

**Question: If God forgives our sins, then why will our sins be remembered at the judgment?**

**Answer:** It's critical to understand that the judgment of believers by Christ is a judgment of our works, not our sins. In 1 Cor 3:13 Paul says of each believer, "His work will be shown for what it is" (NIV) and God's judgment fire "will test the quality of each man's work." The Bible is clear that our sins are totally forgiven when we believe in Christ, and we stand justified (i.e., declared not guilty) in Him. There's no condemnation for the Christian (Rom 8:1). Nevertheless, our laying up of precious stones on the foundation of Christ can apparently be replaced or prevented by sins we've committed as well as by righteous acts we've failed to do. Therefore, a believer's sins contribute directly to his being able to "suffer loss" (1 Cor 3:15). Through this loss of reward the believer is considered to be receiving his "due" for his bad works (2 Cor 5:10). This is not a punishment for sins, but the withholding of rewards for works not done, that should have been.

The "bad" that Paul refers to in 2 Cor 5:10 most likely includes sin and unfaithfulness. Paul uses the Greek word *phaulos*, which refers to "evil" when it is contrasted with "good" (John 3:20; 5:29; Rom 9:11; Titus 2:8; Jas 3:16). However, this has absolutely no bearing on our salvation; rather, it relates to our service. Apparently, the way that Christ will judge our stewardship is by taking into account our faithfulness or lack thereof. So, while the sins that you and I have committed will never come up as they pertain to our salvation, they will likely be included in the evaluation of our stewardship.