to his works.

Diminished Capacity View

This view is that the "loss" mentioned in I Corinthians 3:15 refers to a diminished capacity with which one will dwell eternally. To "suffer loss" (I Cor. 3:15), means that one has to some degree forfeited the only opportunity afforded them to develop capacity to glorify and serve God. This is forfeited because of work that is not accomplished or is not properly motivated, or by unfaithfulness, and the

¹A. Plummer, The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, The Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: The University Press, 1903), p. 157.

failure to allow the Holy Spirit to produce fruit of character in the individual's life.

The judgment seat of Christ will simply overtly expose that which has been covertly present throughout life. There is strong continuity between life now and life after the βῆμα.

There is running throughout Scripture a principle of reciprocation. It says in numerous different ways that there is a strong continuity between this life and the eternal state. (Along with those already mentioned are: Matt. 6:2; 16:27; 7:12; Prov. 21:13; Psalm 41:1; Zech. 7:13; Rom. 2:5, 6; Rev. 14:13; I Cor. 3:8, 17; Eph. 6:7, 8; II Tim. 4:14; Rev. 22:10-12; II Cor. 11:15; Gal. 6:7, 8, et. al.). To not recognize this continuity is to take away from the significance of life prior to the βῆμα. Unfaithfulness in life will have its retribution in a diminished eternal capacity for glory, honor, service, etc. The realization that the reward is eternal also brings forth the fact that the loss of reward is equally eternal. To understand that the nature of the reward consists of one's ability to enjoy the eternal state, to glorify God, to receive honor and praise from Christ, to serve Him in religious, judicial and administrative capacities, etc. also brings forth the understanding that the loss of this capacity in any degree is devastating.

To "receive back" (Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:25) means to have one's eternal capacity established by the faithfulness of

one's life. Thus it is possible to understand how one will "receive back" for the wrong (Col. 3:25) and for the good (Eph. 6:8) that is done. This capacity will be one's eternal reward with which to enjoy heaven's glories.

Perhaps this concept of diminished capacity can be further clarified by use of an illustration.

You perhaps have gone into some fine home or public hall where they had a beautiful, crystal chandelier. When it was lit up, the whole chandelier sparkled with beautiful radiance. If you were to examine that chandelier, you would find that it is made up of a number of small bulbs; there might be some 25 watt, some 50 watt, some 100 watt, perhaps some 500 watt bulbs. Each one had a different capacity but each one was shining to the limit of its capacity. That chandelier was beautiful because of the total capacity of all that was within it. In eternity, some of us are going to shine to the glory of God with a 25 watt capacity, and some with a capacity of 50 watts, some with 100 watts, and some with 500 watts. All will contribute to the glory of God according to the capacity that has been given us at the bema of Christ.¹

The loss will be far-reaching indeed. It was so awesome in the mind of Paul that he greatly feared such an occurrence in his own life. Sale-Harrison gives a discerning warning concerning the loss:

The seriousness of a Christian's life of failure is clearly outlined in many portions of God's Word, for the life lived outside God's will suffers a dual loss. It has a serious effect on his earthly life in loss of power, joy and communion with God, but the loss revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ is even more tragic.²

¹J. Dwight Pentecost, Prophecy for Today: An Exposition of Major Themes on Prophecy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), p. 160.

²L. Sale-Harrison, The Judgment Seat of Christ: An Incentive and a Warning (London:Pickering and Inglis, 1938), p. 42.

CONCLUSION

It is the conclusion of this author that the βῆμα will be an experience mixed with sorrow and joy for the believer. The evaluation of the aggregate accomplishment of a man's life, consisting of internal qualities and external accomplishments, will result in reward or loss of reward. Essential to understanding the more difficult concept of "loss" is an understanding of the concept of reward.

Scriptural teaching concerning reward is that it consists of one's capacity to enjoy the eternal state, to glorify God, to receive honor and praise from Christ, to serve Him in religious, judicial and administrative capacities, etc. Rewards are not to be thought of as being extrinsic to oneself, such as a trophy that someone might receive. Rather, they are to be thought of as being intrinsic to oneself. Eternal rewards are not something that the believer will hold in his glorified hand, but rather, it is something that the believer will be.

