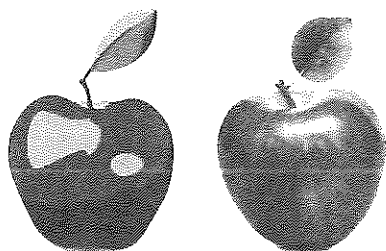


# Christ Will Reward



## Topic

Believers' rewards

## Theme

Christ will reward believers for their service at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

## Desired Learner Response

The learner will serve God in a specific way using rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ as his motivation.

## Materials

- Resources 1, 14, and 15
- Trophies or ribbons

## Scripture Focus

Various passages

## Summary

After the Rapture, all believers from the Church Age will stand before Christ in Heaven and receive crowns for their service for God. But only those acts of service they did in the power of the Spirit and for the glory of God will be eligible for reward. Believers will use their crowns to worship God for all of eternity.

## Outline

### I. Christ Will Reward Us for Our Service

- A. Timing of the ceremony (1 Cor. 15:50–53; 2 Cor. 5:10; Titus 2:11–13)
- B. Qualifications for the crowns (1 Cor. 3:5–17; 1 Pet. 4:10, 11)
- C. Descriptions of the crowns
  1. Incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25)
  2. Crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19, 20)
  3. Crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:7, 8)
  4. Crown of life (James 1:12)
  5. Crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:1–4)

### II. We Will Worship God with Our Crowns

- A. Around His throne (Rev. 4)
- B. For all eternity (Rev. 7:9–17; 11:15–19; 14:1–5; 15:2–4; 19:1–8)

## Memory Verses

*"The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelation 4:10, 11).*



## Award Ceremonies

**ASK:** At award ceremonies, why is the past more important than the future?  
(Q1) *The awards are based on the past. Once the ceremony arrives, there is nothing more that could be done to earn an award.*

**ASK:** When have you attended an award ceremony with satisfaction for your past effort? (Q2)

**ASK:** When have you attended an award ceremony with regret for not having done more? (Q3)

This lesson is about the award ceremony called the Judgment Seat of Christ. At that ceremony, Christ will reward believers for what they did during their lives on earth. Once the day of that ceremony arrives, there will no longer be an opportunity to earn rewards.

Many believers anticipate the blessings of Heaven with little thought about how their lives will affect eternity. This lesson will help us arrive at the Judgment Seat of Christ with a satisfaction with the way we lived on earth.

## Fading Luster

Have someone who has earned several trophies or ribbons bring some of them to class. If you have any trophies or ribbons, you could bring some of your own. Have the person tell what the awards are for and what they had to go through to earn the awards. Then ask him to answer the following questions.

**ASK:** How did you feel immediately after you received your most coveted award?

**ASK:** How long did that elated feeling last?

Have the learner return to his seat.

**ASK:** Why does the feeling of satisfaction for awards wear off over time?  
*There is always another award that makes the ones we already earned seem less significant. Other people forget about the awards.*

This lesson is about the Judgment Seat of Christ, where Christ will reward believers for what they did during their lives on earth. Unlike earthly awards, the ones we get at the Judgment Seat of Christ will never lose their luster. We will enjoy them and appreciate them forever. But if we aren't living for the Lord, we won't have many rewards to enjoy in eternity. This lesson will help us focus on living for the Lord while we have the opportunity. Once we get to Heaven, we will be forever grateful that we did.

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

The previous lesson helped us see that God equips us to serve Him in the context of a local church. This lesson will help us make the connection between our service on earth and our rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

## I. Christ Will Reward Us for Our Service

### A. Timing of the ceremony (1 Cor. 15:50–53; 2 Cor. 5:10; Titus 2:11–13)

The next event in God's dealing with humanity is the Rapture. The Rapture is Christ's return for His bride, the church. All believers from the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost until the Rapture are part of the church. When He returns, Christ will not come all the way to earth. He will first resurrect believers who have died and then rapture the living believers to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:15–17). All believers will immediately have a glorified body and will return to Heaven with Christ (1 Cor. 15:50–53).

