

BONUS CONTENT 15 - The BEMA Seat

Dr David Jeremiah says, "Throughout God's word, we are told there are rewards that will be given to us in heaven and that we should endeavor to earn them by our works here on earth. We should be doing all within our ability to extend the kingdom of God and to make a difference for Christ in our world."

The Judgement Seat of Christ , referred to as THE BEMA SEAT of Christ is where Christ will reward us for serving Him with great and eternal rewards.

David Jeremiah continues to say, "You shouldn't be embarrassed to be ambitious and store up for yourself treasures in heaven."

- Rewards are something I think a lot of us probably don't think about often as many followers of Jesus just want to please God out of gratitude and love.
- Jesus said that if you love me then you will obey me. (**John 14:15**)
 - We see this in the heart of God's people as they weren't serving Jesus for the rewards but rather because of worship and response to God. **Matt 25:35-40**

Eternal rewards are a good thing to ponder and talk about because the bible brings it up frequently.

- Jesus told believers that we are to store up treasures in heaven.(**Matt 6:19-21**)
- The Bible teaches us about rewards and that what we do here on this earth for Jesus matters.
 - There is an old saying by Poet CT Studd "*Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last*"
- The bible teaches that we are STEWARDS of our time, talents and treasures and how we live for Jesus here and now matters for all eternity and we will all give an account to God.
- God has a purpose for us here on earth to bring Him glory and to walk worthy of the calling God has for us here on earth.(**Eph 4:1**).
- When we live for God we will be rewarded for this service and worship unto the Lord!

"The concept of rewards is found in the Old Testament (**Psalm 58:11; 62:12**), and Jesus opens the New Testament era by citing rewards for those persecuted for the sake of righteousness (**Matthew 5:11-12**). And at the end of the Bible, in **Revelation 22:12**, we find Jesus saying, "And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with Me." Rewards are mentioned in many other places in the new testament." (**Mark 9:41; 10:29-30; Luke 18:29-30; 1 Cor 3:14; Col 3:24; Hebs 6:10-12**).' -David Jeremiah

- The bible even exhorts us to not give up and to keep going because we will be rewarded
Gal 6:9 *And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.*

"Every day, God gives us opportunities to please him. Every day God gives us opportunities to make a difference in the kingdom. And Scripture says that we are stewards of that which God entrusted to us." DJ

In our study in Revelation (4-5) where I believe the church is raptured and brought up into heaven...This is where we meet Jesus face to face...HEAVEN. We may not know the exact timing of when we will be rewarded, but we do know that Jesus will reward us personally so I think when we are caught up to heaven this will take place.

The Judgement Seat of Christ (THE BEMA SEAT OF CHIRST) is different from the Great White Throne Judgement (found in Rev 20:11-15)

- I believe that many people confuse these two judgements of Christ.

"Almost everyone has at least a vague concept of about a future judgment where everyone will stand before God. But few Christians realize that the Bible teaches there will be not just one but two different days of judgements!" DJ

FIRST - THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST:

- The expression "judgment seat" is the translation of one little Greek word: BEMA.
- This word 'BEMA' is an interesting term because it means a "raised platform".

"According to one historian, 'In Grecian games in Athens, the old arena contained a raised platform to which the president or umpire of the arena sat. From here he rewarded all the contestants; and here he rewarded all winners. It was called the 'BEMA' or 'reward seat'..."

From this exalted platform, the judges of the Greek Olympics games reviewed the preparation, training, and performance of each of the contestants and rewarded the winners who had kept the rules. They would be there for more than a week as the participants would come and go through all the competitions. The athletes would be judged not just as to whether or not they won the competition but also if they had participated according to the rules that have been set down for the competition itself." DJ

Tony Evans says about the JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, "the purpose of Christ's judgment seat is to judge or evaluate us for the way we live our Christian lives, for the quality of our service. The question here is not whether you are a Christian, but what kind of Christian you are... So the purpose of the judgment seat is to evaluate our fitness for eternal rewards."

Jon Courson said about the JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST, "Every Christian will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ not to be judged for sin, but to be given rewards for that which was done for the Lord's glory in obedience to him."

