

## Parson to Person

### ROMANS 14 PART 8

(Thoughts on The Judgment Seat of Christ—Continued—Part 4)

By taking the Biblical references of “*bema*” into account, it is obvious that no recipient in the first-century Church (or otherwise) would have interpreted “*bema*” to suggest a place of reward alone. All those in Athens, Corinth, Caesarea, etc. would have understood that the “*bema*” was a place of evaluation and pronouncement of right or wrong, failure or victory, good or bad, and as we have seen for Jesus, Herod Agrippa I, and Sosthenes, it was a place of punishment.

As I have said now several times, we should all remember that Jesus said, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life*” (John 5:24 NKJV).

The first reference of “*bema*” in the New Testament is found during the trial of Jesus before His crucifixion. In Matthew’s gospel narrative we read, “*While he [Pilate] was sitting on the judgment seat [bema], his wife sent to him, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him’*” (Matthew 27:19 NKJV).

At Pilate’s judgment seat, Jesus was under scrutiny. Although Pilate said, “*I find no fault in Him,*” it was there that Pilate commissioned Jesus to crucifixion. In this case I might suggest that Jesus appeared at a “*bema*” on our behalf, in our place.

The event is also recorded in John 19 where we learn that the trial took place in the “*praetorium*” where Pilate sat on his judgment seat (*bema*) and gave Jesus the penalty of death. The “*praetorium*” was adjacent to the “*pavement*” where Jesus was beaten, mocked, and led away to be crucified. It is also of note that when Jesus was condemned Barabbas was set free. Barabbas (Bar-Abba) means son of the father. Therefore, the believer is seen in Barabbas as set free through the condemnation of Jesus.

We can see that it is best to recognize that Jesus went to the *bema* for us, and those who trust Him for salvation were crucified with Him—in Him—and therefore identify in His judgment. Moreover, if we died with Him, we likewise partake of His resurrection and therefore righteousness (see Romans 6:5–11). The believer’s sin has been dealt with and will be remembered no more. We have been made the righteousness of God—in Him—and will not come unto judgment and have passed from death unto life where our sins and lawless deeds are/will be remembered no more.

The author to the Hebrews contends that Jesus, “*...after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God*” (Hebrews 1:3b NKJV), and that “*by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:14 NKJV). He said that “*the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,’ then He adds, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.’ Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin*” (Hebrews 10:15–18 NKJV). It is therefore my contention that His word, “*Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more,*” suggests just that (as mentioned above) God no longer remembers the believer’s sins or lawless deeds. He no longer remembers the “*bad*” of the believer nor does he recall or hold a believer in contempt for the “*good*” they omitted to do.

Paul told the Colossians that through the finished work of Christ at Calvary, Jesus had accomplished a work that could deliver every sinful man. Those who trust Jesus for salvation are set free from and forgiven of sin, reproach, and blame. He said, “*For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight*” (Colossians 1:19–22 NKJV). May I re-emphasize “*present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.*” Therefore, no believer need ever fear a future accusatory or condemnatory judgment wherein their “*bad*” is remembered or held against them—in any way.

As the Bride of Christ, believers will appear before Jesus as “*a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.*” We will stand before Him “*holy and without blemish.*”

Finally, the doxology found in the Book of Jude tells us that it is not we who keep ourselves, but it is God. Read, “*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen*” (Jude 24–25 NKJV).

I Love you all,  
Pastor Paul