

All of us struggle with old habits and compulsions, but God promises to counter the pull of the old with the pull of the new:

“And I WILL PUT MY SPIRIT IN YOU and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”—Verse 27.

Remember these promises as you start on your spiritual journey. Let God’s perspective sink in deep, and Jesus will deliver you from an “empty way of life” through His Holy Spirit.

Dear Father in heaven: Thank You for the gift of Jesus who died, not for Himself, but for our sins. Thank You for appointing Him our Advocate, our High Priest, and our Judge. What hope and confidence that gives us! Just now I wish to again place my life in Jesus’ hands. I accept His promise to deliver me from an empty way of life and prepare me for heaven. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

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DISCOVER

FROM GUILTY SINNER TO FORGIVEN SAINT



here were no fingerprints. No weapon was ever discovered. No one saw the murderer enter the office of psychologist Michael Phillips. No one even heard the shots ring out. But Dr. Phillips was found sprawled behind his desk. Five bullets had pierced his vested suit.

It seemed the perfect crime. Detectives at first could find no clues. But then they noticed a tiny wire attached to a pencil holder on Dr. Phillips' desk. The wire led to a tape recorder in a desk drawer. The pencil holder, they realized, actually concealed a microphone.

The investigators quickly rewound the tape and, to their amazement, began to listen to a replay of the actual crime. A man named Anthony Inciarrano had entered the office and began a heated argument with Dr. Phillips. Shots rang out. The tape ended with the terrible moans of the psychologist, dying on the carpet.

Every awful detail had been recorded. The murderer thought his crime would forever remain a secret. He'd been so careful in leaving no clues. But there was an unseen witness who told the whole story.

In this guide we're going to learn about God's final judgment when human beings are "judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books" (Revelation 20:12). (*Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptural texts in the DISCOVER guides are from the New International Version of the Bible [NIV].*) It's a sobering topic. Those who've imagined that their misdeeds have been completely concealed will be in for a big surprise. Individuals, for example, who've made long, pious prayers in church each week, while secretly abusing their spouses at home, will have to confront a shocking record.

But you're also going to learn why the judgment is wonderfully good news for those who've found security in Christ.

"No your Majesty," the man answered, "I am guilty and richly deserve all that I get."

The king turned to the guard and called out loudly, "Come and release this rascal quickly, before he corrupts this fine lot of innocent people."

How do we prepare for the judgment? How do we get ready for Christ to come? Simply by an honest confession of the truth. Simply by acknowledging this great discovery: I richly deserve the penalty of death for my sins, but Another has taken my place and given me a wonderful pardon.

Make a commitment right now that, whatever happens, you'll keep your relationship with Christ eye-to-eye honest and heart-to-heart sincere.

7. DELIVERED FROM YOUR EMPTY WAY OF LIFE

As the Lamb of God and our High Priest, Jesus not only covers our past and secures our future, He also empowers our present.

***"You were redeemed FROM THE EMPTY WAY OF LIFE . . . with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."*—1 Peter 1:18-19.**

He delivers us from an "empty way of life." Jesus offers us the moral equivalent of a heart transplant.

***"I WILL CLEANSE YOU from all your impurities and from all your idols. I WILL GIVE YOU A NEW HEART and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."*—Ezekiel 36:25, 26.**

earth to reward them:

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. . . . Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.”—Revelation 22:12, 14.

Are you ready for Jesus to come? Or is there something you’ve been hiding from Him? Do you have an open and honest relationship with the One who longs to be your Advocate?

An awareness of the judgment shouldn’t make us anxiously dig into our past for some sin that we may have forgotten to confess. But it should motivate us to put everything on the table before God—no secrets, no games.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”—1 John 1:9.

Confession simply means agreeing with God concerning the problems He convicts us about. We’re willing to face them. We accept His forgiveness and acknowledge our need of His power and grace.

While visiting a prison in Potsdam, King Frederick William I listened to a number of pleas for pardon. All the inmates swore that prejudiced judges, perjured witnesses, or unscrupulous lawyers were responsible for their imprisonment. From cell to cell the same story of wronged innocence continued.

But at one cell the inmate had nothing to say. Surprised, Frederick joked, “I suppose you are innocent too.”

1. YOU CAN FACE THE JUDGMENT UNAFRAID

Who will judge the world?

