

Surprising Facts Series 2.

19. Facing the Judge!

Few thoughts could be more sobering: Every person who has ever lived must face a full accounting of his life before God, the righteous Judge (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Does this alarm you? If so, take heart! Millions have found the judgment news of this lesson thrilling and assuring. In the book of Revelation, on four different occasions, mention of the judgment brings praise, thanksgiving, and rejoicing (Revelation 11:16-19; 15:2-4; 16:5, 7; 19:1, 2). The Bible refers to the judgment more than a thousand times. Almost every Bible writer speaks of it. Its importance cannot be overemphasized. (Note: There are three phases of the final judgment. Watch for them as you review this lesson.)

First Phase of the Final Judgment

1. The angel Gabriel gave Daniel the prophecy of the 1844 heavenly judgment. The first phase of the judgment is called the pre-advent judgment because it takes place before Jesus' Second Coming. What group of people will be considered in the first phase of the judgment? When does it end?

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:11, 12.

Answer: It ends just before the second coming of Jesus. Those (living and dead) who claimed to be Christians, "the house of God" will be considered in the pre-advent judgment. (The 1844 date is established in our last lesson.) Only the lives of the righteous will be examined in the first phase of the judgment.

2. Who presides at the judgment? Who is the defense attorney? The judge? The accuser? Who are the witnesses?

"The Ancient of days did sit, ... his throne was like the fiery flame." "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. "The Father ... hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John 5:22. "The Devil, ... the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Revelation 12:9, 10. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Revelation 3:14.

Answer: God the Father, the Ancient of days, presides in this judgment. He loves you very much **"For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. " John 16:27.** Satan is your accuser. In the heavenly court, Jesus, who loves you, your best friend, will be your attorney, and witness. Jesus stands with His faithful people in the judgment and claims His sacrifice for each who has remained faithful in depending on His for Salvation, and promises them a positive verdict.

3. What is the source of evidence used in the pre-advent judgment? By what standard will all be

judged? Since God already knows everything about every person, why have a judgment?

"The judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:10. "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12. "They ... shall be judged by the law of liberty." James 2:12. "We are made a spectacle [theater] unto the world, and to angels, and to men." 1 Corinthians 4:9.

Answer: Evidence for court comes from books in which all details of one's life are recorded. For the faithful, the record of prayer, repentance, and forgiveness of sin will be there for all to see. The records will prove that God's power, through Jesus, enables Christians to live changed lives. God is pleased with His saints and will delight in sharing the evidence of their lives. The judgment will confirm that there is **"Now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1.**

The Ten-Commandment law is God's standard in the judgment (James 2:10-12). Breaking His law is sin (1 John 3:4). The righteousness of the law will be fulfilled by Jesus in all of His people (Romans 8:3, 4). To claim that this is impossible is to doubt Jesus' word and His power.

The judgment is not to inform God. He is already fully informed (2 Timothy 2:19). It is, rather, to inform the angels (1 Peter 1:12) and the inhabitants of other unfallen worlds, as well as people on this earth. After all, the redeemed people will be coming to heaven from a world that has been degraded by sin. Both the angels and the inhabitants of other worlds would certainly feel uneasy about admitting anyone to God's heavenly kingdom who might start sin all over again. Thus, the judgment will open to them every detail and answer every question.

Satan's real aim has always been to discredit God as unfair, ruthless, unloving, and untruthful. This makes it even more important for all beings in the universe to see firsthand how extremely patient God has been with sinners. The evidence presented in the judgment comes from books of heaven.

The vindication of God's character is the prime purpose of the judgment (Revelation 11:16-19; 15:2-4; 16:5, 7; 19:1, 2; Daniel 4:36, 37). Note that praise and glory are given to God for His fairness in the way He handles the judgment.

4. What portion of a person's life is considered in the pre-advent judgment? What will be confirmed? How will rewards be decided?

"God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it evil." Ecclesiastes 12:14. "Let both [wheat and tares] grow together until the harvest." "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend." Matthew 13:30, 41. "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according work shall be." Revelation 22:12.

