



Case
Closed!

Amazing Facts
Study Guide

Amazing Facts Study Guide 19 - Case Closed!

The jury is in, the verdict read ... case closed! Few thoughts could be more sobering. The day is fast approaching when every person who has ever lived will have their lives reviewed before the all-knowing eyes of God (2 Corinthians 5:10). But don't let this alarm you - take heart! Millions have already found the judgment message in this Study Guide to be very good news! On four occasions when the book of Revelation mentions the great judgment, it brings forth praise and thanksgiving! But did you know that the Bible mentions judgment more than a thousand times? Almost every Bible writer refers to it, so its importance cannot be overemphasized. In the next few minutes, you're going to get a real eye-opener in this neglected subject. [Note: There are three phases of judgment... watch for them as you study this lesson!]

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?

"Judgment must begin at the house of God." 1 Peter 4:17. "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. (See also 1 Timothy 3:15.)

Only the lives of the righteous will be examined in the first phase of the judgment.

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 Study Guide 18.)

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. (See also Colossians 1:12-15.)

Answer: God the Father, the Ancient of days, presides in the judgment. He loves you very much (John 16:27). Satan is your only accuser. In the heavenly court, Jesus, who loves you--your best friend--will be your attorney, judge, and witness. And He promises that judgment will be "given in favour of the saints." Daniel 7:22, NEB.*

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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 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 "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). However, 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 unfallen 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 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 the praise and glory are given to God for 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 be 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 as his 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 (James 2:26).

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.

God's saints of all ages will participate in the 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). (For a review of the 1,000 years, see Study Guide 12.)

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 chapter 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 (Revelation 19:11-21). 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 (Revelation 20:12).

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. Its accuracy is incontestable. Its 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 (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 Is Fair

All confess that the sentence of death pronounced upon them is fair--*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 65:17. "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: Fire from heaven will fall upon the wicked. The fire will completely eradicate sin and sinners from the universe forever. (See Study Guide 11 for full details on hellfire.) This will be a time of deep sadness and trauma 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.

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 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:

In Study Guide 2, 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. (Atonement means "at-one-ment," or "to bring all things into total divine harmony.") 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.

The priest's ministry before the mercy seat represented Jesus' ministry for us in heaven.

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 chapter 20).
- F.** Satan, sin, and sinners eradicated permanently (Revelation 20:10; 21:8; Psalms 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 as revealed in this Study Guide and listed below?

Answer:

- 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.

J. 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.

12. 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?

Answer: