

Messages From the Gates of Jerusalem
Lesson #30 - Muster Gate - Part I - Dispelling False Assumptions

Reminder: Two events occur between the Horse Gate (Prepared for Spiritual Warfare) and the East Gate (2nd Coming of Jesus Christ to earth).

1. The 7 year Tribulation Period which is the remaining 7 years of 490 years that God determined was for Israel and the city of Jerusalem. (See Lesson 28-Dan. 9:24)
2. The Rapture, which is imminent, will occur before the beginning of the 7 year Tribulation Period. Jesus will appear in the heavens and all Church Age saints will be caught up to meet Him in the air. (See Lesson 29)

Sequence: The 2nd coming of Jesus Christ to the earth is represented by the East Gate which we will consider later.

We are skipping the East Gate for now and embarking on a study of the Miphqad Gate which is also referred to as the Prison Gate, Inspection Gate, Muster Gate or Gate of the Gathering. This gate is literally the "examination gate."

Reason: After the Rapture, the saints of the Church Age will ALL appear before Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat or Judgment Seat of Christ. This event will be one of the events occurring with Christ while the 7 year Tribulation Period is occurring on earth. Christ will return WITH His Bride as the 7 year period is coming to an end. He comes to wage war against the enemies of God and establish His Kingdom upon the earth.

Imagine staring into the face of Christ! Just the two of you, one-on-one! Like it or not, this is precisely where you and I shall someday be. Perhaps one of the most misunderstood concepts by Christians is the Judgment Seat of Christ. The mere mention of this event strikes fear and dread in most Christians: An event thought of as something unpleasant that must happen before the joys of Heaven and being with our Lord can be experienced. A proper Biblical understanding of this event will motivate Christians to serve our Lord in the limited time we have left.

Doctrine of Rewards is virtually ignored in Christian circles. Several factors have caused this doctrine to lose its significance. Examining Scripture will bring to light the significance of this doctrine which has the ability to transform us and impact our daily lives.

Three false assumptions have given rise to the insignificance of the Doctrine of Rewards.

Assumption #1: False belief > There cannot be a serious evaluation of our lives at the Judgment Seat of Christ because > God has forgiven ALL our sins and cast them into the depths of the sea. (Micah 7:19)

Agreed: We are NOT judged for sin. Judgment Seat DOES NOT determine Salvation.

False Belief: It is not really a judgment; all will receive rewards.

Suggestion: Some believers will experience deep regret along with lost privileges.

Listen to Paul: 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 Therefore we make it our goal (aim) to be well-pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
Consider: "Whether good or bad" - Dispels a hope that our failures will not matter - It reminds us our Father judges us even though we are SECURE we are His children forever.

Biblical Examples of God Judging Believers

1. Consider Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. They lied regarding the price of a sold property so they could withhold a percentage while pretending to give all the money to the church.

Truth: They were Christians smitten by God and instantly died for their dishonesty.

Powerful Reminder: God judges JUSTIFIED believers for unconfessed sins.

Question to Ponder: If God judges believers on earth, is it reasonable to believe He will judge us in heaven for the way we lived on earth?

Jim Elliff: "Such warnings virtually bleed from the pores to Scripture."

2. II Sam. 12 - Consider King David who committed the sins of adultery and murder.

II Sam. 12:13-14 - "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die."

Note: God judged him for his sin even after he had confessed it and was assured of God's forgiveness.

Powerful Reminder: God judges believers for sins that have been confessed and forgiven.

Security of the Believer: Those who trust Christ alone for salvation are redeemed, eternally forgiven and legally perfect before God.

I John 3:14 - We have "passed out of death into life."

We enter heaven with the righteousness of Christ credited to our account.

We are accepted on the basis of His worthy merit.

Danger: Do not conclude that every Christian will do well at the judgment seat of Christ.

Fact: When you were born again (justified), you were set apart by God.

You were also set apart UNTO God for sanctification. New commands are given to the justified believer. You cannot obey these commands; you MUST yield to the Holy Spirit who will do the work in you and transform you into the image of Jesus Christ.

Consider: We can suffer serious loss and stand in shame. We will not all have the same privileges > have you allowed the Holy Spirit to purify and sanctify you?

Ponder: Paul did not see a contradiction between teaching justification by faith as well as the fact we shall be judged for all our "deeds done in the body" since our justification.

Assumption #2: A false belief after we are justified our works have no merit before God.

a. Some teach there will be no difference among believers in heaven.

Argue: If some believers have a different status, it would imply that works had some merit that God accepted. This would be contrary to His grace.

Examine the Scripture:

Strongly agree: When we put our faith in Christ we are declared righteous by God because of Christ and NOT because of our works. Our deeds BEFORE our conversion are of NO MERIT in the sight of God.

Eph. 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Consider: Works done AFTER our justification are special to God.

Eph. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

a. These works are sought by God and honor Him.

b. We should strive to please Him. These works will be rewarded.

Luke 14:14 You will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

Christ promised those who performed sacrificial acts would be "repaid."

Philipp Melanchthon, Martin Luther's confidant and a theologian: "We teach that good works are meritorious - not for the forgiveness of sins, grace, nor justification (for we obtain these only by faith) but for other physical and spiritual rewards in this life and in that which is to come, as Paul says in I Cor. 3:8 - "Each shall receive his wages according to his labor." Therefore, there will be different rewards for different labors...There will be distinctions in the glory of the saints."

Truth: The works after our justification only have merit if we are abiding in Christ.

Our good deeds are done only because God gives us the desire and ability to do them.

Truth: These works are a gift of His grace to us. It is not possible that we could "earn" all that our Father desires to give us.

Important: The Father tests us to prove us worthy. He uses that which is least to see if the believer can be trusted with a greater share of the inheritance.

Ponder: Dependability on earth translates into greater responsibility in heaven.

Truth: God has placed Himself under a loving obligation to reward us.

Consider: If He didn't reward us, Hebrews says God would be "unjust."

Heb. 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

Ultimate Reward: Rule with Christ as a joint-heir charged with the responsibility of authority over all God's possessions.

Rewards are not earned in the usual sense of the word. God has obligated Himself to give us rewards, but this is strictly because of His grace.

Truth: God has chosen to give us what we have no right to demand or expect. We are rewarded because of His generosity, not His obligation.

Assumption #3: False belief > It is selfish to think of rewards as a proper motivation to serve Christ. We should serve God out of love alone.

Argument: I'm just going to cast my crowns before Him anyway. I'll be giving them up.

False Assumption: Rewards are nothing more than crowns.

Scripture is clear there are levels of responsibility that will be given to us.

It is true our motivation for service is our love for Him and a desire to please Him.

Scripture tells us He desires to share His inheritance with us.

Luke 12:32 Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

A. He wants us to win the right to rule with Him in His Kingdom.

Therefore, it should be our passionate yearning.

Remember Paul's Connection between pleasing Christ and doing well at the Bema Seat.

Do you long to hear...Matt. 25:21 Well done, thou good and faithful servant.

Question: Did Christ motivate the disciples with the prospect of rewards?

Matt. 6:20 Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.

Luke 6:35 He promised them if they were sacrificially obedient their "reward would be great."

Biblical saints: Driven to serve Christ because of the prospect of a reward.

1. Abraham - Willing to leave Ur and live in tents. Heb. 11:10 - He was looking for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. He died without receiving the promise, but it was the promise that motivated him to obey God. Rewarded in the future

2. Moses - Willing to leave the treasures of Egypt. Heb. 11:25-26 - Choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. I will give up the visible earthly reward for the invisible future reward.

3. Apostle Paul - He feared that he might fail and thus be disqualified in the race of life.

I Cor. 9:27 But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. Paul urged believers in

Phil. 2:16 - Prove yourselves to be blameless in this perverse generation, "holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain or toil in vain."

A.J. Gordon: "I cannot think of a final divine reckoning which shall assign the same rank in glory, the same degree of joy to a lazy, indolent and unfruitful Christian as to an ardent, devoted, self-denying Christian. If this life is a training ground for greater responsibilities, believers will be thoroughly judged."