

The Reward Seat

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Paul shared in his first letter to the church members of the church in Corinth, ⁶ *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:* ⁷ *(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)* ⁸ *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* ⁹ *Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.* ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat (βῆμα - pronounced bay-ma) of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 (The King James Version).*

The "βῆμα" or "Reward Seat" was a familiar term to the apostle Paul. In the early days of the Olympics, a judge would be seated on an elevated seat called the *Bay-ma* or the Reward Seat. When the contest was completed, the winners would assemble in front of the Reward Seat where they would be recognized and where they would receive their crowns or rewards. The judge was not there to judge the character of the contestant. The judge was there to award the prizes. When the saved who have been caught up stand before Jesus Christ at the Reward Seat they will not be there to decide whether they will spend eternity on the New Earth with Christ or whether they will spend eternity in everlasting torments. That was decided when they asked Jesus Christ to pay their sin debt. They will be there to receive their crowns or their rewards based upon what they have done for Christ's kingdom after salvation. Of course, Paul tells us that there will be those who have never done anything for the Lord after they were saved. He said they would be like someone who was pulled out of a burning place after losing everything they own, with only the scorched clothes on their back. When you die you cannot take anything with you. That's why it is so important to send it ahead. You have only one life and it will soon be passed. Only what is done for Christ will last.

On the other hand, those who have not asked Jesus Christ to pay the sin debt that they owe will appear at a different judgment seat. The seat they will appear in front of is described in Revelation 20:11 as a μέγας (pronounced in English me-gas) θρόνος (pronounced in English

thron-os). In others words, the seat they will appear before is described in Revelation 20:11 as a great, white, stately seat or throne. They will not be there to decide whether they will spend eternity on the New Earth with Christ or whether they will spend eternity in everlasting torments. That was decided when they slipped into eternity without asking Jesus Christ to pay their sin debt by His death on the cross. Books will be opened at the White Throne Judgment that lists every sin they have committed during their lifetime that they must pay for. My advice for a person who has chosen to reject Christ's offer of salvation is to sin as little as possible since every sin they commit will make the debt that much greater and will call for a greater payment. Truly, it will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God.

At the moment of the Rapture, all of the saved (both those who have died and those who are still alive at the catching up) will be assembled before the Reward Seat in the Third Heaven. We will be told of the rewards we will enjoy through eternity. Everything that we have done since salvation has been recorded and our rewards will be based upon the life we have built and upon what we have done for Christ after salvation.

"¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames" 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 (The New International Version).

In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus Christ described what will happen when He returns. He tells us that first, He will reward His servants based on what they have done in His absence and then He will deal with those who did not want Him to rule over them. *"¹¹ While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. ¹² He said: "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.' ¹⁴ "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.' ¹⁵ "He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. ¹⁶ "The first one*

came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'¹⁷ " 'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'¹⁸ "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'¹⁹ "His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'²⁰ "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth.'²¹ I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow'²² "His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow?'²³ Why then didn't you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?'²⁴ "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.'²⁵ " 'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'²⁶ "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away.'²⁷ But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me' " Luke 19:11-27 (The New International Version).

"²⁴ Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever" 1st Corinthians 9:24-25 (The New International Version).

"¹⁰ ... For we shall all stand before the judgment seat (βῆμα - pronounced bay-ma) of God; ¹¹ for it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God." ¹² So (then) each of us shall give an account of himself (to God)" Romans 14:10b-12 (The New American Bible).

"⁶ Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord ⁷ (for we walk by faith, not by sight); ⁸ we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. ⁹ Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him. ¹⁰ For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat (βῆμα - pronounced bay-ma) of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. ¹¹ Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest unto God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences" 2 Corinthians 5:6-11 (American Standard Version).

"¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength. ¹⁴ Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account" *Philippians 4:12-17 (The New International Version).*

"¹⁹Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" *Matthew 6:19-21 (Revised Standard Version).*

"¹² "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates" *Revelation 22:12-14 (English Standard Version).*

"¹⁶ Then those who revered the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the LORD and thought on his name. ¹⁷ They shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, my special possession on the day when I act, and I will spare them as parents spare their children who serve them. ¹⁸ Then once more you shall see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him" *Malachi 3:16-18 (New Revised Standard Version).*

"¹⁰ God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" *Hebrews 6:10 (The New International Version).*

"⁸ Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book? ⁹ When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me. ¹⁰ In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word. ¹¹ In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me" *Psalms 56:8-11 (The King James Version).*

⁶ For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: ⁸ henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" 2 Timothy 4:6-8 (American Standard Version).

⁸ This is what you must write to the angel of the church in Smyrna: I am the first and the last. I died, but now I am alive! Listen to what I say. ⁹ I know how much you suffer and how poor you are, but you are rich. I also know the cruel things being said about you by people who claim to be Jews. But they are not really Jews. They are a group that belongs to Satan. ¹⁰ Don't worry about what you will suffer. The devil will throw some of you into jail, and you will be tested and made to suffer for ten days. But if you are faithful until you die, I will reward you with a glorious life. ¹¹ If you have ears, listen to what the Spirit says to the **churches**. Whoever wins the victory will not be hurt by the second death" Revelation 2:8-11 (Contemporary English Version).

¹⁸ And to the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, he that has his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet [are] like fine brass: ¹⁹ I know thy works, and love, and faith, and service, and thine endurance, and thy last works [to be] more than the first. ²⁰ But I have against thee that thou permittest the woman Jezebel, she who calls herself prophetess, and she teaches and leads astray my servants to commit fornication and eat of idol sacrifices. ²¹ And I gave her time that she should repent, and she will not repent of her fornication. ²² Behold, I cast her into a bed, and those that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and her children will I kill with death; and all the assemblies shall know that I am he that searches [the] reins and [the] hearts; and I will give to you each according to your works. ²⁴ But to you I say, the rest who [are] in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I do not cast upon you any other burden; ²⁵ but what ye have hold fast till I shall come. ²⁶ And he that overcomes, and he that keeps unto the end my works, to him will I give authority over the nations, ²⁷ and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod; as vessels of pottery are they broken in pieces, as I also have received from my Father; ²⁸ and I will give to him the morning star. ²⁹ He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies" Revelation 2:18-29 (Darby).

¹⁰ Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ I am coming

soon; hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.¹² He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches' " Revelation 3:10-13 (Revised Standard Version).

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" Hebrews 4:12-13 (English Standard Version).

⁹ And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with single mind and willing heart; for the LORD searches every mind, and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will abandon you forever" 1 Chronicles 28:9 (New Revised Standard Version).

⁴ The LORD is in his holy temple; he has his throne in heaven. He watches people everywhere and knows what they are doing.⁵ He examines the good and the wicked alike; the lawless he hates with all his heart" Psalm 11:4-5 (Today's English Version).

¹⁰ I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve" Jeremiah 17:10 (The New International Version).