"Please note that the purpose of this judgment is not to pronounce condemnation. No one judged at this court will be condemned. All who are present at this court will already be followers of Christ. They will just have been raised in their resurrection bodies to stand at the judgment seat as believers before the God of heaven. The purpose of this first judgment is for Christ to assess every believer's earthly works to determine what rewards are to be received." DJ

- Realizing we receive rewards and don't have to give an account for our sins is the good news of the gospel!
- Paul would refer to this BEMA seat or judgement in passages like **2 Cor 5:10; Rom 14:10-12 & 1 Cor 3:11-15**
 - (2 Cor 5 is in the context of speaking to believers and explaining our heavenly home 5:1)...
2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the **judgment seat of Christ**, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

This judgement is for Christians...and it is not for determining where we will spend eternity BUT rather for determining our rewards.

"The truth is that the only judgment a believer in Jesus Christ will ever be subject to is the judgment of the cross. We were judged when Jesus died on the cross. We were in Christ on the cross when the Father poured out His wrath upon Him for sin. The sin was not His, but ours. And Jesus took all of our punishment for us. When He was judged for our sin, our sin was forever and finally judged. So if you confessed and accepted Jesus as Lord, you will never again face the judgment for your sin from God." DJ

- This is important to know and understand BECAUSE we need to know that we are not judged by our sins thus we need not be afraid to meet Jesus face to face.
- Our salvation is not based on our works, but our salvation is secured in Christ by the grace of God. (**Eph 2:8-10**)
- Our rewards and honor are from God as He has not only saved us but He gives us the purpose, empowerment, and blessings to we walk in His will.

At the judgment seat of Christ, we will be judged, but judged for blessings and reward. What a good and gracious God we serve! DJ

- We can look forward to this judgment as all sin, shame, guilt and condemnation are gone on the cross and here we will receive all the spiritual blessings in Christ. **Eph 1:3**

Rom 14:10-12 gives us some more insight: Judgment is a personal one!

*10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before **the judgment seat of God**; 11 for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

"This event is not a community affair. This is not a church gathering. This judgment is a one on one interview with the son of the living God, and each of us will have our own personal appointment." DJ
2 Tim 4:7-8 *7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*

- Paul ran His race and obeyed His calling and we are to do the same!

"At the judgment seat, you will only be held accountable for what you have been given.... The judgment seat is an individual deal. You and I will give an account to Christ for ourselves, not for our neighbors." Tony Evans

1 Cor 9:24-27 *24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

- Paul was personally running his race and the bible teaches us we should run our own race.
 - It is actually UNWISE to compare one another's callings. (**2 Cor 10:12**)
 - We are to focus on our own individual calling and do it unto the Lord. (**1 Peter 4:10-11**)
 - **Eph 5:15** *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise.*

"If athletes are willing to exercise discipline and self-control to win the prize, how much more should we be willing to exercise discipline in our Christian lives? Olympic gold medals won't make it to heaven, but we will gain eternal reward for every active service done in Jesus's name and for His glory. Being disciplined in your Christian life doesn't mean being straitlaced, sober, and sad. It means measuring everything you do by the goal of pleasing Christ. Discipline means asking yourself, 'Is what I am doing now going to help me win my Christian race later?'" Tony Evans

Ask God for help in practicing the spiritual disciplines through obedience and empowerment by the Holy Spirit to enable us to live for God and store up treasures in heaven. (Mat 6:20)

- Take seriously the sin and distractions that hinder us from the calling and will of God.
Heb 12:1-2 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,*
- Paul would tell Timothy (his spiritual son) in **1 Tim 4:7a-8** *Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*
- Other verses that touch on our individual calling and running our own race: (**Phil 3:13-14; Acts 20:24; 1 Tim 6:12; Eph 6:8**)
- God's calling and rewards have purpose and He will receive the Glory as He wants to reward you!

"This is not a judicial, court like event. Instead the picture painted here is of an athletic event where the participants are being rewarded by a judge who is elevated up on a high platform, viewing everything from broad perspective." DJ

People will get different rewards depending on their personal obedience and faithfulness!

1 Cor 3:11-15 *11 For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

John Courson says, "You don't have to give an account for the person in front of you or behind you. Every one of us will give an account of ourselves, not of our sins, but of what we did with the possessions the Lord gave us materially, the opportunities he opened for us in ministry, and the gifts he imbedded in us spiritually. All of these will pass through the fire and whatever comes out will be all that matters."