Christ will then judge each believer at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). He will give believers crowns based on what they did while on earth, rewarding all service that He deems good. The word "bad" is a reference to the service we do for God that is not worthy of a crown.

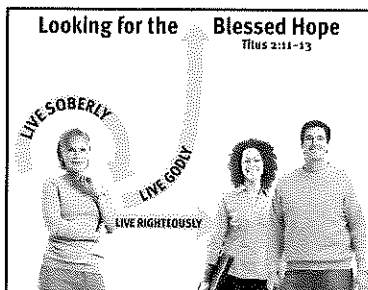
The Rapture will mark the end of the opportunity for living believers to earn rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 15:50–53.

The Rapture will happen instantaneously. The word "moment" (1 Cor. 15:52) means "an indivisible amount of time." "In the twinkling of an eye" refers to the eye's very rapid movement. It is another indication of the swiftness of the Rapture. In addition, Jesus said in Revelation 22:12 that He is coming "quickly," yet another reference to the speed at which the Rapture will happen.

**ASK:** Why would Jesus want us to know that the Rapture will happen instantaneously and without warning? (Q4) *So we would live as if the Rapture is going to happen at any moment and so we would be found ready when the Lord returns.*

Christ's coming should affect our lives as we look forward to it. Paul wrote to Titus about anticipating Christ's return.



**READ:** Titus 2:11, 12. **ASK:** How should the coming of Christ affect our lives? (Q5) *We should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and live with self-control ("soberly"), uprightly in our relationship with others ("righteously"), and rightly in our relationship with God ("godly").*

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 14 as an illustration of Titus 2:11 and 12. Add short descriptions next to each arrow to help explain the illustration.

**READ:** Titus 2:13. **ASK:** “Looking for” means to “receive favorably.” Why might a believer not receive the return of Christ favorably? (Q6) *He is living as if Christ will never return. He is indulging himself and focusing on the present as if it has no bearing on his future.*

Believers should look forward to Christ’s return as a “blessed hope,” or happy anticipation (Titus 2:13).

**ASK:** What particular events in your life have you happily anticipated? How did your anticipation affect your life? (Q7)

We should anticipate Christ’s return more than any other event in our lives. In our anticipation, we should be actively serving God. But we must be careful how we serve. Christ will not reward all good works with crowns.

### **B. Qualifications for the crowns (1 Cor. 3:5–17; 1 Pet. 4:10, 11)**

Peter gives instructions about what service will qualify for a crown (1 Pet. 4:10, 11). Believers are to serve God with God’s abundant supply of strength rather than with their own strength. And their motivation should be to glorify God instead of themselves. Those who follow these guidelines will earn crowns through their service.

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 15. **ASK:** What are some clues that a believer serves God in his own strength? (Record or reveal answers.) (Q8) *He desires to get the credit for his service. He is competitive with other believers and rejoices when they fail. He grows weary and gives up when the service gets difficult.*

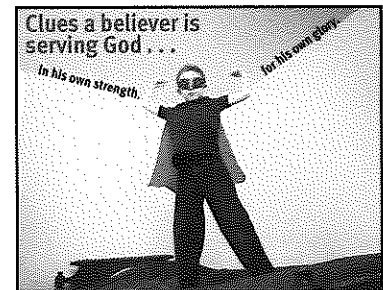
Whether we desire the glory for our service usually indicates whether we are doing the service in our own strength. Peter’s instructions make that clear. He says to minister with God’s “ability” that “God in all things may be glorified” (4:11). “That” introduces a purpose clause and links serving in God’s strength with glorifying God through the service.

