

Christ in Prophecy
Conference 51: Robert Jeffress on Heavenly Rewards

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Opening

Dr. Reagan: Will all of those who go to Heaven be equal, or will there be degrees of rewards? And, if there are rewards, what will be the basis of them? And what are they likely to be? Stay tuned for a great presentation by Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas.

Part 1

Dr. Reagan: Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Each year in July this ministry sponsors a Bible conference. In 2018 the conference theme was God's Prophetic Voices to America. The keynote address was delivered by one of those prophetic voices namely, Pastor Robert Jeffress of First Baptist Church in Dallas. He selected as his topic a fascinating presentation about Heavenly Rewards, a presentation based on his book, *A Place Called Heaven*. Here now is an excerpt from that presentation.

Jeffress' Presentation

Dr. Jeffress: I don't have a better friend in the world than David Reagan. And I so appreciate the ministry of Lamb & Lion Ministries. You know so few people are talking about Bible prophecy today. And David Reagan is a prophetic voice for our nation and for our world. Now, he was very gracious in saying that it was a privilege to follow me. What he was really saying on television is I'm his warm up act. He's the main attraction. And I know you're blessed by this ministry.

This year I have a new book out called, *A Place Called Heaven*. And in that book I answer ten of the most frequently asked questions about Heaven. And I answer questions like: Will we know one another in Heaven? Do people in Heaven know what is happening on earth? What are we going to do in Heaven besides floating on a cloud and plucking a harp? I mean what do we do for all eternity? But the question I'm asked most often and one that people are most surprised about by the answer is this one: Is Heaven going to be the same for everyone?

And you know so many Christians are under the idea that Heaven is going to be kind of a sanctified socialism where everybody gets the same little plot of land. And everybody gets the same little house, and we're all the same in Heaven. Nothing could be further than the truth. Heaven will not be the same for every believer because of an event we're going to talk about tonight in Bible prophecy.

And tonight what I want to spend a few moments, if my voice holds out talking about is the judgment seat of Christ that every believer is going to face. And tonight in our few minutes

together I'd like to do three things. I'd like to talk first of all about the reality of the judgment seat of Christ.

Then secondly, we are going to look at the basis of the judgment seat of Christ. How are we going to be judged?

And then finally we are going to look at the consequences of the judgment seat of Christ. What does it really matter what happens to me at that judgment?

First of all tonight let's talk about the reality of the judgment seat of Christ. Take your Bibles and turn to 2 Corinthians 5:9-10. A few weeks ago we took a group, like many of you have gone on to visit the city of Corinth. As you know Paul went to Corinth on his second missionary journey. And for 18 months he had a very productive meeting there Acts 18 says. Great ministry there; many Jews and Gentiles were won to faith.

But, not everybody was excited about Paul's ministry there, especially the Jews. And so they concocted some charge against the Apostle Paul, and they brought him before the Roman Procurator Gallio who was the governor, the ruler over Corinth. And they hauled Paul, Acts 18:12 says, "They brought him before the judgment seat." The bema, the judgment seat. If you go to Corinth you can see that bema; that judgment seat. It's just really a raised platform isn't it, David? We've all been there before. And it's a place where the proconsul would sit. Gallio, and the prisoners would be brought before him. And it was an amazing thing to stand there where the Apostle Paul probably stood as he looked into the eyes of Gallio who had the power of life and death over Paul. But instead of backing down and apologizing for his ministry, Paul never flinched. He never gave an inch; he never cowered in fear.

What is it that gave Paul the courage to stay firm in his faith? Well, it was because as Paul looked at Gallio on that judgment seat it brought to mind another judgment seat that Paul would stand before one day; the judgment seat of Christ. For he would give an account for everything he had done, or not done while on earth.

