

The Bema Seat of Christ-Its Nature and Necessity-Pt. 1

Let's get a perspective on the believer's 3-fold judgment:

**We were judged as sinners in the past-at the cross-

**We are being judged as sons in the present Christians-

**We will be "judged" as servants in the future-as to our consecration-
(as we shall see, it is our "work" that shall be examined)

Let's begin with a consideration of

I. The _____ of the Bema Seat-

The title itself, "judgment seat of Christ," seems to imply connotations of a judgment-like setting or courtroom where a believer's sins will be judged and punished. Some people believe that Jesus Christ, the Judge, will play a video of the sins of every believer's life for all believers to see and then judge and punish us for those sins.

In contrast, a study of the Greek language behind the English translation reveals the possibility that the judgment seat of Christ will actually be a place of reward and ceremony similar to the award ceremonies after athletic competitions, such as the Olympic Games, where the athletes receive their rewards for winning a contest. In this view, Christians will be rewarded for their godly service. This view emphasizes the honor, dignity of a winning athlete, rather than the sorrow of the losers.

The word "Bema" is found in both these verses, translated "judgment seat." It refers to _____ on which was a seat/chair that the king or governor sat upon to review athletic competition. At the conclusion of each event, the winner would approach the Bema to receive his reward for winning. It was not a place of _____ but of _____. The losers in the event weren't punished...they simply didn't obtain the winner's crown.

II. The _____ of the Bema Seat-

A. The _____ at the Bema Seat-II Cor. 5:10

Paul begins v.10 with the phrase, "We must all appear." The pronoun "we" includes all of the New Testament saints from the Day of Pentecost to the Rapture, that is, the saints of the church age.

Paul goes on to say that these Christians "must appear." The word "appear" is an important term in this passage. A simple rendering of the word would indicate nothing more than showing up. However, the verb used here = "made visible, clear, manifest, or known."

Putting this all together, "we must all appear" says that the saints of the New Testament have an appointment set for them to have something revealed.

B. The _____ of the Bema Seat-

The term “judgment seat” comes from the Greek word, bema, and means “a raised place or platform, reached by steps.”

The word is used 12x in the NT and comes from the root word meaning “_____,” and from another root word meaning “to _____, to _____;” primarily “a _____, a _____.”

In ancient Greek culture the term referred both to a seat of observation and to an elevated platform for awarding athletes who won athletic events. The word translated “bema” describes a stand on which the judges stood to observe and evaluate the actions of the contestants. If any athlete broke a rule...he missed the prize (victor’s wreath-stephanos) regardless of the place he finished in the race or contest. Likewise, when an event was completed, the contestants stood before the bema to hear the judges’ announcement of the results, and to receive such reward as might properly be theirs.

C. The _____ of the Bema Seat-

First, “_____ _____” focuses on the individual nature of this appearance.

Second, a compensation is to occur. The verb for “receive” here is = “to _____ _____” or “to receive what is due.”

The phrase “according to that/what he has done” gives further insight into the nature of how the compensation will occur. The verb which is translated “done,” is in the aorist tense and has the basic meaning “to _____, _____.”

This interpretation is further supported by the grammar that follows since the phrase “whether it” switches back to the singular form. Paul is saying that what is done in the lifetime of each individual Christian is summed up and viewed in total. Paul then gives “deeds” a further breakdown by classifying them as either “good or bad.”

The word “good” Paul chose means “good and useful, especially _____ _____ in relation to God, Who is perfect.”

The word “_____” Paul used means “_____ or _____.” This is not a time when our sins are judged, because Christ judged all our sins at the cross. We will not be judged for what has already been judged, any more than the losers in an athletic event are judged for having not won!!

In summary, II Corinthians 5:10 teaches that the saints of the New Testament have an unavoidable, necessary appointment set for them to appear before Jesus Christ on His Bema seat. When each Christian appears, Christ will reveal a sum total of the deeds that the individual has done so that these deeds can be recompensed, that is, the believer will receive back his due for his overall, total accomplishments based on whether they are good or worthless. **cf. I Cor. 3:12ff**

I’ve given you all the _____ you need on this subject. It must lead to our _____!