

## Session 6

### Review

Last time, we talked about the resurrection body. It is clear from scripture that the resurrected dead – starting with Jesus Himself – have a bodily form of some kind. However, our resurrection bodies must be radically different from our present physical bodies because they will not be subject to decline, death, and corruption. Finally, we briefly took up the question whether God requires any part of our original bodies or any other “raw materials” whatsoever from which to construct our new bodies. We pointed out that although God formed Adam’s body from the dust, God Himself also created the very dust out of nothingness by the power of His Word alone.

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### The Future Judgment of Believers

Before we launch into what Dr. Strauss has said in this chapter it will be helpful to keep in mind what our LORD Jesus Himself taught about His final judgment when He returns – the famous parable of the sheep and the goats.

***<sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup>Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup>And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. <sup>34</sup>Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. <sup>35</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup>And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup>And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup>And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’***

***<sup>41</sup>“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup>For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, <sup>43</sup>I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ <sup>44</sup>Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ <sup>45</sup>Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ <sup>46</sup>And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”** Matthew 25:31-46 [ESV]*

Keep this passage fresh in your mind during this session’s discussions. It bears strongly on some of the questions that will arise concerning this final judgment.

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To be perfectly honest, I became a little discouraged while preparing for our discussion of this chapter. While I have found most of Dr. Strauss' Biblical exposition of the topic of [Death and Afterward](#) to be quite sound, in this chapter I must say he strayed somewhat into the realm of eisegesis. In some instances, Dr. Strauss seems to have ignored the broader context of the passages he quoted for the sake of brevity, thus devaluing the passages somewhat. More importantly, in his discussion of the **βῆμα *bēma*** – judgment seat – of Christ, I found his exposition concerning the Greek word **βῆμα *bēma*** to be purposely misleading in order to point up his belief that only believers will be present for that judgment and only unbelievers will be present for the Great White Throne judgment. This disturbed me greatly, but I debated with myself for quite a while about whether I shouldn't better keep my misgivings to myself. In the end, I decided it would be a disservice to the group to simply brush my concerns under the rug. They are important enough to bring out into the open and discuss them for the benefit of all.

**ASIDE** – On the other hand, the preparation study was a lot of fun for two reasons. First, I learned that the word judgment has two valid spellings – judgement and judgment. Every English language translation of God's Word I had available to me uses the spelling I have personally never used – judgment. So from this day forward, I solemnly promise to use only the Biblically correct spelling. Also, Dr. Strauss introduced a new word to me – censorious, meaning marked by or given to censure (a judgment involving condemnation). Dr. Strauss rightly recommends against censoriousness in our judgments. But I digress...

**CAVEAT** – As with so many of our discussions in this series, there aren't many hard and fast Biblically-correct answers. Nor are most of our beliefs concerning these subjects key to our salvation. In the end, the only thing that matters is whether or not one's name is written in the Lamb's book of life, and that in turn depends solely on our belief in Jesus' resurrection and our commitment to and declaration of His rightful lordship over our hearts and lives.

So with all that out of the way, let's press on to discussing the topic at hand – The Future Judgment of Believers.

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### All Men and Fallen Angels Will Be Judged

Dr. Strauss begins by pointing out that all people, and all of the fallen angels who followed Lucifer in his rebellion will eventually be judged by God. As we have seen several times already in this study, Paul writes in Hebrews that judgment is appointed for every human being.

***<sup>27</sup>And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup>so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*** Hebrews 9:27-28 [ESV]

Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians even goes so far as to say that we ourselves (or at least he and the Corinthians) will be the judges of the fallen angels.

***Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*** 1 Corinthians 6:3 [ESV]

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This bold statement may possibly be confirmed by what we read in Revelation pertaining to the judgment of the fallen angels just prior to Jesus' millennial reign.