Answer: Every detail of life will be reviewed, including secret thoughts and actions. For this reason, this first phase of the judgment is also called the investigative judgment. The judgment will confirm who will be saved of those who claimed to be Christians. It will doubtless also confirm as lost those whose names are not judged in the pre-advent judgment. Although we are saved by grace, rewards will be given based on works, deeds or conduct, which prove the genuineness of a Christian's faith. **"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without**

works is dead also." James 2:26.

Second Phase of the Final Judgment:

5. What group is involved in the heavenly judgment during the 1,000 years of Revelation chapter 20? What is the purpose of this second phase of the judgment?

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." Revelation 20:4.

Answer: The "saints," or righteous people of all ages who Christ takes to heaven in the cloud at His second coming, will be participating in this second phase of the judgment.

Suppose a family discovered that their much-beloved son who was murdered was not in heaven. But the murderer was. Doubtless they would need some answers. This second phase of the judgment will answer all the questions of the righteous. The life of every lost person (including Satan and his angels) will be carefully reviewed by the righteous, who will then totally agree with Jesus' decisions regarding the reward for each one. It will become obvious to all that the judgment is no arbitrary matter. Instead, it simply confirms the choices which people have already made to serve either Jesus or another master (Revelation 22:11, 12). God's saints of all ages will participate in the second phase of the judgment.

Third Phase of the Final Judgment

6. When and where will the third phase of the final judgment take place? What new group will be present at this phase of judgment?

"His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem." "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." "All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem." Zechariah 14:4, 5, 10. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven." Revelation 21:2. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall ... go out to deceive the nations ... to gather them together to battle." Revelation 20:7, 8.

Answer: The third phase of the judgment will take place on the earth at the close of the 1,000 years of Revelation 20, after Jesus return to earth with the holy city. All the wicked who have ever lived, including the devil and his angels, will be present. At the close of the 1,000 years, the wicked dead of all ages will be raised (Revelation 20:5). Satan immediately launches a powerful propaganda campaign to deceive them. Amazingly, he succeeds in convincing the nations of earth that they can capture the holy city.

7. What happens next?

"They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." Revelation 20:9.

Answer: The wicked surround the city and prepare to attack.

8. What interrupts their battle plan, and with what results?

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and

another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:10. "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:11,12.

Answer: Unexpectedly, without warning, God appears with almost paralyzing brightness above the city. The moment of truth has arrived. Every lost soul since the world began, including Satan and his angels, now faces God in judgment. Every eye is fastened upon the King of kings.

Each Person Sees Own Life Reviewed: Then each lost soul recalls his own life story: God's constant, warm, pleading calls to repent; that wooing, still, small voice; the awesome conviction that often came; the repeated refusals to respond. It is all there. The accuracy is incontestable. The facts are irrefutable. God wants the wicked to fully understand. He will provide any details desired in order to make all things clear. The books and records are available.

No Cover-Up: God is not involved in some celestial cover-up. He has destroyed no evidence, erased no 'tapes'. There is nothing to hide. Everything is open, and every person who has ever lived plus all the good and bad angels will be viewing this drama of all dramas.

The Lost Fall to Their Knees: Suddenly there is a movement. One lost soul drops to his knees to admit his guilt and openly confess that God was more than fair with him. His own stubborn pride kept him from responding. And on all sides now, people and evil angels are likewise kneeling. Then in one great, almost simultaneous move all remaining people and evil angels, including Satan, fall prostrate before God. **"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."** Romans 14:11. They openly clear the name of God from all false accusations and give witness to His loving, fair, merciful treatment of them.

All confess that the sentence of death pronounced upon them is fair, and is the only safe way to handle sin. Of each lost person it can be said, **"Thou hast destroyed thyself."** Hosea 13:9. God now stands vindicated before the universe. The accusations and claims of Satan have been exposed and unequivocally discredited as the perverse lies of a hardened sinner.

