

DISCOVER PROPHECY



Facing The Judgment

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Fearing Judgment

Throughout the Bible there are references to judgment. The day of judgment, judgment executed and the measure of judgment. This topic of the Bible often scares or worries people. “And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned” Matthew 12:36,37. Verses like this one make people wonder whether they will find salvation when the day of judgment comes.

However, when we investigate this topic throughout the Word, we find a message of solemn warning and better yet, great joy and praise!

The Sanctuary

The Old Testament sanctuary service was used by God to illustrate to the people the plan of salvation. The death of Jesus upon Calvary’s cross, the measure of righteousness in the law of God, the forgiveness of sin are just a few of the messages taught through the symbolic services of the sanctuary. In addition to these was the truth of judgment.

“And He shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel, and because of their transgressions, in regard to all their sins; and thus He shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities...for it is on this day that atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you; you shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord” Leviticus 16:16,30.

Here in the Bible we see the topic of the day of atonement. The day of atonement is the Old Testament symbol of the sanctuary services that teach us the truth about judgment and the coming judgment day. In this we can gain God’s perspective on the judgment. What it is, how it will be carried out and who those are who will find redemption in Jesus Christ.

The Daily Services

The sanctuary had many services but the two main services were the daily services and the day of atonement. The daily service took place as it is described, daily. This service, symbolized the justification process we

go through in Christ.

The sanctuary itself was made up of two rooms or compartments. These were known as the holy and most holy places.

Outside the sanctuary was the altar of sacrifice. When a person committed a sin, he would come to the sanctuary with a lamb (or another animal as described in the Bible) and would take it to the priest at the altar of sacrifice. There at the altar, he would confess his sin over the lamb, while laying his hands upon the animal. His sin was then transferred from himself to the lamb. He was now forgiven his sin and the lamb now carried it.

Next, the man would kill the lamb. Usually taking a sharp knife, he would take the lamb’s head and cut the throat of the innocent animal. How unfortunate that this helpless animal paid the price of death for the sin of another. The blood would flow from the animal and the priest would catch it in a small bowl.

The priest, after washing himself in the golden laver (bowl) located next to the altar of sacrifice, would then enter the sanctuary into the holy place. In the holy place was three articles of furniture, the seven branch candlestick, table of show bread and the altar of incense. The seven branch candlestick illuminated the compartment and the show bread located on the other side. The priest would then take the blood and sprinkle it onto the altar of incense. The smoke would ascend into the air and go over the vail that separated the two compartments. The smoke would enter and linger in the most holy place, thus transferring the sin now from the blood of the lamb to the sanctuary. It would be recorded there until the sanctuary was cleaned.

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

The sins of people coming to the sanctuary all year long were then transferred to the most holy place and recorded there. Once a year then, the sanctuary would be cleansed. This cleaning process, not only cleaned the sanctuary but also the people in Israel. This cleansing process occurred once a year and was known as the day of atonement.

In preparation for the day of atonement, the people were called to make a choice whether they wanted

forgiveness from God or not. If they wanted forgiveness, they need only ask for it, if they didn't, they would be expelled from the city and would no longer be welcome.

When the day of atonement came, two goats were chosen. These goats were placed side by side and lots were cast (similar to rolling the dice or flipping a coin) and the two goats would be distinguished from each other.

After sacrificing a bull for a sin offering as they had done throughout the daily service, the goat was sacrificed. The priest would lay both of his hands upon the goat and confess over it all the sins of the nation. The sins of the people were then once again transferred to the goat. Once the goat was killed, the blood was taken into the sanctuary, this time to the most holy place. The blood of the goat was sprinkled upon the mercy seat (ark of the covenant) and at that moment, all the people are forgiven their sins.

Once the priest came out, he would take the second goat, known as the scapegoat or Azazel, and confess the sin of the people upon it. Different from the first, this goat does not atone for the sin of the people. This goat receives the sins, but only after the price of death was paid by the first.

The sins of the sanctuary are transferred to the goat, thus cleaning the sanctuary, and the goat was led out into the wilderness where he would wander and eventually die.

Thus, the sanctuary and the people were once again cleansed and stood as perfect before God. Those who did not want to take advantage of this redemption were cast out of the city. Thus the day of atonement was known as the day of judgment because it was on that day that the people were either atoned for or ultimately lost.

The Judgment

One of the angels in Revelation, speaking of God said, "with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come'" Revelation 14:7.

The Bible says that the judgment of God has come and that we are to give Him glory.

Interestingly, when we view the judgment, we picture ourselves being investigated by God, as if He were looking for an opportunity to cast us out of the kingdom. Have you ever considered the likelihood that God was in judgment too? Remember, in the great controversy, Satan is making claims against God;

worlds, angels and mankind are determining if He is just. "...let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, 'That Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and mightest prevail when Thou dost judge.'" Romans 3:4. God is actually determined just and righteous by how He interacts with us sinners.