***4<sup>a</sup>Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed...*** Revelation 20:4a [ESV]

Dr. Strauss rightly points out that sinful human beings cannot possibly judge properly. Only Jesus is able to provide perfect justice. Yet when we are finally perfected into His image, our ability to judge will also be perfected into the image of His perfect judgment. Thus, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:3 that we will judge angels. Our final perfection will allow us to be among those to whom authority to judge is committed.

Dr. Strauss also reiterates throughout this chapter that the judgment of believers' works does not determine our salvation. That judgment – praise God – was laid upon Jesus at the cross when our names were written in His book of life. Furthermore, it follows logically from that essential of our faith, that the salvation He purchased for us on the cross is sealed by God's Spirit dwelling within us, and therefore remains ours eternally. But Dr. Strauss goes on to say some things about the future judgment of our works which are perhaps subject to some debate.

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### The Five Separate Future Judgments

1. **The Judgment Seat of Christ** – This is the specific judgment of believers' works with which we will largely concern ourselves in this session's discussions.
2. **The Judgment of Regathered Israel** – A detailed study of Revelation makes it clear that God's purpose in the horrific Tribulation judgments we read about in Revelation 6-18 is to bring the remnant of His chosen people Israel to repentance.
3. **Judgment of the Living Nations** – This is the judgment spoken of in Joel 3 upon the Gentile nations based on their treatment of God's chosen people Israel throughout history.

***<sup>1</sup>“For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup>I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And I will enter into judgment with them there, on behalf of my people and my heritage Israel, because they have scattered them among the nations and have divided up my land,*** Joel 3:1-2 [ESV]

The context of the book of Joel makes it clear that this judgment will take place in what Joel calls “the Day of the LORD.” It will be the final fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.

***For I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*** Genesis 12:3 [ESV]

4. **Judgment of the Fallen Angels** – This is the judgment we find in Revelation 20:4 wherein those to whom authority to judge has been committed will judge satan and his fallen angels at the beginning of Christ's millennial reign. Jesus spoke of His final judgment of these fallen angels in the parable of the sheep and goats we looked at earlier (Matthew 25:41)

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*“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’* Matthew 25:41 [ESV]

5. **Judgment of the Unbelieving Dead** – This is the Great White Throne judgment we read about in Revelation 20:12-15 which will take place at the very end just prior to God’s final creation of an entirely new universe.

*“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup>And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup>Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup>And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”* Revelation 20:11-15 [ESV]

Dr. Strauss maintains that there will be no believers at all judged in this Great White Throne judgment. He has some sound Biblical reasons for saying this, and although I personally disagree, I’ll keep my reasons to myself in the interest of time.

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### The Judgment Seat of Christ

For the remainder of this session, we will focus on the judgment of believers at the **βῆμα bēma** – judgment seat – of Christ. Two verses from Paul speak of this judgment of believers.

*Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat [βῆμα bēma] of God;* [θεός theos] Romans 14:10 [ESV]

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat [βῆμα bēma] of Christ, [Χριστός christos] so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.* 2 Corinthians 5:10 [ESV]

Jesus spoke of His judgment throne at the beginning of the parable of the sheep and goats that we looked at earlier.

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.”* [θρόνος thronos] Matthew 25:31 [ESV]

Dr. Strauss makes much of the distinction between this **βῆμα bēma** type of judgment seat and other seats of judgment, saying that in classical Greek literature the term **βῆμα bēma** was used to refer to the place of honor reserved for judges at the ancient Olympic games who handed out the laurel crowns to the winning athletes. By contrast, the throne Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25:31 and the Great White Throne in Revelation 20:11 are called by the Greek word **θρόνος thronos**. Dr. Strauss emphasizes this distinction due to his contention (shared by many Biblical expositors) that only

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believers will be judged at the **βῆμα bēma** of Christ, and that this **βῆμα bēma** judgment will be solely to determine the rewards to be given to us by Jesus, not to determine our eternal destinies as either sheep or goats that we saw earlier in Jesus' parable. That's all well and good. In fact, I mostly agree with what Dr. Strauss has to say on the subject, but I find his drawing this distinction between the **βῆμα bēma** that Paul wrote about in Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 14:10 and other Biblical judgment stations to be misleading at best.