9. What final steps will eradicate sin from the universe and provide a secure home and future for the righteous?

"They ... compassed the camp of the saints about, ... and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:9, 10. "For they [the wicked] shall be ashes under the soles of your feet." Malachi 4:3. "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth." Isaiah 65:11. "Look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, ... and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them." Revelation 21:3.

Answer: Even though all admit their guilt, they still make the attempt to attack the city! Then fire from heaven will fall upon the wicked. The fire will completely eradicate sin and sinners from the universe forever. This will be a time of deep sadness for God's people. Virtually every

person will have a loved one or friend in the fire. Guardian angels will probably shed tears over the loss of the people they protected and loved for years. Even Christ will doubtless weep over those He loved and pled with so long. At that awful moment the anguish of God, our loving Father, over the terrible cost of sin will defy description. Fire from heaven will eradicate sin and sinners for eternity.

New Heavens and Earth: Then the Lord will wipe all tears away from His redeemed people (Revelation 21:4) and create new heavens and a new earth, lovely beyond description, for His redeemed saints. And best of all, He will reside here with His people throughout eternity. No thinking person would want to miss that!

10. How did the "Day of Atonement" service in the Old Testament earthly sanctuary symbolize the judgment and God's plan to eradicate sin from the universe and restore perfect harmony?

Answer: We learned how Satan falsely accused and challenged God and brought the ugly malignancy of sin into the universe. The Day of Atonement in ancient Israel taught, through symbols, how God will handle the sin problem and bring harmony back to the universe by the atonement, to bring all things into total divine harmony. The sacrificed animal represented Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. In the earthly sanctuary, the symbolic steps were:

- A. Lord's goat slain to cover sins of the people.
- B. Priest ministered the blood before the mercy seat.
- C. Judgment took place in this order: (1) the righteous confirmed, (2) the unrepentant cut off, and (3) the record of sin removed from the sanctuary.
- D. Record of sin placed on scapegoat.
- E. Scapegoat sent into wilderness.
- F. People cleansed from their sins.
- G. All begin new year with a clean slate. These five symbolic steps represent literal atonement events which are instituted from the heavenly sanctuary, God's celestial headquarters for the universe. The first point above is the symbol of the literal atonement event of the first point below; the second point above is the symbol of the second point below, etc. Notice how clearly God has symbolized these great atonement events:
 - A. Jesus' sacrificial death as man's substitute (1 Corinthians 15:3; 5:7).
 - B. Jesus as our High Priest restores people to God's image (Hebrews 4:14-16; Romans 8:29).
 - C. Judgment provides records to confirm lives, good and bad, and then removes the records of sin from the heavenly sanctuary (Revelation 20:12; Acts 3:19-21).
 - D. Responsibility for originating sin and for causing all people to sin is placed on Satan (1 John 3:8; Revelation 22:12).
 - E. Satan banished into wilderness (1,000 years of Revelation 20). The priest's ministry before the mercy seat represented Jesus' ministry for us in heaven.
 - F. Satan, sin, and sinners eradicated permanently (Revelation 20:10; 21:8; Psalm 37:10, 20; Nahum 1:9).
 - G. New earth created for God's people. Everything lost by sin is restored to the Lord's saints (2 Peter 3:13; Acts 3:20, 21).

The atonement is not completed until the universe and all in it are restored to pre-sin condition, with the assurance that sin will never rise again.

11. What is the good news about the judgment revealed in this lesson and listed below?

- A. God and His manner of handling the sin problem will be gloriously vindicated before the entire universe. This is the central purpose of the judgment.
- B. Judgment will be decided in favor of God's people.
- C. The righteous will be safe from sin for eternity.
- D. Sin will be completely eradicated and will never rise a second time.
- E. Everything that Adam and Eve lost by sin will be restored to the redeemed.
- F. The wicked will be turned to ashes, not tortured endlessly.
- G. In the judgment, Jesus is our judge, attorney, and witness.
- H. Both the Father and Son love us. It is the devil who accuses us.
- I. The heavenly books will be helpful to the righteous because they will show how the grace of the gospel changed their lives. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. The judgment will only make that truth evident.
- K. Not one soul (man or angel) will complain that God is unfair. It will be unanimous that God has been loving, fair, gracious, and kind in dealing with all. After the judgment, sin will be gone forever. The righteous will be safe for eternity.

