

DOCTRINE OF THE BEMA SEAT

- I.** Vocabulary: **bēma** – bema; noun; used 12x; literally a step or pace, a foot length, a raised place that is mounted by steps, a raised platform used of the official place of a judge.
- II.** Definition and description:
- A.** The term bema is used generally of an elevated platform from which a ruler could review the games, make speeches, or render judicial decisions. Act.12:21; 18:12,16,17; 25:6,10,17
 - B.** It is used of the place where Pilate judged Jesus. Mat.27:19; Joh.19:13
 - C.** Technically, theologically it is used of the place where Jesus Christ will evaluate the Ph₂ production of believers and distribute the appropriate rewards.
- II.** The purpose of the Bema seat:
- A.** Works or deeds, which are performed in time, are the basis for the reward of believers and punishment of unbelievers alike. Rom.2:6; 2Cor.5:10; 2Tim.4:14; Rev.2:23; 20:12-13
 - B.** The purpose of the Bema seat is to evaluate the Ph₂ production of believers that live in the Church Age and to reward Divine good production in time. 1Cor.3:8,14; Rev.22:12
 - C.** The judgment and evaluation is not for sins, which were judged in Jesus Christ and will not be an issue per se according to the law of double jeopardy. 1Joh.2:1-2; 1Pet.3:18 cp. Heb.9:26b-28
 - D.** Sin is only an issue in the fact that time spent out of fellowship by the believer in time voids any possibility for the believer priest to produce Divine good production.
 - E.** Jesus taught this principle clearly in Joh.15:4.
 - F.** The standard by which the believer's works will be evaluated is the standard of sound Bible doctrine. 1Cor.3:10-15
 - 1.** The building analogy recognizes that there is but one true foundation, faith in Christ. vs.11
 - 2.** The communicator is viewed as a builder that is building up believers. vs.12 cp. Eph.4:11-13
 - 3.** Two distinct types of materials are possible. vs.12
 - 4.** Gold silver, precious stones refer to the sound doctrines of the Word of God. Cp. Rev.3:18
 - 5.** Wood, hay and straw refer to teachings, viewpoints and systems of doctrine that are passed off as solid building material, but in reality are in contrast to the truth. Cp.Eph.4:14-15
 - 6.** The fire of judgment refers to the evaluation of one's actions by perfect righteousness. vs.13

7. Gold, silver and precious stones are purified by fire making them more valuable, while wood, hay and straw are totally consumed by fire.
 8. That which is left after the conflagration/bonfire will be rewarded with SG₃. vs.14
 9. Those that did not build with the proper materials will be delivered into heaven, but at the expense of loss of reward. vs.15
 10. Again, Jesus taught this same principle in the allegory of the vine and branches in Joh.15:1ff, esp. vs.6.
- G.** Jesus Christ, who is uniquely suited to judge, will be the One that evaluates His people. Rom.14:9-12; 2Tim.4:8
1. For this reason, believers are to abstain from evaluating the intent of one another's works in time and passing a sentence of blanket condemnation on their Ph₂. Mat.7:1; Rom.14:13; 1Cor.4:5
 2. This does not mean that there is no place for critiquing the actions of others, since on the other hand Jesus taught that there is a place for righteous judgment. Joh.7:24
 3. While the believer can discern that which is construed as being human good, legalism, traditions of men, sin, etc., through the truth of BD, they are to avoid any attitude of judicial condemnation and leave that area to be taken care of between Christ and the other party. (*Judicial condemnation meaning to pass eternal sentencing on other believers as if you are God.*)
 4. In our critiquing of other's actions, even in their failings, we are to put the matter in God's hands as to their ultimate destiny.
 5. Rather than acting as another's judge in this regard, the believer is to separate him or herself from reversionist believers and their activities. Cp. 1Cor.5:1-13; 2Thess.3:6
- H.** This evaluation will result in shame for some believers and extreme exhilaration among other believers. 1Joh.2:28; 1Pet.4:13; as applied to 1Cor.3:15
- I.** The fact that the Lord will provide a perfect evaluation and the appropriate reward for applications of BD is the basis for exhortations to continue to apply. Eph.6:7-8; Col.3:23-24; 1Cor.15:58

III. The time and place of the Bema seat:

- A.** The Bema seat will occur immediately following the rapture. 1The.4:17
- B.** Jesus Christ states that He is coming quickly and that He has His rewards with Him. Isa.40:10; Rev.22:12
- C.** The awards will be distributed above the battlefield in the second heaven. 1The.4:17
- D.** The glorified and rewarded Church will then accompany the Lord back to the 3rd heaven and await the final seven years before returning with Him at the 2nd advent.

“For we must all appear before the Bema seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” 2Cor.5:10