

Roadmap to Eternity 4: The Bema Seat Judgment

Rapture Q&A

Isn't the restrainer of 2 Thess 2:6-9 the Holy Spirit, so doesn't this prove a pre-trib rapture?

How is time running out if there is still salvation during the Tribulation?

What about those who are cremated?

- Genesis 3:19 ...“for dust you are and to dust you will return”
- Revelation 20:13 “The sea gave up the dead that were in it, ...”

Do the OT Feasts present a prophetic timeline and the Rapture is next?

Feasts: “Gods appointed times”

Spring Feasts

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Passover | Lamb's sacrifice: Jesus on the cross |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | Remove the sin – Jesus in the tomb |
| 3. First Fruits | First of the Harvest – Jesus resurrection |
| 4. Pentecost | 2 Loaves – Holy Spirit falls to unite 2 peoples |

Pause between the Feasts: Harvest

Lev 23:22 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.'

Fall Feasts

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1. Trumpets | Gathering together – a holy convocation (Rapture)
Began on “new moon” – no exact day Matt 24:36 |
| 2. Atonement | Israel before God for judgment and cleansing (2 nd Coming) |
| 3. Tabernacles | God dwelling with His people (Millennial Kingdom) |

Isn't the rapture a new doctrine started in the 1800's?

Claim: John Nelson Darby was the first to publish a systematic system of ‘Dispensationalism’ in the 1830's which emphasizes a pre-trib position. This was later popularized in the 1909 *Scofield Reference Bible*.

Response: He was not the first to mention a rapture nor a pre-trib rapture. Examples:

- “When in the end the church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said ‘there shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning neither shall be’.”
 - Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, Ch 29, Section I, 180AD
- “For the wrath of God always strikes the obstinate people with seven plagues, ... and these shall be in the last time, when the Church shall have gone out of the midst”.
 - Victorinus, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John*, 295AD
- “All the saints and elect of God are gathered together before the tribulation, which is to come, and are taken to the Lord lest they see the confusion that is to overwhelm the world because of our sin.”

- Pseudo-Ephraem, *On the Last Times, the Antichrist, and the End of the World*, 370-600AD
- Others: Dolcino 1316, Increase Mathers 1670, Peter Jurieu 1687, Morgan Edwards 1744

Claim: Margaret MacDonald in Glasgow, 1830, had a prophetic vision of the rapture.

Response: This is a view proposed by Dave MacPherson. See attached article from Liberty University which disputes the claim and points to research that MacDonald actually wrote of a post-trib rapture view.

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1101&context=sor_fac_pubs

Ultimately – “who said what when” doesn’t matter, as scripture is our authority.

Why does it matter? I’m a pan-trib: it’ll all ‘pan out’ in the end!

Only if you fall in a ditch!

Pre-Tribulation ditch:

- No urgency, be happy! Unwilling to suffer, or fearful of suffering.
- The church is out of here so why do I need to study end times?
- Jesus could return by 1948 – so no need to invest in my 401K! (No legacy thinking)
- I can’t wait for my rapture to rescue me, rather than my Redeemer

Post-Tribulation ditch:

- I’m ready to suffer, so I’m more mature than the pre-tribbers (remember Peter???)
- The expectation to suffer becomes the preoccupation (gold, guns & goods)
- A focus on endurance rather than dependence
- Interpreting prophecy through the front page news

Pan-Trib ditch:

- Prophecy and end times isn’t important
- I don’t know how it all fits – so I won’t spend any time considering it

For our Eschatology: let’s be more concerned about the “why” than the “when”

We’re closer than any other church age to identify these mysteries!

It should cause us to “get ready”!

Rapture ready! And Reward ready!

The Bema Seat Judgment

This Judgment is NOT about sin!!

Col 2:14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Ps 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Eph 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

What are these good works?

They are not Salvation / Sin = > They are Stewardship and Service

Great White Throne = Salvation & Sin → Condemnation

Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema Seat) = Stewardship and Service → Commendation

Romans 14:10,12

... For we will all stand before God's judgment seat ...