This capacity will flourish or be diminished in direct proportion to one's faithfulness while in the body. The judgment will be a just recompense meted out by the One who judges with righteous judgment. One's faithfulness will be the basis for reward that is multiplied a hundred times over by the Lord. God lavishly rewards His faithful servants.

The diminished capacity received by unfaithful believers will be their eternal loss. There will be no carnal apathy to salve the conscience or deaden the awareness of life and how it was lived. There will be absolute moral awareness.

Thus the significance of life before the judgment is elevated by its continuity with life after the judgment. Every moment lived and every action performed has eternity in it. There has never been an insignificant action performed. An insignificant day will never be lived.

APPENDIX A
A CORRELATION OF TERMS FOR REWARD¹

REWARD	OT	NT
Eter. Life	Dn. 12:2	Mt. 19:29; Mk. 10:29; Rom. 6:22-23; Gal. 6:8
Kingom: Authority Power	Dn. 2:44, 7:13f., 22, 27	Mt. 19:23-24; Acts 14:22; Gal. 5:21; I Thess. 2:12; II Thess. 1:5; Heb. 12:28; Rev. 2:26-27; 5:10; 20:4-6
Glory	Ps. 73:24; Prov. 4:18; cf. Dn. 12:3	Rom. 2:7, 10; II Cor. 4:17f.; I Thess. 2:12; II Tim. 2:10, 4:18; I Pet. 1:7; 4:13; 5:1, 4, 10
Inheritance	Ps. 16:5; 73:26; Dn. 12:13	Acts 20:32; Rom. 8:17; Col. 3:24; I Pet. 1:4
Honor	I Sam. 2:30; Prov. 3:16; 4:8; 8:18; 15:33; 22:4	Rom. 2:7, 10; I Pet 1:7
Treasure (riches)	Prov. 8:18-19, 21; 22:4; 24:4	Matt. 6:20; 19:21; Lk. 16:11, "the true riches"; Rom. 9:23; I Cor. 2:9; Eph. 3:6
Crown	Prov. 4:9; Isa. 28:5; "the Lord Himself will be a beautiful crown..." diadem; Isa. 6:3	I Cor. 9:25; Phil. 4:1; I Th. 2:19f.; II Tim. 2:5; 4:8; Js. 1:12; I Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10; 3:11; cf. Ps. 8:5; 103:4; Heb. 2:7, 9
End	Deut. 33:20, 29 (a charith); Prov. 23:18; 24:14; Jer. 29:11	Rom. 6:22f.
Garments	God (Ps. 93:1; Dn. 7:10f.); Men (Isa. 61:10)	Mt. 22:11-13; Rev. 3:5; 6:9-11; 7:14; 16:15; 19:8, 14

¹Handout given by J. E. Rosscup for the
course "Biblical Exposition of Reward."

APPENDIX A
(CONTINUED)

REWARD	OT	NT
Tree of Life	Gen. 2:9; 3:22-24; cf. Prov. 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4	Rev. 2:7; 22:2
Banquet	Isa. 25:6	Mt. 8:11; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 14:15ff.
Prize		I Cor. 9:25; Phil. 3:12-14
City	Isa. 62	Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 21:2-22:5
Fruit, or a Harvest	Ps. 58:11; Prov. 11:18b; cf. Jer. 4:3; Hos. 10:12	II Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:8
Paradise	IV Ezra 4:8; 7:29- 44 (espec. 36), 123-25; 8:52	Rev. 7:15-17; 21:2- 22:5
Righteousness	Isa. 62:2	Mt. 5:6; II Tim. 4:8; Rev. 19:8
Name in Book of Life	Dan. 12:1 (cf. v. 2)	Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27; cf. Lk. 10:20 "names are written in Heaven" Phil. 4:3, "enrolled in Heaven" Heb. 12:23
Works written	cf. Dan. 7:10ff.	Rev. 20:12-15, "the books were opened..."

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