

THE BEMA THE JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER AS A STEWARD

We have looked at the judgment of the believer's sin and self. This third judgment will deal with the believer's service as a Christian, for their Lord and Savior. It is not a judgment that determines salvation. It will determine the gain of or loss of rewards.

1. SUBJECTS: the believer as to their works...**not** their salvation
 - a. Believer's only: 2 Corinthians 5: notice the number of times the plural pronoun "we" is employed by Paul in this chapter
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:1 is addressed to "the church of God...all the saints..."

NOTE: remember, all of our sins, as believer's, were judged on Christ at Calvary (Isaiah 53: 6; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:7)

2. PLACE OF THE JUDGMENT:

- a. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 seems to indicate judgment will take place somewhere in the Heaven's immediately following the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4) and just before the arrival in Heaven, Revelation 4:1. Notice that the saints are clothed in "white raiment; and they had on their heads, crowns of gold." Revelation 4:4, 9-11.
- b. 2 Corinthians 5:10 refers to the place as "the judgment seat of Christ" known as the "bema" which is a raised stand used by judges to review those running the race. In order to be in the race, one had to be a citizen. Those in the race were to be brought before the "bema" in order to receive their reward.
- c. 2 Corinthians 5:11 reminds us this is a place of judgment and that **ONLY** believers stand at this judgment. Salvation is not decided here.

NOTE: FYI: in studying the judgments, pay close attention to the different locations of the different judgments: 2 Corinthians 5; Matthew 25; Revelation 20

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE JUDGMENT:

- a. **IS NOT** to determine salvation, for every man's destiny is determined before leaving Earth
- b. **IS NOT** to punish believers for their sins after their salvation
1 John 1:7
- c. **IS** to determine rewards or loss of rewards for service rendered or not rendered for the Lord while on Earth. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15
- d. See: Matthew 16:27 A general statement that applies everyone.

NOTE: Among many things, Scriptures refer to the believer as a "steward" (1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10). It has been said that a steward is "someone that possess all things but owns nothing." They are accountable to someone else for the manner in

which they have used what has been given to them to manage. They are accountable to their “master.”

4. THE POSSIBILITIES OF THIS JUDGMENT

A. **GAIN** for those who have used precious stones in their building

NOTE: The Scriptures teach that a number of crowns are available to followers of Christ.

1. The Crown of Life: James 1:12; Revelation 2:10
(may refer to a martyr’s crown and to those faithfully enduring under great testing)
2. The Crown of Glory: 1 Peter 2:2-4
(may refer to a crown given to faithful under-shepherds of the Great Shepherd)
3. The Crown of Righteousness: 2 Timothy 4:8
(may refer to a crown for all those who love His appearing)
4. The Crown of Rejoicing: 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; Philippians 4:1
(may refer to a crown for soul winners)
5. The Crown Incorruptible: 1 Corinthians 9:25-27
(may refer to a crown given to those who “keep under their body:” meaning they are not diverted from their Master’s work by the things of this temporary world)

B. **LOSS** for those who have used perishable material in their building

1. 2 John 8 clearly teaches the possibility of losing a full reward
2. 1 John 2:28 clearly teaches the possibility of being ashamed at Christ’s coming
3. 1 Corinthians 3 clearly teaches that the believer will have some things that God can praise and some things that God cannot praise
4. 1 Corinthians 3:15 carries the idea of loss in relation to forfeiture of reward that could have been possessed
5. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 states Paul’s concern about being disapproved or unworthy to receive a reward

TIME OF THIS JUDGMENT: future: immediately following the rapture

NOTE: There will be no future judgment of the believer for his sins as crimes against God, for they have already been judged at Calvary, in Christ. Even our present day judicial system understands the principle of double jeopardy. Once and for all, our sin has been dealt with in the death of Christ.

Tom Price, 2018