And that's why in 2 Corinthians when Paul later wrote back to these Corinthians he used that image of the judgment seat. He said in verse 9, "Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent to be pleasing to God." Why? "For we must all appear before the bema, the judgment seat of Christ. That each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, for what he has done whether it is good, or," and that word there "phaulos" it doesn't mean morally bad it means worthless. Notice what he says here, "We must all appear." He's not talking about non-Christians. He's talking to the Corinthian Christians and he's saying, "We as Christians must stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

You know there are a lot of Christians who think, "Boy, I am so glad I'm a Christian. That means I never have to face God's judgment in my life." Wrong. The Bible says Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed unto every person once to die." And then what? "The judgment." Now, we know the judgment for non-Christians is much different than the judgment we face as Christians. Revelation 20 talks about the Great White Throne Judgement, all un-believers from the

beginning of time will be raised for that judgement. They will be given a body for that judgment. And they will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment. And the Bible says, "And at that judgment the books were opened and then the book was opened." The books are the records of every man's deeds; the good, the bad, and the ugly. The book is the Lamb's Book of Life. But the reason a person will be at that judgment, or at that Great White Throne Judgment is because he has said, "I don't need the grace of God in my life. I'm good enough to make it into Heaven. My works are sufficient." So, God says, "Fine, you want to be judged by your works, that's exactly how we will let you be judged." The books were opened and every person works will be examined. And as good as a person might be, it will be not good enough to merit entrance into Heaven. And everybody at that Great White Throne Judgment will understand why it is he is not being allowed into Heaven, because as good as he might be when measured against the perfect holiness of God everyone will be lacking. Now that is the Great White Throne Judgment. And John says in Revelation 20, "If any man's name was not found written in the Book of Life he was cast into the Lake of Fire, and tormented there day and night forever, and ever."

Now, what I want you to see is the Great White Judgment for unbelievers is a judgment that leads to condemnation. But the judgment seat of Christ for Christians is about commendation from God. It is about rewards. It is an evaluation of our life. It's not to determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell; that is determined the second you die. If you die without having placed your faith in Jesus Christ you're bound for an eternal separation from God. But this judgment, the judgment seat of Christ is an evaluation, and God says we are all going to have that evaluation.

You know there is a clinic here in Dallas that is known for giving extensive physicals. And so a few years ago I went to that clinic to have a physical. And I tell you they put you through the most humiliating things you can possibly imagine. And at one point they had me in my birthday suit. Please don't try to imagine that, but wipe that. Do a memory wipe. But they put me in this basket and lowered me into the water to try to figure out my fat content. And then I was standing there just in my birthday suit, and this technician takes this little torture device and starts pinching my skin to check the body fat as well. And I tell you it was humiliating. So finally I get dressed. I go into the doctor's office. And I'm sitting there at the little conference table. And he walks in with his white coat and he has a little notebook, and you know he sits down. And he said, "Well, we've got all your test results here, pastor." He said, "Now, I want to commend you on some of the good things you're doing. Exercising five days a week, that's a good thing. Gugging down those bran flakes every morning instead of an Egg McMuffin, that's a good thing. There's some good things." But then his smile turned to a frown. He said, "But, there are some things we need to work on. You know we need to get that cholesterol down. We need to get that blood pressure down. We need to do this or that." He was evaluating my health, not because he hated me but because he cared about me.

Now, that is the kind of judgment we're going to go through at the judgment seat of Christ. It is an evaluation of our life. You know we as Christians have this funny idea about good works. We say good works don't matter to God at all. Wrong. Wrong. Be very clear about this, good works are absolutely useless in securing your place in Heaven. Isaiah said your good works, your righteousness is like a filthy rag unto God. Good works are useless in securing your place in

Heaven. But they are invaluable in securing your position in Heaven. Good works are meaningless to God before your salvation, but good works are priceless to God after your salvation.

You know we Baptists we love to quote Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast." But we stop short there because verse 10 says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Did you hear that we are not saved by good works, but we are saved for good works? And that's why the Bible says our works make a great deal of difference to God after we are saved. I say in my book, "A Place Called Heaven," "What we do on earth reverberates in the halls of Heaven forever." So, there is a judgment coming; an evaluation the judgment seat of Christ.

Now, what is the basis for that judgment seat? Exactly how is God going to judge me? I want you to hold your place here and turn back to 1 Corinthians 3, this is the other key passage in scripture that describes the judgment seat of Christ. First Corinthians 3, beginning with verse 11, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. For if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and straw, 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."

