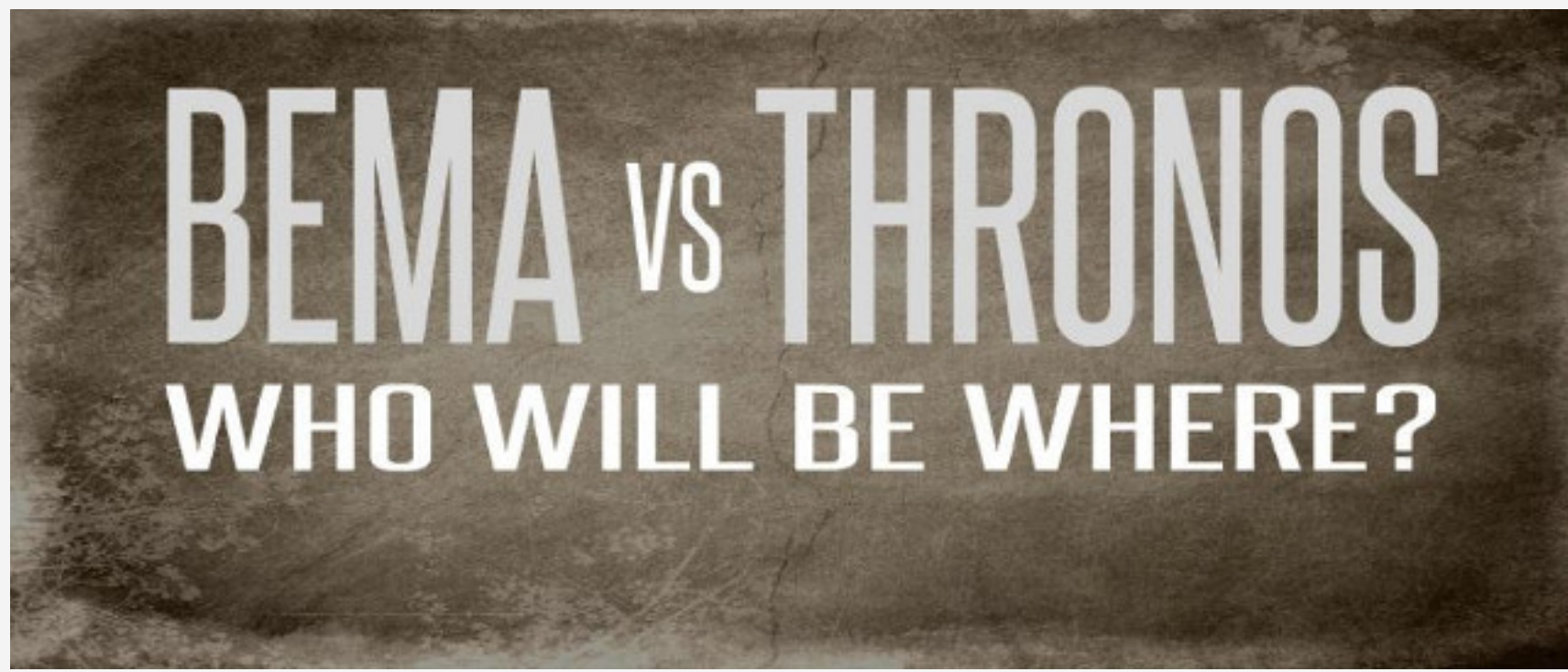


## BEMA VS. THRONOS: WHO WILL BE WHERE



By Paul Miles

We're going through a three-article series on the differences between the *Bema* of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgement. In the [first article](#), we discussed the difference between the word, *bema* (often translated 'Judgement Seat') and the term, "Great White Throne." In this article, we'll be looking at the difference between the attendees at the two judgments. That there will be two different groups of people at the two judgments is a strong indication that the two judgments are separate events.

