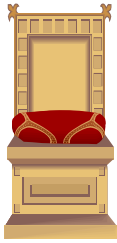


The Bema Seat

The Judgment Seat of Christ

JUDGMENT (Bema) SEAT OF CHRIST (Believers)



As we read in **2 Corinthians 5:10**, we (believers) shall all appear before our Lord at the “*Judgment Seat of Christ*” to be rewarded for our service in the name of Christ. The name is derived from the Greek term *bema*, which described the platform where Olympic athletes were awarded their medals.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 describes the process for determining our *reward*. Our works will be laid on the altar of Jesus Christ and tested by fire. Those works surviving the fire (gold, silver, costly stones) will be the basis/materials for our reward. Those works that are burned (wood, hay, straw) produce no reward. It is possible that we will lose (not receive) any rewards at all – but we retain our salvation (vs. 15).

This judgment is much the way the Olympics are judged. Every athlete competing has already made the team. They are there to have their *performance* judged and rewarded. The highest, best, fastest scores receive medals. Those who score low do not receive a medal, but there is no disqualification from the team. Many scholars believe that, in addition to whatever rewards we may receive from the Lord, there are 5 *crowns* which believers are eligible to receive at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Whether these crowns are literal or figurative is not important. What is important is the continuing theme of living for *the Day*, and not for today.



1. Crown of LIFE (James 1:12, Revelation 2:10). This is the reward for those who endure trials, tribulations, temptations/testing for the name of Christ - some even *to the point of death*. (also referred to as the Martyr’s crown, the Sufferer’s crown)

2. Crown of GLORY. (I Peter 5:2-4). This is the reward for pastors, elders and leaders of local congregations - *shepherds of the flock* - who serve faithfully and *not* for the money or the power. They shall receive this crown from the Chief Shepherd - Christ himself. (also referred to as the Pastor’s crown, the Elder’s crown, the Shepherd’s crown)

3. Crown of JOY. (I Thess. 2:19-20, Philippians 4:1). This is the crown for those who lead others to the Lord. In fact, the souls won are actually the crown. (also referred to as the crown of Rejoicing, the Soul Winner’s crown)

4. Crown of RIGHTEOUSNESS. (2 Timothy 4:8). This is the crown reserved for those who love, and long for, the coming (“appearing”) of the Lord.

5. The VICTOR’s Crown. (I Corinthians 9:25-27, 2 Timothy 2:5). This crown is the only one that uses an athletic analogy. It is for those who have kept their Christian lives pure - not distracted by worldly pleasures, not contaminated by sinful desires or harmful substances - as totally self disciplined as an athlete in training. (also referred to as the Incorruptible crown)