Now I want you to imagine for a moment that you have one sibling, and you have a father. And your father happens to be Jeff Bezos the founder of Amazon. The richest man in America; 110 billion dollars. Now I want you to imagine that you and your sibling have Jeff Bezos as your father. And one day he calls you in and he said, "You know I'm getting more advanced in years and I'm trying to decide what I'm going to do with my estate. And I want to be sure my estate is well taken care of, and managed properly. So, we're going to have a little contest, you and your sibling. I am going to give each one of you a two acre tract of land. I am going to pour a concrete slab on each of your pieces of property. And I'm going to give each of you a check for 5 million dollars. And whoever at the end of six months has constructed the most elaborate, luxurious home I'm going to give two-thirds of my estate to."

Well, man you hear that from your dad and you are immediately motivated. I mean you can't even go to sleep that night before you start our drawing out plans for that house. And the next days you spend enlisting architects, looking at various plans. You enlist contractors. You try to get the contractor who will give you the most bang for your buck so you can create the best house you can.

But, your sibling is not quite as industrious as you are. He says, "Six months that's plenty of time. I don't need to get to work on that immediately. Five million dollars, my dad's given me, man, I'm going to take some trips. I'm going to buy some automobiles. I've got some things I'd like to do."

By the time your six months is up you've created a house that looks like the Taj Mahal. But at the end of that same six months your sibling says the night before the contest deadline, "Oh,

yeah, that house I'm supposed to be working on. I better get to work on that, Dad's coming over tomorrow." The only thing is your sibling doesn't have any money left, and he's run out of time. So the best he can construct on that concrete slab is a grass hut. The next morning your dad, Jeff Bezos comes to examine your house, and his house. He walks around your house, the great palace that you've built. He smiles and says, "Good job. Good job." And then he goes to your sibling's grass hut and walks around that, and said, "What a shame. What a shame."

Now, does your dad disinherit your sibling? Does he throw him out of the family? No. But he squanders a great fortune that could have been his. You say, "What does that have to do with the judgment seat of Christ, and with this passage?" That is exactly the illusion Paul is using here in 1 Corinthians 3:11 he says, "No man can lay a foundation other than that which is laid which is Christ Jesus." The moment you trust in Christ as your Savior, Jesus Christ becomes the foundation of your life. That is a gift from your Heavenly Father. Jesus is the foundation. That is what God has done for you. But the moment you become a Christian you decide what kind of life you're going to build on that foundation. You could build with gold, silver, precious stones, those things that are enduring. Or you can build a life, you can squander away a life with wood, hay, and straw. How we build our lives is the decisions that we make.

Let me be real specific here, the two criteria by which we are going to be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. First of all the durability of our life. You know gold, silver, precious stones those relate to those things that last for eternity. In other words those things that have an eternal perspective. Wood, hay and straw it is those things that are temporal. That are easily blown away. I have to ask the question tonight, we all need to ask the question: What is the real focus of my life? Is it on the eternal, or is it on the temporal? Am I consumed with building God's kingdom, or building my kingdom? Is it about God, my life about God, or is my life about me? It is one or the other, it can't be both.

Let me press this just a little further. If you want to know what the real focus of your life is it the eternal or the temporal ask yourself these three questions. Question number one: What do I think about most often? I mean when I'm driving. When I'm by myself. When I'm listening to Dr. Jeffress but thinking about something else. What is it that I'm really thinking about? What do I think about most often? Secondly, what do I talk about most often? When I'm with people where does the conversation go? What comes out of our mouth reveals what is really in our heart. Are we talking about the sports team? Are we talking about politics? What are we talking about? Where is the focus of our conversation?

What do I think about? What do I talk about? Third questions: If somebody gave me a check for \$500,000 what would I do with that money? You know what you think about. What you talk about. How you spend your money is a great barometer to what your life is really all about. The durability of our life.