In fact, the word **βῆμα bēma** is found twelve times in the New Testament. Apart from the two instances we just looked at, we find the word in...

1. Matthew 27:19 and John 19:3 – referring to Pilate's judgment of Jesus.
2. Acts 12:21 – speaking of Herod's throne on the day of his death.
3. Acts 18:12 & 16-17 – speaking of the tribunal who judged Paul in Achaia
4. Acts 25:6, 10, & 17 – referring to the place where Festus judged Paul in Caesarea.

Clearly in each of these cases, the judgment being meted out was to determine whether the accused person was to be released or condemned to death! These judgments had nothing at all to do with any laurels or other rewards. In fact, Dr. Strauss himself says this about the **βῆμα bēma**...

*In this sense every judgment throne can be considered as the judgment seat of Christ, for, as the resurrected Son of God, He has been appointed by the Father to be the Judge of all. However, there is only one bema, a throne erected for Christ for the purpose of awarding the prizes or crowns to the victorious saints.*

Strauss, L. (1997). *Death and Afterward* (p. 23). Bible Studies Press.

<https://bible.org/article/death-and-afterward>

Now with that bit of unpleasantness out of the way, let's move on to discuss the **βῆμα bēma** itself.

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### Christian's Works Will be Tested

Regardless of the time or place of the **βῆμα bēma** judgment, it is clear from the scriptures we've already seen that every Christian must stand before Jesus to be judged. Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats notwithstanding, we rest assured that this judgment will never determine our eternal destinies. Our salvation was purchased for us forever by Jesus shed blood at the cross. Yet Paul clearly states that we must all still stand in judgment at the **βῆμα bēma** where our works will be judged. It follows then that this judgment of our works will determine something else apart from our salvation – that is our heavenly rewards. Near the end of Revelation, Jesus – the Alpha and Omega – gives us this encouraging promise.

***Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.*** Revelation 22:12 [ESV]

Like our salvation in Christ, the rewards meted out by Jesus at His **βῆμα bēma** will also be eternal. One of my great heroes of the faith is a man named Charles Thomas Studd – a world famous cricketer who left England in 1885 to serve in Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission. Of this work, Studd said...

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*“Some want to live within the sound  
Of church or chapel bell;  
I want to run a rescue shop,  
Within a yard of hell.”*

Studd devoted the remainder of his life to missionary work starting in China, and later serving in India and Africa. Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel was fond of quoting the refrain from Studd’s great poem One Life.

*Two little lines I heard one day, Traveling along life’s busy way;  
Bringing conviction to my heart, And from my mind would not depart;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, yes only one, Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in “that day” my Lord to meet, And stand before His Judgment seat;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, the still small voice, Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave, And to God’s holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, a few brief years, Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;  
Each with its days I must fulfill, living for self or in His will;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*When this bright world would tempt me sore, When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way, Then help me Lord with joy to say;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e’er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*Oh let my love with fervor burn, And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

*Only one life, yes only one, Now let me say, “Thy will be done”;  
And when at last I’ll hear the call, I know I’ll say “’twas worth it all”;  
Only one life, ’twill soon be past, Only what’s done for Christ will last.*

Paul wrote of the final testing of our works in his first letter to the church at Corinth, giving the reassurance (albeit a frightening one) that this testing of our works will never put our eternal salvation into jeopardy.

***<sup>10</sup>According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. <sup>11</sup>For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup>Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— <sup>13</sup>each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it***

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*will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. <sup>14</sup>If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup>If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.* <sup>1</sup> Corinthians 3:10-

<sup>15</sup> [ESV]

Dr. Strauss uses Jesus' parable of the Ten Minas as a framework for discussing Jesus' distribution of heavenly rewards based on our application of the gifts we've been given here on Earth.

