

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST/BEMA

JROC/Week 2 – BEMA OF CHRIST

August 29, 2021

Within the church today there is considerable confusion and debate regarding the judgment seat of Christ. And, because of the confusion and debate, this event in Scripture is often ignored or, when taught, it is misrepresented because of the term, “judgment.”

A common misconception regarding the judgment seat of Christ is that God will distribute a just retribution/a just PUNISHMENT for SINS in the believer’s life!!!??? NO!!! The judgment seat of Christ is NOT a place where God will PUNISH believers.

When we talk about judgment in the classic sense of its use in Scripture sin is focused upon. WHY? Because all the judgments that take place in the Bible are judgments upon sin EXCEPT the “judgment seat of Christ.”

The usage of the word “judgment” is NOT an accurate translation for this event. We need to remember that our sins have been COMPLETELY PAID FOR by JESUS at the cross!!!! AMEN! PERIOD! IT IS FINISHED!

The Gk. word for judgment seat is “Bema.” Bema means a raised platform where a Roman ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence. Paul used BEMA in his epistles in speaking of Greek athletic contests. “Bema” is taken from Isthmian games where contestants would compete for the prize under the careful scrutiny of judges who would make sure that every rule of the contest was obeyed (II Tim. 2:5 - *And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules*)

The victor of a given event in the games who participated according to the rules was called up to the platform and the laurel wreath was placed on his head as a symbol of victory (I Cor. 9:24-25). At the athletic games a perishable award was given to the victorious Grecian athlete. Believers appearing before Christ’s Bema will receive imperishable rewards/crowns.

The Bema is a place where rewards will be given or lost depending on how one has used his or her life for the Lord after coming to faith in Jesus. After? CONSIDER: our lives before coming to faith in Jesus were NOT empowered by the Holy Spirit. At the BEMA we will give an account for our lives...as we lived for the Lord...AFTER we placed our trust in Jesus.

The judgment seat of Christ...the BEMA in the future does NOT determine our salvation. CONSIDER: where will we be at the BEMA? Before Jesus in heaven! We’ve entered heaven! To believers Paul said, “Absent from the body, present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:8).

This time of rewards or LOSS of rewards following our giving an account of what we’ve done – how we’ve lived our lives for the Lord - will NOT be a time of punishment where believers are judged for their sins. When we think of the possibility of the loss of

rewards...CONSIDER: WE ARE GOING TO BE FACE-TO-FACE with Jesus, HOW can we be fearful or depressed? Think of the love He will pour out on us at that time!

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Think of our time now – when we KNOW we have disappointed Him – and continue to disappoint Him many times. But through Jesus' mercy and grace, He overwhelms us with His love. How much more when we stand before Him in heaven?

Each judgment in Scripture has its own time and its own place/location.

Judgment of the Nations (Gentiles)

Recorded in the book of Isaiah.

Judgment of Sin

Approx. 30 AD, on earth, at Golgotha/Calvary – on the cross. The judgment that we deserved fell upon Jesus as He bore our sins.

Jesus' death on the cross defeated sin and death.

I Cor. 15:54b-57 - *Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom. 8:1 - *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

John 3:18 - *He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 5:24 - *Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*

I Cor. 11:32 - *But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

BEMA of Christ

The account of the believer's works before Jesus takes place in heaven, before the Bema of Christ, following the rapture – after we have been resurrected, having received our glorified bodies!!

Revelation Prologue:

Revelation 1:1 - *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants (believers) —things which must shortly (quickly, speedily, without delay) take place.*

Revelation 22:12 - *...behold, I am coming quickly (reiterated) (quickly, speedily, without delay), and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.*

At the rapture – Jesus does not come to earth. We meet the Lord in the air...and He will take us to be with Him – in heaven.

John 14: 2-3 - *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

I Thess. 4:16-18 – *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the*

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clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (in heaven). ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Heb. 11:6 - *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Scripture teaching the BEMA of Christ

I Cor. 3:11-15

I Cor. 9:24-27

II Cor. 5:9-10

I John 2:28

Rev. 3:11

Judgment of Living Israel

Israel's judgment is recorded in Ezekiel 20:33-44 (READ). When Jesus returns at His physical Second Coming to earth He will judge those from the nation of Israel who have survived the tribulation and God will purge the rebels and He will restore the righteous.

Judgment of those in Israel not saved is noted in the parable of the ten virgins and the ten talents (Matt. 25:1-30).

The righteous of Israel who have come to faith in Jesus will enter the Kingdom of God/the Millennial Kingdom.

The unrighteous of Israel will be purged from the righteous and sent away (Matt. 25:30).

Judgment of the Living Nations (Gentiles)

Joel 3:1-3 (READ)

Matthew 25:31-46 (READ)

This will occur when Jesus returns at His physical Second Coming to earth, He will separate those who are within the Gentile nations who have survived the tribulation. The righteous of the living nations will go into the Millennial Kingdom. The “goats” on the left will NOT go into the Millennial Kingdom. NOTE: only believers from Israel and from among the Gentile nations go into the Millennial Kingdom.

Final Judgment of Satan

After the Millennial Kingdom, when Satan is released and leads the second War of Gog and Magog on earth, Satan, *who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are* (Rev. 20:10).

Great White Throne

Rev. 20:11-15 (READ)

After the heaven and earth pass away following Satan's being cast into the lake of fire. WHEN? After the heaven and earth pass away following Satan's being cast into the lake of fire.

WHERE? Somewhere in space/a vacuum/where there was NO PLACE for them!

The dead appear to be gathered all together before God (Jesus Who is the Judge [Jn. 5:22]).

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The books were opened. AND, another book was opened – the Book of Life.

The dead in this BLEAK, STARK setting were judged according to their works – by the things written in the books.

There is a resurrection of this “dead” in v. 13 – the sea (to people at that time – the deepest depths. Death and Hades delivered up the dead.

The first resurrection of which Jesus, those OT saints in the grave at Jesus' crucifixion were raised following His resurrection (Matt. 27:50-53), the Church, the OT saints, and the tribulation saints are a part (Dan. 12:1-3; Rev. 20:4-6)

Before we read of the GWT, we read...

Rev. 20:4-6 - *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection (Jesus' resurrection of the just – He is our first fruits – OT saints, tribulation saints, the Church already resurrected at the rapture) ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death (death – separation; second death – ETERNALLY SEPARATED FROM GOD) *has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.**

And then we read of Satan's rebellion at the end of the Millennium – second war of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:7-10). Afterwards – II Pet. 3:10-11 – the Day of the LORD – the day of JUDGMENT!

What is the first resurrection? What is the second death?

Daniel 12:2 summarizes the two very different fates facing mankind: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Everyone will be raised from the dead, but not everyone will share

the same destiny. The New Testament reveals the further detail of separate resurrections for the just and the unjust.

Revelation 20:4-6 mentions a "first resurrection" and identifies those involved as "blessed and holy." The second death (the lake of fire, Revelation 20:14) has no power over these individuals. The first resurrection, then, is the raising of all believers. It corresponds with Jesus' teaching of the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14) and the "resurrection of life" (John 5:29).