



Recompense for Deeds

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

We cannot earn salvation or eternal life, but we are told in Scripture that *“if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”* (Romans 10:9). Those who are saved will be taken to be with the Lord in the Resurrection and the Rapture, where *“each one of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:12) and *“each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are”* (1 Corinthians 3:13-17). We see that the recompense for bad deeds is suffering loss of all that we have built through those deeds—our work is “destroyed,” but we are saved.

While this future judgment should cause us to be more focused, single-minded, *“steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 15:58), it should not evoke fear in us, for *“we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*

By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.” (1 John 4:16-18).

For those who love God, what will be the recompense for good deeds? Scripture speaks of “rewards” and “crowns.” We don’t know what all the rewards will be, *“but love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High”* (Luke 6:35a).

Some rewards are mentioned as crowns, suggesting rulership with Christ, for *“if we endure, we will also reign with Him”* (2 Timothy 2:12a). We see the Elders in Heaven around God, casting their crowns down in worship of Him (Revelation 4:10). The crowns that are mentioned are life, righteousness, exaltation, and glory. Paul even mentions to the Philippians and Thessalonians that they are his crown (Philippians 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:19).

We don’t have a lot of detail about rewards, but we know that *“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him”* (Hebrews 11:6). *“We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth”* (Revelation 11:17-18).

Amen.