

[Psalm 2: The Importance of Works](#)

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In the [previous part](#) of this study on Psalm 2, we looked at the warnings of the Holy Spirit in verses 10-12. Today I'll look at the significance of the believer's works.

A Call to an Unusual Form of Rejoicing

The future judgment which we face for our works is the reason that the Spirit expresses His next command in such an unusual way. He calls us to *"rejoice with trembling"* ([Psalm 2:11](#)).

Have you ever thought about what a strange command this is? A person normally rejoices with laughter, dancing, singing, or hand-clapping. How does one rejoice with trembling?

I think the command relates to the tension that exists in the Scriptures between grace and works. We are saved by grace, and we should rejoice over that and over the completion of our salvation (the glorification of our bodies) that we will enjoy when the Lord returns. But at the same time we should tremble over the prospect of standing before Jesus to have our works judged.

There is both good news and bad news about the Lord's forthcoming judgment of the redeemed. The good news is so good that many Christians find it hard to believe, but it is true nonetheless. The incredible good news is that the redeemed will not be judged of their sins to determine whether they will spend eternity in heaven or hell.

The reason, of course, is that we have already been judged of our sins. That judgment took place at the Cross when all our sins — past, present, and future — were placed on Jesus, and He received the wrath which we deserve.

That's why the Bible teaches that if you are covered by the blood of Jesus, your sins have been forgiven and forgotten ([Isaiah 43:25](#) and [Hebrews 8:12](#)). They have been removed

from the presence of the Lord *"as far as the east is from the west"* ([Psalm 103:12-13](#)). As Corrie ten Boom used to say, "The Lord has placed our sins in the deepest part of the ocean, and He has put up a sign that says, 'No Fishing!'" (See [Micah 7:19](#).)

What does it mean for the Lord to "forget" our sins? It means they will never be held against the redeemed again with regard to the determination of their eternal destiny. That's why the writer of Hebrews could confidently assert that when Jesus appears a second time, He will come *"for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him"* ([Hebrews 9:28](#)).

So, if our sins have been forgotten, what will be the nature of our judgment when we, the redeemed, stand before the Lord? This brings us to the bad news that should cause us to tremble. We are going to be judged of our works, not to determine our eternal destiny, but to determine our degrees of reward. And in regard to our works, our shortcomings and failures will be remembered.

This news comes as a great shock to most Christians for most seem unaware that their works have any significance, and others do not realize that there will be degrees of reward.

Degrees of Reward

The concept of degrees of reward is clearly spelled out in the Scriptures. In [1 Corinthians 3:8](#) Paul says *"each will receive his own reward according to his labor."* He then says that our works will be tested by the Lord to determine their quality ([1 Corinthians 3:13](#)). He indicates that some will, in effect, be saved with their tail feathers smoking! This is because their works will not stand the test of the Lord's "fire" (His judgment). He thus concludes, *"If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire"* ([1 Corinthians 3:15](#)).

Some of the last words Jesus spoke on this earth had to do with degrees of reward. Those words are recorded in [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."*

The Judgment of Works

How will the Lord judge our works? What criteria will He use?

I believe the starting point will be the gifts of the Spirit which we received when we were born again. The Word teaches that at the moment of salvation every redeemed person receives at least one gift of the Spirit ([1 Corinthians 12:7](#) and [1 Peter 4:10](#)). Some receive more than one gift, and some may receive additional gifts as they develop in the Lord, particularly if they are good stewards of their initial gifts ([Matthew 25:14-30](#)).

I believe the Lord will ask each one of us how we used the gifts He gave us for the advancement of His kingdom. And then I believe He will test our works in terms of quantity, quality, and motive.

What about you? Do you know what gifts you have been given by the Spirit? Are you using them to advance the kingdom? And are your motives pure? Are you serving the Lord in the power of His Spirit for the purpose of His glory?

In the final part of this study on Psalm 2, I'll look at the significance of the believer's call to commitment.

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