**NOTE** – There is a typo in Dr. Strauss' paper. This parable is found in Luke 19, not Luke 18. The very similar Parable of the Talents is found in Matthew 25:14-30.

*<sup>14</sup>“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. <sup>15</sup>To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. <sup>16</sup>He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. <sup>17</sup>So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. <sup>18</sup>But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. <sup>19</sup>Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. <sup>20</sup>And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ <sup>21</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>22</sup>And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ <sup>23</sup>His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ <sup>24</sup>He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, <sup>25</sup>so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ <sup>26</sup>But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? <sup>27</sup>Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. <sup>28</sup>So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>30</sup>And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’* <sup>Matthew 25:14-30</sup> [ESV]

**ASIDE** – I have heard this parable taught in terms of what we do with our spiritual gifts, thinking of them as personal talents. While the parable certainly is applicable to that, the word talent here is **τάλαντον** *talanton* – referring to a specific weight of a precious metal e.g. 100 pounds of silver, or 200 pounds of gold. The actual weight varied by place and time in history.

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But wait. It seems on first blush that Jesus may have been teaching some kind of salvation by works here. Specifically, in Matthew 25:30, it seems the worthless servant is cast into the outer darkness – a term Jesus used to describe eternal separation from God. This punishment was given to the servant due to his works – or more correctly, due to his lack of works. Is eternal salvation or condemnation based on our works really what Jesus is teaching here? We'll take up that question later.

All of us long earnestly to hear Jesus speak the words of verse 23 to us. Before we leave this parable, take a look at the beautiful way this verse is rendered in the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

***“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master’s joy.’*** Matthew 25:23 [ESV]

What could be more heartwarming than the certain knowledge that our LORD rejoices over us due to our faithfulness with the blessings He has given us.

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### Saints Will Differ in Heaven

I don't want to dwell too deeply on this section, but Dr. Strauss uses 1 Corinthians 15:41-42 to make the case that our glorified bodies will differ in glory from one another due to the rewards Jesus distributes to us at His **βῆμα bēma**. Specifically, Dr. Strauss mentions Paul's illustration of the differing glories of various stars. But clearly, Paul's point in this passage (that we examined thoroughly in Session 5) was that our incorruptible resurrection bodies will differ in glory from our corruptible earthly bodies. Thus, Dr. Strauss has taken this passage out of its intended context in order to make the argument that our heavenly bodies will differ from one another in glory based on Jesus' judgment of our works. While that may or may not be true, the scripture Dr. Strauss uses to make the point doesn't support it. Be Berean!

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### The Crowns or Rewards

The recompense for our works performed in Jesus' Name, which Jesus will distribute to believers at His **βῆμα bēma** are often referred to as crowns. The Word of God specifically mentions five such crowns.

**NOTE** – It is often taught that once we receive our crowns, we will then cast them at Jesus' feet as a sign that we are unworthy to receive them. This idea comes from Revelation 4:10 which describes the 24 elders who are seated around the Heavenly throne doing so as part of their worship. But we're not them unless they are symbolic of some kind of classification system involving 24 classes of believers. I would say it's quite a stretch to cram that sort of complex interpretation into such a straightforward scripture. But I digress...

1. **The Incorruptible Crown** – This reference comes from 1 Corinthians 9:25. In that chapter, Paul protests to the Corinthian church about some of the things which were being taught and said about his ministry there with Barnabas. He reminds the Corinthians that while worldly athletes compete to win an earthly prize which is temporary and corruptible, he and Barnabas

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(and by extension all servants of the Gospel) work for an eternal and incorruptible crown from our LORD.

2. **The Crown of Rejoicing** – Those who lead others to salvation in Christ through their Gospel witness will receive this crown. Paul speaks of it in his first letter to the church in Thessalonica. Paul and Silas had preached the Gospel to the Thessalonians the previous year, but were forced to flee by a mob (Acts 17). Nevertheless, some of the Thessalonians had become Christian believers.