**The Great White Throne**

Revelation 20:12b-13a tells from whence come the defendants at the Great White Throne:

“ **And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them.**

Everyone at the Great White Throne Judgment will already be dead. Let's back up a little bit to see what this implies.

The Great White Throne Judgment will take place after the 1,000 year period of Revelation 20:1-6. At the end of the millennium, there will be a Satanic rebellion consisting of the remaining unsaved population of the world. The rebellion ends with them being killed with fire from heaven (Rev 20:9) and at this point, every single nonbeliever will be dead, either from the rebellion, or from whatever causes before the millennium. But what about saved people?

All saved people will be alive at this point. People saved in Old Testament times will be resurrected (Ps 50:1?6; Is 26:19; Dan 12:1-3 ), believers who were martyred for Christ in the period before the millennium will also be resurrected (Rev 20:4), people saved in the Church period will return and enter the millennium with Christ (Rev 19:11-16), and believers who lived at the beginning of the millennium will still be around (as will their children assuming they were not unbelievers that died in the rebellion).

In other words, all saved people will be alive after the rebellion, and so they will not be judged among the dead at the Great White Throne Judgment that follows.

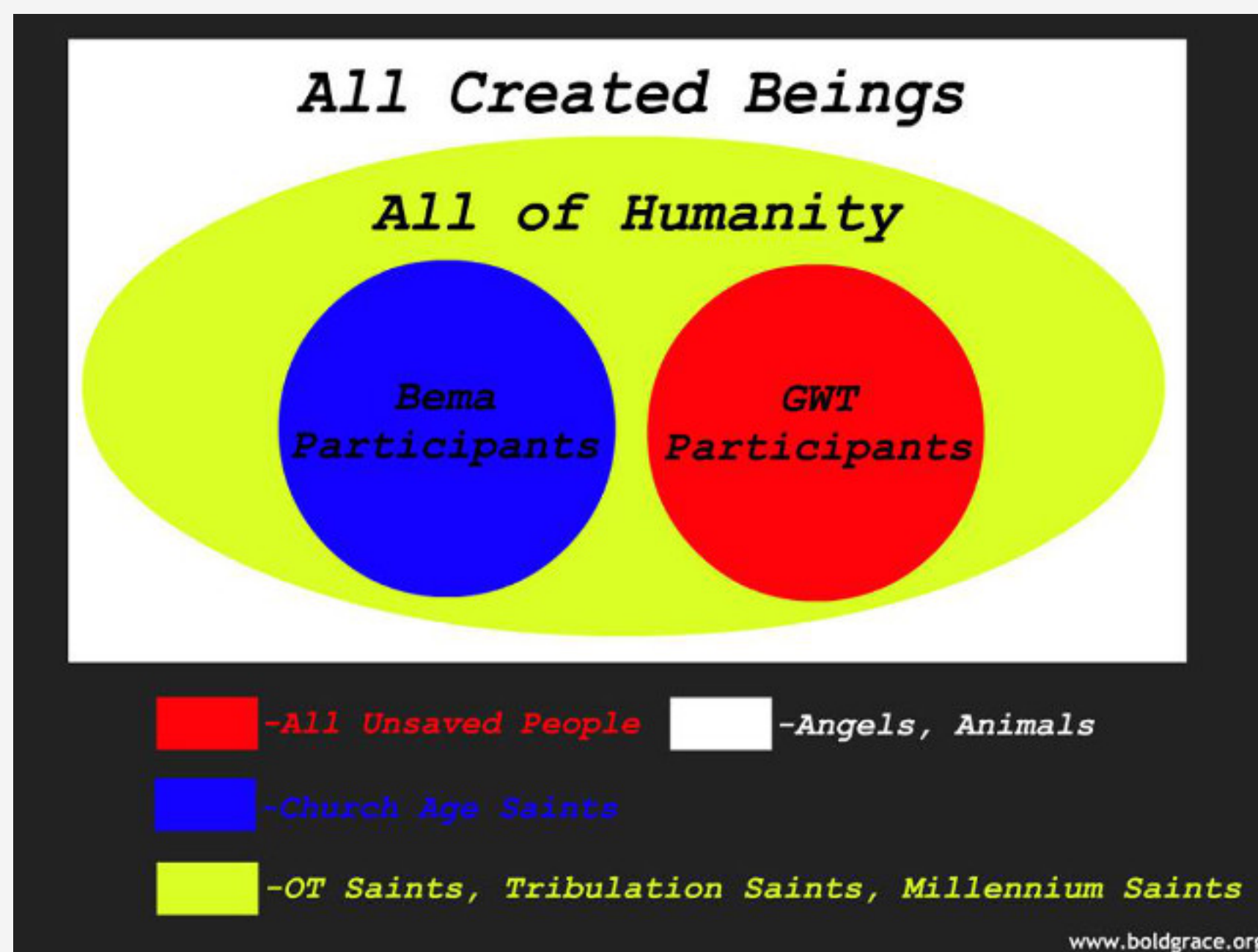
**The *Bema* of Christ**

Let's first notice that the Great White Throne and the *Bema* will occur at different times (this in and of itself could be a fourth reason that we know the two events are distinct). As seen above, the Great White Throne is going to be at the end of the millennium after the rebellion. The *bema* will have already happened by the time of Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:6-10), which precedes the millennium.<sup>1</sup> There are at least 1,000 years between the two judgments. Many of the rebels in the Satanic rebellion won't even have been born yet when the *bema* judgment takes place.

Though only believers will be at the *bema*, not every believer throughout history will be there. Samuel Hoyt puts it well:

