

Bema Seat – A Judgment Seat for Christians

The Bema Seat is a Judgment for Christians Only

The **Bema Seat** (see 2 Cor. 5:10), takes its name using imagery from Paul's day. During the ancient Olympics, the judge sat along the finish line. His purpose was not to determine whether or not the participants actually ran the race. If they got that far, then they completed the course. But the Judge at the Bema seat determined how they came in, first, second, and so on, and he handed out the rewards. That is the imagery that the Bible gives us of the Believer's Judgment. It is at the Judgment Seat of Life that Christ metes out the rewards not the punishments that we earn in life.

The punishments He has already dealt with by shedding his Blood on the Cross for all those who were willing to trust in Him. Your rewards are determined according to your works. That is the only place in which your works have any bearing on your eternity. Works won't save you. Only faith in Christ's completed Work on your behalf will. But your works do have a bearing as to your rewards.

"But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;" "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10b-15)

Your gold, silver and precious stones are works done with the right motive and by dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

Rewards for Christians: The city of Corinth was famous for the Isthmian Games, a festival of athletic contests and events similar to Olympic games. At the end of each contest or event, the athletes would appear before a large, ornately decorated platform called the bema. On this platform, the emperor sat on the judgment seat and gave out rewards to the victorious athletes for their years of dedicated and disciplined training and their perseverance and endurance in the heat of competition and battle.

(In 2 Corinthians), Paul gives the Corinthians a similar image of the bema in relation to the future judgment of Christians when he states,

2 Corinthians 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat (bemas or bema), 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."

Paul is saying that all Christians will stand before the bema seat of Christ. At the bema seat, Jesus Christ will bring to light every deed, good or bad that each believer has done on earth since

he or she became a Christian. Every Christian will be rewarded based on his words, deeds, and faithfulness (1 Cor. 3:11-14).