2 Cor 5:8-10

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Judgment Seat: *Bema* G968 A raised platform mounted by steps. Used by officials, magistrates or judges in athletic contests. Judges evaluated who won the event – who gets what reward!

The “Bema Seat” Judgment = the commendation judgment based on stewardship/service

Good or Bad = this is not sin! This is referring to our stewardship / service. Was it good or bad? Was it the ‘good works’ of Eph 2:10, or was it something else: bad

Bad: *phaulos* – worthless, good-for-nothing.

The futility or corrupt quality of an action, attitude, or product.

This is not referring to sin, but rather an evaluation of the quality of a believer's service (which means ministry!) for the Kingdom.

phaulos Works: For my glory and my Kingdom Come = result in worthless / good for nothing

Good Works: For His glory and His Kingdom Come = result in eternal rewards

- Works done in faith and obedience
- Willingness to submit and serve God's will, not our own

- The works we perform by faith for the glory of Christ

1 Cor 3:11-15

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have—Jesus Christ. Anyone who builds on that foundation may use a variety of materials—gold, silver, jewels, wood, hay, or straw. But on the judgment day, fire will reveal **what kind of work** each builder has done. The **fire will show if a person's work has any value**. If the work survives, that builder will receive a reward. But if the work is burned up, the builder will suffer great loss. The builder will be saved, but like someone barely escaping through a wall of flames.

The fire does not test you! It tests your “Kind of Work”!

- Work What you did
- Motivation For whom you did it
- Stewardship How you used what He gave you (gifts, position, talents, finances)

Illustration: 4H Fair - - but with no envy!

Fire is often used in scripture as symbolizing ‘judgment’.

The fire burns the work! Not the person

The fire is something that tests / evaluates / determines the value / quality / worthiness.

- Gold, silver, jewels represent good works done with pure motives, proper conduct, and effective ministry to God's glory, which will endure the test and receive a reward. Things that are truly valuable / eternal are those Good works ordained by God and lead / empowered by His Spirit. **For His Kingdom by His Power for His Glory,!**
- Wood, hay, and straw represent humanly impressive or self-serving works that have no eternal value (worthless). Things we did out of our flesh nature for our own gain = things that will not withstand the testing fire. **For my kingdom by my power for my glory**

That's why we “suffer great loss”, because we had the opportunity and may have even done the work – but with the wrong heart motive. This does not impact our eternal salvation – as we are saved and escape as through a wall of flames – but the work we built on the foundation of Christ – does not endure for eternity. Loss of Reward and Rule in the coming Kingdom.

- Stewardship and Service for who?
 For my Kingdom and my glory = wood, hay, straw
 For His Kingdom and His glory = gold, silver, jewels

The work itself does not define it as good or bad – the motivation of the heart does!

Matthew 6:1

Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

- Vs 2 Offering “they have their reward in full”
- Vs 5 Prayer “they have their reward in full”
- Vs 16 Fasting “they have their reward in full”

We get to contribute to the “glory and honor and thanks” of Jesus!

Good Works leading to ‘Rewards’ listed in Scripture

An insight from The Sheep and Goat Judgment

Matt 25:37-39

“Lord when did we”:

- Feed you
- Give you drink
- Invite you in
- Clothe you
- Visit you

Some “when did we’s”

1) Rejoicing in persecution

Matt 5:11-12 NIV

“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:22-23 NIV

Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

2) Loving those who don’t love you

Matt 5:46 NIV

If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

Luke 6:35 NIV

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

3) Hospitality and Care for God's people

Matt 10:41-42 NLT

If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God, you will be given the same reward as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, you will be given a reward like theirs. And **if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded.**

Luke 14:12-14 NLT

Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. **Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.**"

4) Giving up possessions and family for Jesus

Matt 19:29 NLT

And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or property, for my sake, will receive a hundred times as much in return and will inherit eternal life.

5) Proclaiming the truth of the gospel in evangelism and discipleship

1 Cor 3:8 NIV

The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.