“ **Since this examination will commence immediately after the rapture of the church-age saints, those that espouse faith in Jesus Christ during the tribulation and during the millennium cannot be included in this unique event. The only other possible group of believers that could be present would be the resurrected Old Testament saints. However Daniel 12:1-3 indicates that the resurrection of the Old Testament saints will not be prior to the tribulation period but immediately after it. Therefore, this resurrection is subsequent to the judgment seat evaluation, and thus the Old Testament saints will be excluded from this adjudication. As a result, there is left to consider only those Church-age saints who are living or have lived between Pentecost and the rapture; and it is deduced from Scripture that these will be the only ones who will stand before the bema of Christ.**<sup>2</sup>

Here's a Venn Diagram that might help:



Notice that neither Satan nor any of the angels (fallen or not) nor plants nor animals will be at either judgment, but only people. Notice that not all people will appear before one of the judgments (Old Testament saints, for example, are neither part of the Church nor are the unsaved). Especially notice that nobody will appear before both judgments.

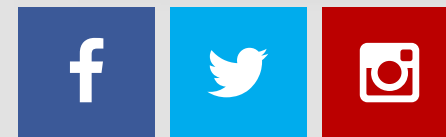
Just as it is impossible for a regenerate person to be judged at the Great White Throne Judgment, it is impossible for an unregenerate person to be judged at the *Bema* of Christ. Because these are two different judgments with two different groups being judged, it follows that there are different criteria at the judgments which only advances the differentiation between the two. We'll take a look at these criteria in the next installment of this series.



<sup>1</sup> As Dwight Pentecost wrote, "When the Lord returns to the earth with His bride to reign, the bride is seen to be already rewarded. This is observed in Revelation 19:8, where it must be observed that the 'righteousness of the saints' is plural and cannot refer to the imparted righteousness of Christ, which is the believer's portion, but the righteousnesses which have survived examination [the judgment seat] and have become the basis of reward.... Thus it must be observed that the rewarding of the church must take place between the rapture and the revelation of Christ to the earth." *Things to Come*, pp. 220-21. Quoted by Samuel L. Hoyt, *The Judgment Seat of Christ: A Biblical and Theological Study*. (Milwaukee: Grace Gospel Press, 2011), 50-51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

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