**RESOURCE:** Display resource 15. **ASK:** What are some clues that a believer wants the glory for his service? (Record or reveal answers.) (Q9) *They get upset when people don’t notice their service; they find ways to bring up how they have served God; they do only public acts of service.*

Those who serve in their own strength will want people to notice their service and congratulate them on their effort. Conversely, those who serve in God’s strength will recognize that He deserves all the glory. When people try to recognize them for their service, they will response by saying “praise the Lord!” Those who serve in God’s strength and for God’s glory will receive crowns at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 3:10–12. **ASK:** What would a fire do to a building made of wood, hay, and stubble? (Q10) *Nothing. Those materials would burn up both quickly and completely.*

The previous lesson also covered Peter’s instructions in 1 Peter 4:10, 11.



Those who serve God in their own strength and for their own glory are metaphorically building on the foundation of Christ with very combustible materials. That is bad news. That material won't stand up to Christ's scrutiny at the Judgment Seat.

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 3:13–15. **ASK:** How much attention should we pay to our “building materials”? (Q11) *A lot! Both who we depend on as we serve and why we serve will affect eternity.*

Salvation is not the issue at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The quality of building materials is the issue. We must serve God in His strength and for His glory. Otherwise, we will forfeit any crowns we would have received. We will enter Heaven smelling like smoke without much to show for our life on earth.

### **C. Descriptions of the crowns**

Several passages give us descriptions of specific crowns a believer can receive. The list is not exhaustive, but it does give us a glimpse of what Christ will reward when He judges us.

#### **1. Incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25)**

The first reward is the incorruptible crown (1 Cor. 9:25). Those who show personal discipline as they are serving Christ will receive this crown. That means keeping our bodies under control and ordering our lives to include time for spiritual disciplines like prayer and Bible study.

**READ:** 1 Corinthians 9:24, 25. **ASK:** How does comparing the believer to a world-class runner help you understand the discipline it takes to receive this crown? (Q12) *The discipline must be consistent. The believer must order his life with the finish in mind.*

Paul sought the incorruptible crown. He disciplined his body and brought it under subjection lest he become disqualified for the prize (1 Cor. 9:26, 27).

#### **2. Crown of rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19, 20)**

Christ will award the crown of rejoicing to those who have won souls to the Lord and have seen them grow in Christ (1 Thess. 2:19, 20). Paul said the Thessalonians would in essence be his crown of rejoicing at the return of Christ.

#### **3. Crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:7, 8)**

Near the end of Paul's life he recounted his faithfulness for God. He had “fought a good fight,” “finished” his “course,” and “kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). Therefore the crown of righteousness awaited him at the Judgment Seat. Faithfulness is the key to receiving the crown of righteousness. Paul was faithful with all that God entrusted to him.

**READ:** 2 Timothy 4:7, 8. **ASK:** What is the connection between loving Christ's appearing and faithfulness to God throughout life? (Q13) *Those who are faithful to God will be anxious to see Christ.*

#### 4. Crown of life (James 1:12)

Believers who endure temptation will receive the **crown of life** (James 1:12). When trials come, it is tempting to give up on God and quit. Christ will reward those who persevere.

**READ:** James 1:12. **ASK:** What will motivate those who endure temptation? (Q14) *Love for the Lord.*

Love is the key to enduring temptation. Trials tempt us to doubt God's goodness. We wonder if He really cares for us. Our love for Him in response to His love for us helps us endure.

#### 5. Crown of glory (1 Pet. 5:1–4)

The final crown is for pastors. Pastors who are willing to serve, eager to serve, and exemplary in their service will receive the **crown of glory** (1 Pet. 5:1–4). This crown has nothing to do with which pastor had the largest building or the greatest attendance. The pastor's heart is the focus of this crown that "fadeth not away."

## II. We Will Worship God with Our Crowns

What will we do with the crowns Christ gives us at the Judgment Seat of Christ? We will use them to worship Him.

