

2 Corinthians 5:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;
that every one may receive the things done in his body,
according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Analysis

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ—Tous gar pantas hēmas phanērōthēnai dei (τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἡμᾶς φανερωθῆναι δεῖ, "for it is necessary that all of us be made manifest"). Phaneroō (φανερόω) means "to make visible, expose, reveal"—nothing hidden, all laid bare. The bēma (βῆμα, "judgment seat") was the raised platform where Roman officials rendered verdicts. This isn't condemnation (Romans 8:1) but evaluation—believers' works tested for reward (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

That every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad—Hina komisētai hekastos ta dia tou sōmatos (ἵνα κομισῆται ἕκαστος τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος, "that each one may receive the things through the body"). Komizō (κομίζω) means "receive back, obtain" what is due. Dia tou sōmatos emphasizes embodied actions—not mere thoughts but deeds. Agathos ē phaulon (ἀγαθὸς ἢ φαῦλον, "good or worthless")—Paul doesn't say "evil" (kakos) but phaulon (φαῦλον, "worthless, useless")—wasted opportunity.

This grounds Paul's ambition (v. 9): judgment is real, universal, searching, and consequential. Yet judgment occurs after secure homecoming with Christ (v. 8)—this is family accountability, not criminal trial. God's children give account to their Father for stewardship, receiving rewards or suffering loss of reward (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Historical Context

The bēma in Corinth was visible in the agora—Paul likely stood there before Gallio (Acts 18:12-17). This imagery made Christ's judgment seat vivid and tangible. First-century Christians lived with conscious awareness of coming judgment, motivating holy living. Modern Western Christianity often neglects this theme, producing ethical laxity.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does knowing your every action will be "made manifest" before Christ affect your private behavior when no one else is watching?
2. What does judgment by Christ (not just salvation from hell) reveal about the seriousness of how you spend your life?
3. Are there areas of your life currently categorized as "worthless" rather than "good"—how can you redirect that time and energy?

Interlinear Text

τοὺς <small>G3588</small>	γὰρ For <small>G1063</small>	πάντας all <small>G3956</small>	ἡμᾶς we <small>G2248</small>	φανερωθῆναι appear <small>G5319</small>	δεῖ must <small>G1163</small>	ἔμπροσθεν before <small>G1715</small>	τοῦ <small>G3588</small>
βήματος the judgment seat <small>G968</small>	τοῦ <small>G3588</small>	Χριστοῦ of Christ <small>G5547</small>	ἵνα that <small>G2443</small>	κομίσηται may receive <small>G2865</small>	ἕκαστος every one <small>G1538</small>	τὰ <small>G3588</small>	
διὰ the things done in <small>G1223</small>	τοῦ <small>G3588</small>	σώματος his body <small>G4983</small>	πρὸς according <small>G4314</small>	ᾧ to that <small>G3739</small>	ἔπραξεν he hath done <small>G4238</small>	εἴτε or <small>G1535</small>	
ἀγαθὸν it be good <small>G18</small>	εἴτε or <small>G1535</small>	κακόν bad <small>G2556</small>					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 16:27 (Parallel theme): For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Revelation 22:12 (Parallel theme): And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Ephesians 6:8 (Good): Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (Judgment): For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Psalms 62:12 (Parallel theme): Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

1 Corinthians 4:5 (Judgment): Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

1 Peter 4:5 (Judgment): Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

Psalms 98:9 (Judgment): Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Revelation 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Job 34:11 (Parallel theme): For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.

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