What is the Judgment Seat of Christ?

The Judgment Seat of Christ is the place where a just recompense is doled out -

> 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
> 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. 11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.
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> Romans 14:10
> But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

- It is clearly something that "we" all must appear before. The "we" is referring to Christians, for Paul is including himself in the group.
- Romans supports this, for the context dictates that it is regarding us and our "brothers" (fellow Christians).
- We will all be judged by God.
- The Judgment is based on our works.
- All Christians will be recompensed (which means "given what is owed") for their works, *either good or bad*.
- This event should make us fearful of the Lord, which in itself makes us think that the outcome is not guaranteed to be favorable.

This event is future –

> Revelation 22:12
> "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

- This is Jesus speaking, contextually at His return, which is yet future.
- For additional reference, see information regarding the "reward" and the "inheritance."

> Matthew 16:24-27
> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"] for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"]? Or what will a

man give in exchange for his soul [Greek 'psuche,' literally "soul"]? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

- This judgment and recompense is clearly shown to be future, when the Son of Man returns.
- Jesus speaks this to His disciples, including them in the context.

This event, the Son of Man returning and passing judgment, occurs at the end of this age –

Matthew 13:39-41
… and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. 40 Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth [future tense] His angels, and they will gather out [future tense] of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit [Greek present tense, literally "who are committing"] lawlessness…

- This age ends with a harvest, where sorting occurs.
- The sorting is to rid "those who are committing lawlessness" out of the "Son of Man's" kingdom.
- Christians can *be committing* "lawlessness" (referring to a continual type of lifestyle, not referring to our sins which we ask forgive for and are cleansed from) even after they're saved.

This judgment and recompense, to Christians, will be both GOOD and BAD –

Romans 2:1-8
Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath,Judgment will be based on works

- Context shows Paul is talking to the church, *redeemed* individuals.

- There is a positive recompense, and a negative recompense.
- The negative recompense is reserved for the stubborn and unrepentant, and this brings on the wrath of God.
- The positive recompense for good works (persevering, repentant heart, doing good, seeking glory and honor) is “eternal life.”
- You NEED TO KNOW what “eternal life” really means if it is spoken of as a reward! (Read the Bible study “Word of the Kingdom” on our Bible Studies page, in particular Part XI, pages 82-89.)

Let’s look at a parable the Jesus gives in response to those who “supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately”—

> Luke 19:11-27
> Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' 15 And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.”
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> 16 "Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.' 20 Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?' 24 And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.'
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> 25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.'"

- Parables are always portraying some veiled truth that is *unveiled*/opened up only with spiritual eyes and ears, which only come with a softened heart and a willing spirit. Jesus Himself said that His parables concern "the *mysteries*" of the kingdom of God/heaven.
- This parable pictures a judgment concerning the kingdom of God. (Read #5 of the "10 Basic Questions for Christians" on the same-named page to understand what is meant by this phrase.)
- This judgment occurs when the "nobleman" returns, picturing Jesus, <u>after</u> receiving for himself a kingdom.
- The judgment is reserved only for his servants. All of his servants are there (signified by the #10), and there is no distinction made in their status – they are all servants. (A servant is a *redeemed* person, one who has willingly put themselves under the Master.)
- Their recompense is based on what they **did** with what they were given by their Master (not based on what they did with what they had irrespective of Him).
- The rewards for faithfulness with the goods concerns *rulership*.
- The one who did not produce anything was not given mercy; rather, he was judged relative to his own words and attitude towards the Master, and his recompense was NOT positive. He lost everything and was called an "enemy" of God.

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14
13 The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

- The coming judgment concerning "every act," whether good or evil, should cause us to "fear God" and "keep His commandments."

Finally, the Judgment Seat of Christ, yet future, is seen vividly in Chapters 2 and 3 in the Book of Revelation. (We know this is yet future because John was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," meaning "the day of the Lord," the Second Coming of Christ.) In this passage of Scripture we can clearly see Christ as Judge in the midst of the churches (Rev. 1:13-20, *girded about the chest* as a judge would be), symbolizing the entire Church in that future day (2:1). Jesus makes proclamations and determinations concerning the works that these individual Christians did, and doles out rewards in relation to *overcoming;* the rewards all have to do with positions of rulership within His Kingdom.