Tony Evans said about this, "For many believers, the judgment seat of Christ is going to be a time of profound joy and delight. They will be lavishly rewarded for their faithfulness. But for others, the evaluation at the Bema will produce shame, tears, and pain as they see their life's work burned up in their presence. The things we do out of sincerity and love for Christ will stand the test and be rewarded, all the stuff we do to impress others will burst into flames before our eyes."

- **1 John 2:28** tells us we should be living for Jesus out of worship, so we won't feel ashamed when He returns. **1 Jo 2:28** *28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.*
 - Abiding and walking in God's will bears fruit and takes away our shame.
 - This shame is referring to the opportunities that we missed for loving and serving to expand the kingdom in the life we live here on earth.
- Some people have the wrong idea that this judgement is about all our sin committed since we become Christians. We don't have to pay God back, but we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice out of love. **Rom 12:1**

David Jeremiah says about this: " Just consider **Romans 8:1**, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ.' It is ridiculous to think that somehow the salvation of a Christian is made up of everything Jesus did for you before you believed in Him, and then after you believe in Him, you have to do everything for yourself. Nonsense! When Jesus died on the cross, how many of your sins were still in the future? All of them! So when Jesus died on the cross, what happened there was sufficient for all the sin that we would ever commit from that moment on -forevermore!"

Tony Evan gives a good illustration about how individuals will receive different rewards depending on their personal obedience and faithfulness...

"Here in America, we provide children with a free education in the public schools. But that doesn't mean every child is going to value and use that education equally. Some will work harder and be more faithful and committed students than others, and they will do better and be rewarded for it. In other words, to graduate with honor will take some hard work. Students don't have to earn their seat in the public-school classroom, but they are responsible for their efforts.

Too many Christians take grace for granted; they don't really appreciate what Christ did on the cross. They view their salvation as the key to heaven and little else, and so they are not serving in the kingdom the way they should."

"Rewards are simply Gods expression of joy in response to our love for him." David Jeremiah

As we are worshipping God out of love, we walk in those works that He has prepared us to do. (Eph 2:10) This is what the BEMA SEAT (judgement seat) of Christ is all about: REWARDS from God.

Comparing the BEMA SEAT to the GREAT WHITE THRONE Judgment:

- The great white throne judgment (found in **Rev 20:11-15**) is the final sentence for those who have rejected Christ—they will face an eternity without God.
Rev 20:15 *And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.*

“This is the final judgment in God’s justice plan for the inhabitants of planet earth. There will be no grading on a curve, and the accused will be judged by the black and white standard of absolute truth and justice. There they will face the consequences of rejecting Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.” DJ

- The Apostle John says in **John 3:36** *Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.* This judgement is about whether people have received OR rejected Christ...if their names are in the book of life - AND your name is written in the book of life when you turn to Jesus and repent! **John 3:16, John 1:12**

“Your goal in life should be to make certain that you have chosen the right path and to avoid being present at the great white throne. You don't want to be there, because if you are, it is too late. There is no plan for you to have a second chance after that. DJ

This is known as the SECOND DEATH!

Rev 20:14 *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.*

“At the final judgment, sinners will finally see the awfulness of their sin because it will be revealed in the blazing light of God's justice.” Tony Evans

- This is why it is so important for us to preach the gospel and personally respond to the Gospel.
- We have eternal life and overcome by our faith in Christ (**1 John 5:4-5**)
- **Rev 2:11** *He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'*
- There is no fear of death when we trust in Jesus.

SO HOPEFULLY BY NOW YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST (BEMA) and THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT.

Here are few differences: (5)

BEMA SEAT — Is for believers in heaven

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE — Is for unbelievers and they are sent to the lake of fire

BEMA SEAT — Is full of rewards for obedience

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE — Is full of judgement for sin

BEMA SEAT — has to do about obedience and faithfulness

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE — has to do with salvation and faith in Jesus

BEMA SEAT — will take place when believers meet Jesus before the millennium

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE — will take place when unbelievers meet Jesus after the millennium

BEMA SEAT — is full of joy and commendation

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE — is full of pain and condemnation

I would encourage you as we close to LIVE FOR JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM

- It will be worth it as our rewards from God will last for all eternity.

Heb 10:35-36 *Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*