

DOCTRINE OF THE BEMA SEAT

I. Vocabulary.

- A. bema, n.noun, 12X, lit. a step or pace, a foot length, a raised place which 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. Acts 12:21, 18:12,16,17, 25:6,10, 17
- B. It is used of the place where Jesus was judged by Pilate. Matt. 27:19; Jn. 19:13
- C. Technically, theologically it is used of the place where Jesus Christ will evaluate the Ph 2 production of believers and distribute the appropriate rewards.

III. 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; IICor. 5:10; IITim. 4:14; Rev. 2:23, 20:12-13
- B. The purpose of the bema seat is to evaluate the Ph 2 production of believers who lived in the Church age and to reward divine good production in time. ICor. 3:8,14; Rev. 22:12
- C. The evaluation has nothing to do with sins, which were judged in Jesus Christ and will not be an issue according to the law of double jeopardy. IJn. 2:1-2
- D. The standard by which we will be evaluated is the standard of sound doctrine. ICor. 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 who is building believers up. vs 12
 - 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. Rev. 3:18
 - 5. Wood, hay and straw refer to teachings, viewpoints and systems of doctrine which pass as solid building material but are in contrast to the truth. vs 12
 - 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 will be rewarded with SG3. vs 14
 - 9. Those who did not build with the proper materials will be delivered into Heaven, but will suffer the loss of SG3. vs 15
- E. Jesus Christ, who is uniquely suited to judge, will be the One who evaluates His people. Rom. 14:9-12; IITim. 4:8
 - 1. For this reason believers are told to abstain from evaluating one another in time and passing a sentence of condemnation on the Ph 2 of other believers. Matt. 7:1;

Rom. 14:13; ICor. 4:5

2. Jesus Christ did not engage in judging people for rejection of the truth at the first advent. Jn. 12:47
- F. This evaluation will result in shame for some believers and extreme exhilaration among other believers. IJn. 2:28; IIPet. 4:13; ICor. 3:15
- G. The fact that the Lord will provide a perfect evaluation and the appropriate reward for applications of doctrine is the basis for exhortations to continue to apply. Eph. 6:7-8; Col. 3:23-24; ICor. 15:58

IV. The time and place of the bema seat.

- A. The bema seat will occur immediately following the rapture. IThess. 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. IThess. 4:17
- D. The glorified and rewarded Church will then accompany the Lord back to Heaven and await the final seven years before returning with Him at the second advent.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or worthless.

IICor. 5:10