

The first angel cries, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgement has come." Revelation 14:7. Paul told the people of Athens, "For he (God) has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him (the One appointed to judge) from the dead." Acts 17:31.

WHO ARE THE ACCUSED?

Paul stated, "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10. Peter indicated this truth in another way. He wrote, "For it is time for judgement to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" 1 Peter 4:17. Quite obviously, we are all involved in the judgement. None can escape it.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE JUDGEMENT?

Judgement takes place to vindicate God as well as to declare who will enter God's kingdom and who will be destroyed. Satan has openly challenged the position, power, honour and character of God. The judgement will demonstrate that God is "right" in all His ways. (See Romans 3:4.) The judgement will also reveal who will receive eternal life and identify those who will be destroyed by the second death.

WHEN IS THE TIME OF JUDGEMENT?

According to Scripture there are three phases to the judgement: (1) the pre-advent judgement, (2) the verdict, and (3) the execution of judgement.

I The PRE-ADVENT JUDGEMENT

When Jesus comes the second time He will come with "rewards" to "give to everyone according to what he has done." Revelation 22:12. (See Matthew 16:27.) This indicates that an aspect of judgement has already taken place. Prior to the second coming the first angel declares, "The hour of his judgement has come." Revelation 14:7.

Daniel 7 ...

The prophecy of Daniel 7 parallels that of Revelation 12-14. Daniel was shown the gathering of the heavenly hosts for a judgement scene, which precedes the return of Jesus Christ. (See Daniel 7:9,10,25-27.)

Daniel 8 and 9 ...

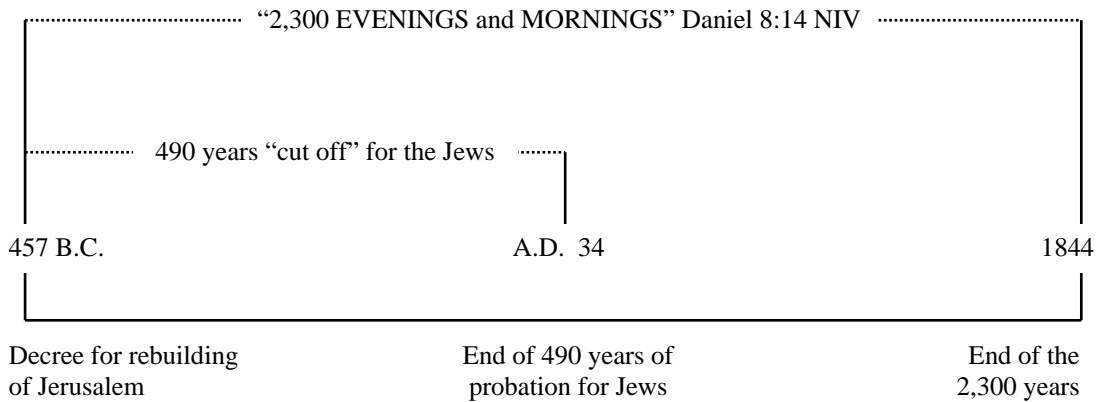
In Daniel 8 and 9 we find further evidence for the pre-advent aspect of judgement. In the vision of Daniel 8, the prophet witnessed a "stern-faced king" attack God's Word, the plan of salvation and God's people. (Daniel 8:9-12, 23-25.) Then Daniel heard the question asked, How long will this go on? (See Daniel 8:13.) In answer to this call for divine intervention and judgement, Daniel was told, "It will take 2,300 evening and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." Daniel 8:14.

Early in the 19th century there was a spiritual revival based on the study of Daniel and

Revelation. Considerable attention was focused upon Daniel 8 and 9. Many believed that the words of Daniel 8:14 indicated that Jesus Christ was going to come in 1844 for they concluded from their study that the "2,300 evenings and mornings" pointed to that. From their study they decided that:

- The vision of Daniel 9 was a further explanation of Daniel 8.
- The "2,300 evenings and mornings" of Daniel 8:14 represent 2,300 literal years. (Evidence for what was called the "year-day principle" was found in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6.)
- The 490 years of Daniel 9:24 were "cut off" the beginning of the 2,300 of Daniel 8:14.
- The 490 years and the 2,300 both began at the time of the "decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:25) in 457 B.C.

CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY BIBLE STUDENTS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY



Initially, many believed that Jesus was going to return in 1844. This caused a tremendous spiritual revival in many Christian Churches, including Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist and Episcopalian or Anglican congregations. However, instead of pointing to the return of Jesus Christ the second time, the context of Daniel 8:14 indicates that after the "2,300 evenings and mornings" the God of heaven would judge, the plan of salvation and the will of God would be uplifted, and Satan's attacks upon God's people and work would be exposed. Here, in Daniel 8, is a further picture of the pre-advent judgement.

2 The VERDICT

When Jesus Christ finishes His work as our great High Priest in the heavens, the destiny of all will be fixed and the door of mercy closed. (See Revelation 8:3-5; 15:5-8.)

3 The EXECUTION of JUDGEMENT

The second coming of Christ involves this aspect of judgement. He will come to give rewards. (Revelation 22:12.) The Lord Jesus Christ will:

- Reward the believers: Believers will be caught up to be with Christ, and during the 1,000 years they will be involved in a work of judgement. (See Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3.)
- Reward the unbelievers: When Christ comes the wicked will be destroyed. (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10.) After the 1,000 years they will rise to face judgement before the throne of God and their final fate, the second death. (Revelation 20:5, 11-17.)

WHO IS THE JUDGE?

The judgement is conducted in the presence of God the Father as the whole universe of angels look on. (Daniel 7:9,10.) However, the work of deciding our destiny has been given to Jesus Christ. He "is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead." Acts 10:42. (Also see John 5:22.) He also speaks as our advocate or mediator or High Priest. (Read Matthew 10:32,33; John 5:24; Romans 8:1; 1 John 2:1.)

WHO ARE THE WITNESSES?

God and His holy angels witness every aspect of our lives. We are accountable for everything we do or say or think. (See Hebrews 1:13,14; 4:12,13; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36,37.) The record of heavenly memory will testify to what we have done. The Scripture speaks of: (1) the individual record, (Psalm 139:15,16) (2) the record of sin, (Jeremiah 2:22) (3) the book of remembrance, (Malachi 3:16) and (4) the book of life. (Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 20:15; 21:27.)

WHAT IS THE STANDARD IN THE JUDGEMENT?

The law of the ten commandments is the standard by which the character and lives of people will be tested in the judgement. James wrote, "Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom." James 2:12. (Compare Ecclesiastes 12:13,14.) In Revelation, the scenes that lead to judgement are associated with the ten commandments. (See Revelation 11:19; 12:17; 14:12; 15:15. Compare Exodus 31:18; 32:15,16; 38:21.)

CAN OUR SIN BE ERASED? HOW WILL YOU STAND IN THE JUDGEMENT?

We can have the record of our sinfulness completely removed or blotted out for Jesus Christ took our place and died for us. In Him there is cleansing from sin. "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you - even Jesus." Acts 3:19,20. (See 1 John 1:5-9; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; John 12:30-33; John 3:16.) God's judgements are and will be true and right. (See Revelation 15:3; 16:7; 19:2.) For the faithful believer and obedient follower of Jesus Christ the judgement is good news for it vindicates and clears both the believer and God.