1 Cor 9:18 ESV

What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

6) Generosity and giving

1 Tim 6:17-19 NAS95

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. *Instruct them* to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

Matthew 6:2-4 NIV

So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But **when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.**

Matthew 6:19-20 ESV

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Luke 21:1-4

As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. “Truly I tell you,” he said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”

7) Sincere wholehearted labor

Ephesians 6:5-8 NIV

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

Col 3:22-24 NAS95

Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

8) Prayer and Fasting

Matthew 6:5-6 NIV

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:17-18 NIV

But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Hebrews 11 – The Hall of Faith Chapter

Hebrews 11:6 NIV

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11 lists numerous people and the good works they did for God “through faith”. These good works are examples of what we’ll see rewarded at the Bema Seat Judgment:

- Brought a more acceptable offering
- Walked with God
- Pleased God
- Built an ark
- Obeyed God's call
- Lived as a sojourner
- Looked for a city
- Believed God was faithful in His promise
- Considered God able
- Blessed his sons
- Gave instructions
- Didn't fear the King
- Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter
- Chose to be mistreated
- Considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than Egypt's treasures
- Kept the Passover
- Marched around the walls
- Administered justice
- Obtained promises
- Were made strong out of weakness
- Endured mocking and flogging
- Suffered chaining and imprisonment
- Were stoned, sawed in two, put to death by the sword
- Were tempted
- Went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, mistreated
- Wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground

Crowns listed in Scripture

Crown: *stephanos* – victors wreath, what is earned

Contrast with *diadema* – royal crown, rightful position of authority. Rev 19:11

1) Crown of Righteousness – those who eagerly wait for Christ's return

2 Tim 4:8 NIV

Now there is in store 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 longed for his appearing.

2) Crown of Life – those who faithfully endure trials, suffering, persecution & martyrdom

James 1:12 ESV

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

Rev 2:10 ESV

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

3) Crown of Glory – those who faithfully lead and care for God’s people

1 Peter 5:2-4 NIV

Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

4) Crown of Rejoicing – those who evangelize and make disciples

1 Thess 2:19 NLT

After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you!

Phil 4:1 NLT

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

5) Crown of Victory - those who exercise self-discipline and determination to serve the Lord

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 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. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Takeaway: There is the availability for all to gain rewards: prayer, fasting, giving, hospitality, discipleship, witnessing, self-discipline, enduring trials, longing for His return.

All of us can gain rewards every day!

When is the Bema Seat Judgment?

Revelation 4:1-4, 5, 9-11

Timing: The event after 4:1 “come up here”

24 Elders (*Presbyteros*)

- 24
 - 1 Chr 24 Priesthood is ordered into 24 courses = The church
 - 12 Tribes of Israel / 12 Apostles (Rev 21:12-14) = OT and NT Saints
- White Garments – symbols of redemption (Is 1:18, Ps 51:7, Rev 3:5, 7:13-14)
- Holy Spirit Rev 4:5
- Song Rev 5:9 **KJV** ‘You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood’
- Crowns
 - *Stephanos*: A crown of reward. What an athlete would receive at *Bema*
 - Material = Gold, Silver, Precious Jewels = **Rewards**
 - Thrones = **Rule**
 - Luke 19 Parable of the Minas = cities to rule
 - 2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, we will also reign with him ...
 - Commissioning Ceremony for the Millennial Kingdom!

Characteristic of a great Kingdom Ruler: Matthew 20:21, 26-27

21 “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”

26-27 ... Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave ...

The Motivation of the Heart

Revelation 4:9-11 “Give glory and honor and thanks”

We Get to contribute to the “glory and honor and thanks” of Jesus!

It’s an incentive system

Revelation 22:12

Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to reward each one as his work deserves.

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.

2 John 1:8

Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked so hard to achieve. Be diligent so that you receive your full reward.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 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. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Disqualified: *adokimos* – not standing the test, disapproved, rejected

The Encouragement: What you do matters! Examine your:

- Work – where are you prioritizing your time
- Motivation – whose glory are you living for
- Stewardship – am I being faithful in the small things I've been given

"I have but two days in my calendar: Today, and the Day I stand before Christ."

– M Luther