Secondly the motives of our life are going to be a basis of the judgment seat of Christ. Sometimes why we do something is just as important as what we do. In 1 Corinthians 4:5 Paul says that on that judgment day God will bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts, and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Proverbs 16:2, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, but the Lord weighs the motive."

Now, I know what some of your thinking. You are thinking, "Wait a minute Robert, you're talking about rewards in Heaven. Is that really the right motive for serving God? I mean should I really just be serving Him because of the rewards I'm going to get? Isn't that a selfish motive?" Not in the least. In fact it is one of the greatest motivations I know for following God is because of His promise of rewards. Remember Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For those who please God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently serve Him." I mean think about that great roll call of faith in Hebrews 11, you know what all those men and women had in common? They all obeyed God without receiving the full reward for their obedience. They weren't looking for a pay off in this life. They were looking for a pay off in the next life. And when you think about it God, God values faith more than anything else. And the essence of faith is obeying God, believing that someday He's going to reward me for that obedience to Him. So, working for rewards that is the most faithful, the best motivation I know of for serving God.

Now, we've talked about the reality of the judgment seat of Christ, every one of us is going to stand at that judgment seat of Christ. We've talked about the basis for the judgment seat, it is going to be about the durability of our lives, eternal or temporal, as well as the motives of our life.

Now, let's look finally at the consequences of the judgment seat of Christ. The consequences of the judgment seat of Christ. Is it really going to make any difference? Look at 1 Corinthians 3:14, "If any man's work which he has built upon that foundation remains he shall receive a reward." The Bible says one possible outcome for you and me at the judgment seat of Christ is we are going to receive a reward. I don't know what those rewards mean. In my book I talk about some possibilities for what those rewards are. The Bible sometimes uses the images of crowns as a reward. I think those may be literal crowns, but I don't think we're going to be walking around with crowns for all eternity. I mean you know, Dave, is going to have to worry about that more, he'll have more than I do. But you know even one or two will be uncomfortable after a while. I think those crowns are symbolic of very tangible privileges in Heaven. We don't have time to go to it now but the Bible says there will be special privileges for some Christians that other won't have in Heaven: special access to the Tree of Life, special entrance into the Kingdom of God.

Have you ever been to Disneyworld before? I don't know how many fortunes we have blown at Disneyworld when our girls were little. But you know how it is at Disneyworld, for one price you can get in and do all of the activities. I mean it is a great, the happiest place in all the world Disneyworld. Now you've got one price, but if you are willing to pay a little bit more you can get into the park earlier. You can have breakfast with Mickey and Minnie. You know there are somethings you can do if you are willing to pay a little bit more.

Well, I think the same in Heaven is going to be that way, there are going to be special privileges reserved for those who were faithful. There are going to be special positions of authority. What

we do in Heaven is going to be dependent upon our faithfulness in this life. You say, "Special things to do? And positions of authority? I'm looking forward to dying so I don't have anything to do. I'm tired. I'm worn out." Well, you know I talk about that in the book. What are we going to do in Heaven? You know God created us to be workers. Work is not a curse, it's a gift from God. Before the Fall Adam and Eve were workers and they loved their work. God meant work to be fulfilling, exhilarating. We were made in His image. He is a worker. We were designed to be workers. The only reason we hate work now is because of the effects of sin, we have bodies that grow old and tired. We have relationships that are strained. We have government regulations to deal with. You realize all of those restraints will be removed in Heaven? And we will enjoy the work that God has gifted us to do.

Closing

Dr. Reagan: Pastor Jeffress proceeded to discuss in detail the types of rewards that the Bible says will be given out to believers at the Judgment Seat of Jesus. Again, his presentation was based on his book, "A Place Called Heaven" a book I highly recommend.

You can also find detailed information about Heaven and Heavenly Rewards on our website at lamblion.com.

In just a moment, our announcer will tell you how you can get a copy of the conference video album that contains all of Pastor Jeffress' information, plus the presentations by the five other speakers at the conference.

Well, folks, that's our program for this week. I hope it has been a blessing to you, and I hope, the Lord willing, that you will be back with us again next week. Until then, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb & Lion Ministries, saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near!"

End of Program