

Doctrinal Studies
BEMA – Judgment Seat of Christ

[Romans 14:10](#) and [2 Cor. 5:10](#) speak of the judgment seat (*Bema*).

1. Bema is used in the gospel and Acts of a raised platform where a Roman magistrate or ruler sat to make decisions and pass sentence ([Matt. 27:19](#); [John 19:13](#))
2. Bema is used in the epistles by Paul, because of his many allusions to the Greek athletic contests.
3. The word BEMA was taken from the Isthmian games where the contestants would compete for the prize. The winner (the victor) of a given event would be led by the judge to the platform called the BEMA and there the laurel wreath would be placed on his head as a symbol of victory ([I Cor. 9:24, 25](#)).
4. Paul is picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual contest. As the Grecian athlete appeared before the Bema to receive a perishable award so the Christian will appear before Christ's BEMA to receive an imperishable award.
5. The judge at the Bema bestowed rewards to the winners (victors); HE DID NOT WHIP THE LOSER, NOR DID HE SENTENCE HIM TO HARD LABOR.
6. The BEMA portrays a time of rewards or loss of rewards following examination but not a time where believers are judged for their sins. That would be inconsistent with the TOTAL WORK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.
7. GRACE covers Past, present and future sins ([Col. 2:13](#)).
8. No judgment presented in [John 3:18](#); [5:24](#); [6:37](#); [Rom. 5:1](#); [Rom. 8:1](#); [I Cor. 11:32](#))
9. BEMA-----WHEN?
This event will occur immediately following the rapture, when the church is caught up according to [I Thess. 4:13ff](#).
10. BEMA-----PLACE?
It will occur somewhere in the heavenlies in the presence of the Lord. [Rev. 4:2, 19:8](#) and [I Thess. 4:17](#)

Doctrinal Studies
BEMA – Judgment Seat of Christ (Continued)

11. Bema---Participants

- (1) All the passages dealing with the Bema or rewards are addressed to believers, or pertain to believers of the Church Age ([Rom. 14:10-12](#); [I Cor. 3:12ff](#); [2 Cor. 5:9ff](#); [I John 2:28](#); [I Thess. 2:19, 20](#); [I Tim. 6:18, 19](#); [Titus 2:12-14](#)).
- (2) All believers, regardless of their spiritual state, will be raptured and will stand before the Bema to give an account of their lives and will either receive rewards or loss of rewards.

12. Bema---The Examiner or Judge

- (1) None other than the Lord Jesus Christ
- (2) He is our examiner and rewarder.

13. Bema---Purpose

- (1) We are brought face to face with the practical aspects of life.
- (2) This is not a time of punishment
- (3) Here we have the importance of the elimination of Energy of the Flesh activity, Human good, Horizontal thinking—called *phaulos* – dung, worthless, no good, excrement, base, no value.
- (4) Reminded of the many times we failed to deal with our sinful ways--the many time we grieved and quenched the HS, the many times instead of operating by faith in God’s provisions, we operated in the energy of the flesh. We seek to handle life by our personal bag of human tricks. Self-centered desires-lack of true interest in that which is ETERNAL.
- (5) not punitive-not to judge believers of any kind, confessed or unconfessed.

14. Bema---Positive Aspects

- (1) To evaluate the quality of every believer’s work whether it is good or bad. Acceptable and thus worthy of rewards, or unacceptable, to be rejected and unworthy of rewards.
- (2) To destroy and remove unacceptable production-wood, hay, stubble. These include sinful deeds, thoughts, and motives, as well as the “good” done in the energy of the flesh.
- (3) To reward the believer for all the good portrayed by the symbol gold, silver and precious stones. These can stand the test of fire.