### A. Around His throne (Rev. 4)

John recorded a heavenly scene that shows us the value of the crowns we receive at the Judgment Seat (Rev. 4). God brought John into Heaven in spirit to give him a revelation of things to come. The revelation started in the throne room of God. The sight of God's throne captured John's attention immediately. John described God's appearance like a "jasper" and a "sardine" (sardius) stone (4:3). Jasper stones are translucent and come in various colors, red in particular. Sardius stones are also translucent and either yellowish brown or red. God must have been veiling His glory in some way, for John could not have looked on God's full glory and lived. Around God's throne was a rainbow that was like an emerald in appearance (4:3). The twenty-four elders seated around the throne must represent the church, the Body of Christ (4:4).

Also around the throne were four living creatures. They worshiped the Lord God Almighty for His holiness (4:6–8). The fact that they repeat the word "holy" three times is a testimony to the completeness of God's holiness. The fact that they worship God day and night shows that no amount of praise could ever be enough to recognize the awesomeness of God.

**READ:** Revelation 4:9–11. **ASK:** Why do the twenty-four elders cast their crowns before the throne? (Q15) *The elders recognized that the Lord deserves all the glory for their service for Him on earth because His Spirit empowered them to serve Him.*

God empowers us to serve Him, so He deserves all the glory for what He accomplishes through us. Furthermore, our crowns will be a result of God's grace.

We don't deserve Heaven, and we certainly don't deserve to receive crowns when we get there. The Lord will give us crowns anyway because He is gracious. We will realize that and use our crowns to worship God around His throne.

### **B. For all eternity (Rev. 7:9–17; 11:15–19; 14:1–5; 15:2–4; 19:1–8)**

The book of Revelation describes multiple scenes of worship of God. All of them are still future. The Tribulation believers worship God after being delivered from the troubles and persecution of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9–17). They are so grateful for their salvation that they feel compelled to serve God day and night (7:15). Worship is obviously a part of their service.

The church worships the Lord God Almighty at the announcement of the transfer of the kingdoms of the world to Christ (11:15–19). The church gives thanks to the Lord God Almighty for asserting His power to reign over the earth. The wrath of God is a major focus of this worship. The transfer of power actually happens at the battle of Armageddon (16:13–16; 19:17–21) when Christ returns with the church to defeat the world's armies.

The 144,000 Jews who share the gospel on the earth during the Tribulation sing a new song before God's throne (14:1–5). This scene is most likely in Heaven. Their song is "new" because no one else experienced what they did as part of the Tribulation. They will be able to appreciate and praise God in a way that only they will fully understand.

Lesson 2 covered the  
song of Moses in Exodus  
15:1–21.

The next instance of worship in Heaven involves the tribulation martyrs. Though the Antichrist has physically killed them, they are ultimately victorious over him (12:11). They stand on a sea of glass before God's throne. They sing praises to God while playing harps (15:2–4). Their song reflects the song Moses sang to Israel after God destroyed the Egyptians in the Red Sea (Ex. 15:1–21). It also seems to reflect Moses' last song he sang to Israel before his death and Israel's entrance into the Promised Land (Deut. 32:1–43). The truths about God in Moses' songs will be true forever. They will be part of our theme in glory when we all get to Heaven.

In Revelation 19:1–8, the inhabitants of Heaven worship God for the victory over Babylon. The sound of the praise is like the sound of rushing water and mighty thunderings (19:6). The coming reign of the Lord God Omnipotent and the marriage of the Lamb to the church is the focus of their praise (19:6, 7).

**ASK:** We will be part of this worship scene. What does the volume of our praise to God tell you about our enthusiasm for worshiping God in Heaven?  
(Q16) *We will be so overwhelmed with the desire to worship God that we deliver it with all our being.*

**ASK:** Do you think that enthusiasm will ever wane throughout eternity? Explain. (Q17) *We will never tire of worshiping God. We will never be less than awed to be in His presence.*

There is no doubt we will have a constant attitude of worship toward God for all eternity. The themes for our worship are numerous; we could never wear them out.

