

Restoration of the Kingdom of God – 11

Three times the apostle Paul refers to “**the day of Christ**,” and in each case clearly refers to the **return of Jesus** from heaven - **Philippians 1:9** “*It is my prayer... 10... that you may ... be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,*” encouraging them in **Philippians 2:16** to hold “*fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.*”

- **If Paul expected to go to heaven when he died then he would not have to wait until “the day of Christ” to know the outcome of his efforts.** □
□
- And in **2 Thessalonians 2:2** he shows that the day of Christ would not be **until after** the “falling away” or apostasy had occurred. The very fact that most of Christendom believes in going to their reward in heaven at death, shows that the church turned away from apostolic teaching many centuries ago.

Six times Paul refers the return of Jesus as “That Day”, in one of them speaking of the time “*when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels*”, when “*those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ... shall be punished with everlasting destruction ... when He comes, in That Day*” - **2 Thessalonians 1:7**.

- So when Paul told his fellow believers in **2 Corinthians 5:8** ESV, “*we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord*”, he is thinking, as he shows in **verse 10**, how - “*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*”

Did Paul expect Jesus to judge him immediately after he died, and then to continue judging all the others as they died through the centuries of time?

- Paul told Timothy when he expected to stand before the Judgement Seat of Jesus - “*The Lord Jesus Christ will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom*” - **2 Timothy 4:1**, clearly showing that the judgement seat of Christ will be after Jesus has returned from heaven.

And then Paul shows Timothy in **verse 8** when he expected to be “*present with the Lord*”. On that same day of judgement, when Jesus has found Paul faithful, Jesus will give Paul his “*house from heaven*” which is his immortal body - that will be his “crown” or reward for his faithfulness -

- “*Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on That Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*”

It is important to be able to see the order of events. Before Jesus rewards the faithful believer, there must be the judgement seat of Christ. Before the judgement, Jesus must return from heaven. **This makes it impossible** for anyone to receive his reward **at the time of death**. He must be like Paul and the others who during this mortal life, “love his appearing”. He must, whether he is still alive, or if he has “fallen asleep” like Paul, wait for Jesus to come back first.

- **Hebrews 9:27** “*As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*” More next time, God willing.