"And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,' declares the Lord God, 'When I prove Myself holy among you in their sight'" Ezekiel 36:23.

Wow! God is vindicated (decreed righteous and just) by His interaction with us. All will know, through the judgment that God is a just God. Who will know? Everyone, even others beings. "...in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in heavenly places" Ephesians 3:10.

The next question is then, "How will God be vindicated?" What is the manner of His being made known as righteous. God, according to the previous verses, uses His people or church to represent Him.

"Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come" Revelation 14:7. Since the hour of His judgment has come, we are to "Give Him glory." What does it mean to give God glory? It is nothing more than to honor another through obedience. As we experience the grace of Jesus Christ and out of a motivation of love, follow His commands and will for our lives, we bring glory to His name in obedience.

Notice how God can be glorified in His actions to us sinners, "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight..." And what does this forgiveness do for God's name? "...so that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak and blameless when Thou dost judge" Psalm 51:1-4.

In the judgment then, who is being judged? Mankind is being judged as to whether we are obedient to God or not. God is being judged in how He responds to us sinners.

A Great Division

Once judgment has been executed, there will be two camps, those who are followers of God and those who

are not. The Bible talks about both groups using the symbolism of harvest. “And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe’” Revelation 14:15. These are the righteous, those who are faithful to God, ultimately receiving eternal life.

The other group is also mentioned, this time in a less favorable light. “And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had a sharp sickle, saying, ‘Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe’” Revelation 14:18. Ultimately then, those grapes were crushed or destroyed.

When judgment has finished, these two groups will ultimately receive the result of their choices. We who chose Christ to eternal life, those who did not will perish. All of us must first appear before the judgment seat of Christ to determine who will be in which camp. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad” 2 Corinthians 5:10. Two groups, two ways of life, two choices, two ultimate outcomes.

“Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep holy. Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done” Revelation 22: 11,12.

Whose the Judge?

At first glance, these verses may appear as if we will receive eternal life on the basis of works; that if we’re good enough, we might have salvation. But is that what the Bible says? Is the Bible inconsistent? Does it say in one place that we are saved by faith and another by works?

Yes! Both are true. That all depends on your choice. You see, if we work for our salvation, we’ll receive the wages for our works (death). If we come to Jesus and except His works for us in His life and death upon the cross, we will be saved.

So when we stand before the judgment scene, in the presence of God, will we find salvation or condemnation? We can gain a better understanding of this by looking at the one who does the judging. “For

not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son” John 5:22. According to the Bible, who is the judge? Who will be the one to decree the verdict as to our eternal destiny? Jesus Christ!

Does Jesus want us saved or lost? According to the Bible, is the judge looking for an opportunity to save us or cast us out? Does He want to give us death or life? “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life” John 5:24. Jesus died so we would be saved and when we accept Jesus, we no longer have to fear judgment, because we have life in Him!

Jesus is our judge. Jesus wants to save us. The evidence presented before Him is His works and our faith. Who is our defense attorney? In the Bible, the high priest was the one who ministered in behalf of the guilty. Who is our high priest before the heavenly courts? “Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession” Hebrews 4:14. Grasp the concept! Jesus is the judge. His death and life is our evidence. Our faith in Him is our testimony. And He is our defense attorney! We can’t loose! Everything is set for us to receive eternal life.

What about our sins? What about all the bad things we have done? Won’t those be brought before the court scene? How will those match up to our faith? According to the Bible, our life of sin will not be presented as evidence. No matter how hard the Devil may try! “I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you” Isaiah 44:22.

With information like this, those of us who have come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior have no fear of judgment at all. In it God is vindicated and we are saved! Praise the Lord! Aren’t you glad you have received Jesus as your savior and He is operating as your judge, priest and defense?

The Time Of The Judgment

The Bible also talks a great deal about the timing of the judgment. The book of Daniel speaks, to a great degree, on the subject of judgment and not only the nature of it, but when it will take place. “Behold, I am going to let you know what will occur at the final period of the indignation, for it pertains to the appointed time of the end.... And the vision of the evenings and mornings which has been told is true, but keep the vision secret, for it pertains to many days in the future” Daniel 8:

19,26. When is the future according to Daniel's timing? When is the final period of the indignation? When is the time of the end? Are we there now? How much closer? That's what Daniel was asking in relation to the judgment. He knew that the judgment and cleansing of the sanctuary were the same. When would the sanctuary be cleansed, or judgment occur?

That's what Daniel was asking. "How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled? And he said to me, 'For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored'" Daniel 8:13,14.

This is the first part of the judgment, the second part focuses on the time of the end, the longest time prophecy in the Bible and the nature of the judgment. Be sure to get the information for our next topic, "The Beginning of the End."