12. God promises to acquit you in the heavenly judgment if you invite Jesus to enter your life and permit Him to remain in control. Will you invite Him to enter today?

Your Answer: _____

Your Thought Questions Answered:

1. What is the difference between accepting Jesus as my Saviour and accepting Him as my Lord?

ANSWER: The difference is substantial. When I accept Him as Saviour, He saves me from the guilt and penalty of sin and gives me the new birth. He changes me from sinner to saint. This transaction is a glorious miracle and is essential to salvation. No one can be saved without it. However, Jesus is not finished with me at this point. I have been born, but His plan is that I also grow up to become like Him. **“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:” Ephesians 4:13.** When I accept Him daily as the ruler, or Lord, of my life, He, by His miracles, causes me to grow in grace and Christian conduct until I am mature in Christ. **“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” 2 Peter 3:18.**

The Problem is I Want My Own Way: I want to run my own life, have my own way. The Bible calls this "iniquity," "lawlessness" or sin. **“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6.** Making Jesus my Lord is so important that the New Testament mentions Him as "Lord" 766 times. In the book of Acts alone, He is referred to as "Lord" 110 times and as "Saviour" only twice. This demonstrates how important it is to know Him as Lord and Ruler of our lives.

A Neglected necessity: Making Him Lord: Jesus placed continuing emphasis upon His Lordship because He knew that crowning Him Lord would be forgotten and neglected by many. **“For we**

preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

2 Corinthians 4:5. Unless I make Him Lord of my life, there is no way I can ever become a full-grown Christian clothed in Christ's righteousness. Instead, I will end up "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" and, even worse, feeling that I am fine and "have need of nothing." Revelation 3:17.

2. Since the record of the sins of God's people were transferred on the Day of Atonement to the scapegoat, doesn't that make him also our sin-bearer? I thought Jesus alone bore our sins.

ANSWER: The scapegoat, which represents Satan, in no way bears, or pays for, our sins. The Lord's goat, which was sacrificed on the Day of Atonement, represents Jesus, who assumed and paid for our sins on Calvary. Jesus alone **"taketh away the sin of the world."** **John 1:29.** Satan will be punished (as will all other sinners, (Revelation 20:12-15) for his own sins, which will include responsibility for (1) the existence of sin, (2) his own evil actions, and (3) influencing every person on earth to sin. God will clearly hold him accountable for evil. This is what the symbolism of the transfer of sin to the scapegoat (Satan) on the Day of Atonement is meant to convey.

3. The Bible is clear that God forgives all sins which are confessed (1 John 1:9). It is also clear that, though forgiven, the record of these sins remains on heaven's books until the end of time (Acts 3:19-21). Why aren't the sins blotted out when forgiven?

ANSWER: There is a very good reason. The heavenly judgment is not complete until the judgment of the wicked takes place immediately prior to their destruction at the end of the world. If God destroyed the records before this final phase of the judgment, He could be accused of a massive cover-up. All records of conduct remain open for viewing until the judgment is completed. Also our sins have ongoing effects, even though forgiven, and the records are not complete until the end.

4. Some say the judgment took place at the cross. Others say it takes place at death. Can we be certain the timing for the judgment as shown in this lesson is correct?

ANSWER: Yes. To make it possible for us to be certain regarding the timing for the judgment, God clearly specified it three times in Daniel chapter 7. Notice God's specific timing. God left no room for uncertainty. The divine sequence is stated three times (verses 8-14, 20-22, 24-27) in this one chapter as follows:

- A. The little horn power-ruled A.D. 538 to 1798.
- B. The judgment-begins after 1798 (in 1844) and continues until Jesus' second advent.
- C. God's new kingdom, established at the end of the judgment.

So God makes it clear that the judgment does not take place at death or at the cross, but between 1844 and Jesus' second coming. Remember that the first angel's message is in part, **"The hour of his judgment is come."** **Revelation 14:6, 7.** God's end-time people must be telling the world that the final judgment is in session now!

5. What important lessons can we learn from our study of the judgment?

ANSWER: Notice the following five points:

A. God may seem to take a long time before He acts, but His timing is right. No lost person will ever be able to say "I didn't understand" or "I didn't know."

B. Satan and evil of all kinds will ultimately be dealt with by God in the judgment. Since the judgment is God's work and He has all the facts, we should stop judging others and let God do it. It's a serious matter for us to take over God's work of judging. It's usurping His authority.

C. God leaves us all free to decide how we will relate to Him and who we will serve. However, we must be prepared for serious consequences when we decide contrary to His Word.

D. God loves us so much that He has given us the books of Daniel and Revelation to make these end-time issues clear. Our only safety lies in listening to Him and following His counsel from these great prophetic books.

E. Satan is determined to destroy every one of us. His deceiving strategies are so effective and so convincing that all but a very few will be ensnared. Without Jesus' resurrection power in our lives daily to protect us from the devil's traps, we will be devastated by Satan.

Summary Sheet. Place a check beside the correct answers.

1. How many phases are there of the judgment?

Six.

One.

Three.

2. Check the true items regarding the first phase of the judgment.

it is the pre-advent judgment.

it began in 1844.

It is in session now.

Satan is the accuser.

The angel Gabriel is the judge.

God presides.

The prophet Jonah foretold it.

God's law is the standard.

It will consider the lives of those who claimed to be Christians.

3. Which items tell the truth about the second phase of the judgment, which takes place during the 1,000 years?

The righteous of all ages will be present.

Satan will continually interrupt the Court proceedings.

All will agree that Satan's punishment is just.

Satan's angels will be pardoned.

The wicked will demand their rights.

The righteous will learn why some of their friends are lost.

4. Jesus will serve in two capacities. What are they?

Judge.

Witness.

Bailiff.

Clerk of the court.

Defense attorney.

5. The wicked will be present in person for judgment at the close of the 1,000 years after they surround the holy city. Yes. No.

6. God will make clear to every lost person and angel why he or she is lost. Yes. No.

7. At one phase of the judgment every person (good and bad) who has ever lived, plus all evil angels and Satan, will be present in person. Which phase?

First phase: the present pre-advent judgment.

Second phase: during the 1,000 years.

Third phase: at the close of the 1,000 years.

8. Why are record books needed in heaven's judgment?

To inform God of the facts.

To remind God of what He may have forgotten.

To give the angels something to do.

To help people, angels, and inhabitants of other worlds understand God's fair and righteous handling of the judgment.

9. "Atonement" means "to bring all things into total divine harmony." Which items below are part of the great heavenly atonement?

Jesus' death on the cross.

The judgment.

Jesus' ministry as our High Priest.

The flood of Noah's day.

Daniel in the lion's den.

The final destruction of sin and sinners.

Creation of new heavens and a new earth.

10. Which items are good news from the judgment?

- The judgment will be decided in favor of the saints.
- The devil burns forever in hell.
- The little horn power will be destroyed.
- Sin will never start over again.
- Sin could easily start up again in the far future.
- Jesus is our judge, attorney, and witness.
- God's method of dealing with sin and salvation will be fully vindicated.
- All that Adam and Eve lost by sin will be restored.

11. What is the truth about Satan as the judgment scapegoat?

- He is punished for originating sin.
- He is punished for leading every person into sin.
- He has nothing to do with paying for our sins.
- Satan is our sin-bearer.
- Satan will refuse to be the scapegoat and will escape.

12. The main purpose of the judgment is to make clear to people, Satan, the good and bad angels, and the inhabitants of other worlds that God has handled the sin tragedy wisely, equitably, and righteously since its inception. Yes. No.

13. The judgment is not arbitrary. Instead, it basically confirms the choices that people have already made either to serve Jesus or to choose another master. Yes. No.

14. God promises to acquit you in the heavenly judgment if you will invite Him to enter your life and permit Him to remain in control. Will you invite Him to enter your life today?

- Yes. No.