*<sup>19</sup>For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? <sup>20</sup>For you are our glory and joy.* <sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 2:19-20 [ESV]

In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul speaks of our LORD Jesus' joy over our salvation that He attained for us through His death on the cross. In this sense Jesus' crown of thorns was also His crown of rejoicing.

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Hebrews 12:1-2 [ESV]

3. **The Crown of Righteousness** – This crown is for all true believers. We have no righteousness of our own. Isaiah affirms that all of our “righteous” thoughts, words, and deeds are as filthy rags compared to the righteousness of God (Isaiah 64:6). Thankfully, God offers us His own perfect righteousness through faith. Thus it is written of Abraham – ...*“Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness.”* Romans 4:3b [ESV] So it is with all Christian believers who receive the righteousness of God as our reward for faith in His Gospel.

*For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* <sup>2</sup> Corinthians 5:21 [ESV]

At the end of his life Paul wrote of this crown of righteousness in his heart-rending final letter to his protégé Timothy.

*Henceforth there is laid up 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 loved his appearing.* <sup>2</sup> Timothy 4:8 [ESV]

4. **The Crown of Life** – This crown is a special reward to those who are killed for their Gospel testimony. Jesus spoke of this crown in His letter to the church at Smyrna. He offered them encouragement to persevere in their faith, knowing that they were about to suffer deadly persecution and that some of them would be killed.

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***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.*** Revelation 2:10 [ESV]

James also speaks of this martyrs' crown

***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.*** James 1:12 [ESV]

5. **The Crown of Glory** – A very special reward awaits those who are faithful as pastors of Christian fellowships. Peter speaks of this crown of glory in 1 Peter 5:4. But the broader context of this chapter also includes a dire warning which all pastors will do well to heed.

***<sup>1</sup>So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup>not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. <sup>5</sup>Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”***

***<sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. <sup>10</sup>And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. <sup>11</sup>To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*** 1 Peter 5:1-11 [ESV]

Finally, Dr. Strauss points out the fulfillment of these crowns or rewards remains until the “...***resurrection of the just***” (Luke 14:14b) at the **βῆμα bēma** of Christ, whenever and wherever that will be. In the light of the hope for our heavenly rewards given to us by our Lord Jesus at His **βῆμα bēma**, we will do well to heed Paul’s encouragement to the Colossians regarding our works performed in Jesus’ Name as we patiently await His return.

***<sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, <sup>24</sup>knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*** Colossians 3:23-24 [ESV]

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### Discussion Questions

1. Who is sitting on the Great White Throne? Hint – Matthew 25:31
2. What does Paul mean when he tells the Corinthians that we will judge angels? We who? What angels?
3. Is the **βῆμα bēma** judgment distinct from the Great White Throne judgment?
4. Who are “...those to whom the authority to judge was committed...” in Revelation 20:4? Tribulation saints? Saints in general? Twenty-four elders? The Holy Trinity? Elect angels? Others?
5. How do we reconcile Matthew 25:31 with John 8:15-16 and John 5:21-29? Hint – See Deuteronomy 6:4

***“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Matthew 25:31 [ESV]***

***<sup>15</sup>You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. <sup>16</sup>Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. John 8:15-16 [ESV]***

***<sup>21</sup>For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. <sup>22</sup>For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, <sup>23</sup>that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.***

***<sup>25</sup>“Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.***

***<sup>26</sup>For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>27</sup>And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. <sup>28</sup>Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice <sup>29</sup>and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. John 5:21-29 [ESV]***

6. Is it possible for a servant of God to be condemned even temporarily? Hint Matthew 25:30.
7. Can someone who isn't saved serve God? Hint Judas Iscariot.
8. Will some believers be purtier than others in glory?
9. Does Jesus teach salvation or condemnation based on our works in the parable of the sheep and the goats or the parable of the talents?
10. Are the crowns of reward literal crowns? Will we have literal heads to wear them on?
11. Will we cast our crowns at Jesus' feet after we receive them? Can we?