The eternal ability to worship God and magnify Him is why we should be certain



that we are using gold, silver, and precious stones as the building materials in our lives (1 Cor. 3:12–14). Bragging on God is what we will want to do more than anything else in Heaven. Our crowns will be a primary vehicle for magnifying and worshiping God.

Those who created an illusion of living the Christian life will suffer eternal loss of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. All believers will enjoy eternity, but those who receive crowns at the Judgment Seat will have an increased capacity to worship God.

## MAKING IT PERSONAL

### Service Examination

**ASK:** What are your thoughts as you consider standing before Christ to receive crowns for what you have done on earth? (Q18)

**ASK:** Evaluate the service you have done. Have you depended on your own power or the Spirit’s power to serve the Lord? (Q19)

**ASK:** Have you served for your own glory and recognition or for the glory and recognition of the Lord? (Q20)

Encourage your learners to be active in serving the Lord in the power of the Spirit and for the glory of the Lord. Both of those demand a conscious effort on our part. But the reward for such a life will be eternally fulfilling and enjoyable!

### Right Building Materials

**ASK:** What might you need to change in your service to God to ensure you are building with “gold, silver, and precious stones”? (Q21)

### Summary and Memory Verses

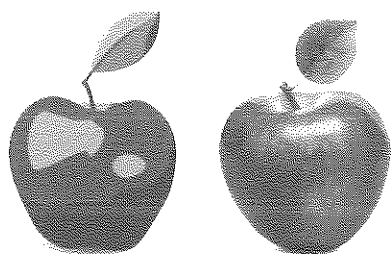
**RESOURCE:** Display resource 1. Add a summary statement for lesson 11 or use the following: Live in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Encourage learners to memorize Revelation 4:10 and 11. Give them an opportunity to say the verses in class next week.

### Living in the Real

1. Wake up to reality!	8. Handle God's Word as God intended.
2. Live in response to Who God is.	9. Take an active part in Christ's church.
3. Live in response to God's person.	10. Exercise your spiritual gifts.
4. Walk in newness of life as God's redeemed.	11. Live in light of the Judgment Seat of Christ.
5. Boldly approach the throne of grace.	12.
6. Live in the power of the Spirit.	13.
7. Value and study the Bible as God's very words.	

# Christ Will Judge



## Topic

God's judgment on humanity

## Theme

God will judge unbelievers for their sins, condemning them to eternity in the Lake of Fire.

## Desired Learner Response

The learner will share the gospel with the lost in light of God's coming judgment on them.

## Materials

- Resources 1 and 16
- Paper and markers
- Shoe box

## Scripture Focus

Various passages

## Summary

God will judge the lost during the Tribulation, putting them all to death when He returns to earth to set up His rule. Then after the Millennium, all unbelievers from the beginning of time will be judged before Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment. Christ will condemn the lost to eternity in the Lake of Fire. None of their names will be found in the Lamb's Book of Life.

## Outline

### I. God's Judgment during the Tribulation

- A. Timing of the judgment (Jer. 30; Dan. 9:24–27; Rev. 3:10; 19:7–16)
- B. Descriptions of the judgment
  1. The seal judgments (Rev. 6)
  2. The trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:7–9:21; 11:15–19)
  3. The bowl judgments (Rev. 16)
- C. Responses to the judgment (Rev. 7:9–17; 11:1–14; 16:9, 11, 21)

### II. Christ's Final Judgment of the Lost

- A. Timing of the judgment (Rev. 19:11–16; 20)
- B. Descriptions of the judgment (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 14:11; 20:10; 21:23; 22:5)

### III. Our Responsibility in Light of God's Judgment

- A. See people as lost (Matt. 9:35–38)
- B. Share the gospel (Matt. 10:27–31; 28:18–20)

## Memory Verses

*"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:12, 15).*