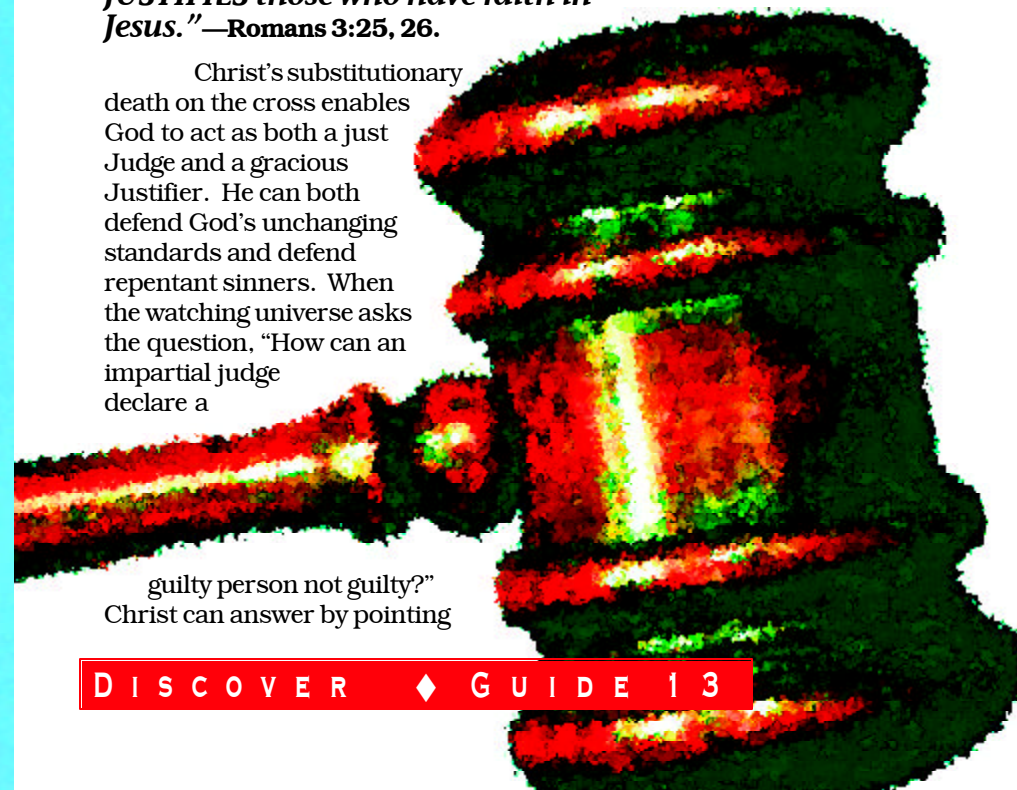
“The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”—John 5:22.

How did the cross prepare Christ to become our judge?

“God presented [Jesus] as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, . . . so as to be JUST AND THE ONE WHO JUSTIFIES those who have faith in Jesus.”—Romans 3:25, 26.

Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross enables God to act as both a just Judge and a gracious Justifier. He can both defend God’s unchanging standards and defend repentant sinners. When the watching universe asks the question, “How can an impartial judge declare a

guilty person not guilty?” Christ can answer by pointing



to the scars in His hands. He has absorbed the just penalty of sin in His own body.

[Guide 12 gave us insight into how Jesus, the Lamb of God and our representative before God's throne, has prepared us for the judgment day by resolving the sin problem.]

What does Jesus offer in exchange for our life of sin?

“God made him [Christ] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”—2 Corinthians 5:21.

Because of Christ, God can perform a marvelous act of substitution. Our life of sin is exchanged, in a judicial sense, for Christ's life of righteousness. Because of Jesus' sinless life and death, God can forgive us and treat us as if we'd never sinned. What is more, He buries our sins in the depth of the sea and presents the record of His sinless life (which the cross has declared “admissible evidence”) as a replacement for the damning record of our sinful life. This is exactly what we need in the judgment in order to stand before a holy God.

Heaven preserves a record of every individual life (Revelation 20:12). God evaluates every action (1 Samuel 2:3). He keeps track of every word ever spoken and every thought that has ever crossed the mind (Matthew 12:36). That's the bad news for those who imagine their secret sins and crimes will never return to haunt them.

But there is wonderfully good news for all who've sincerely accepted Christ as their Advocate before the Father: “The blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Jesus has “wiped out” our sins (Acts 3:19). In place of our very flawed past, Christ presents the spotless record of His

6. FACING YOUR LIFE RECORD IN THE JUDGMENT

Since 1844, according to the prophecy in Daniel 8 and 9, Christ has taken on a judicial role in an investigative judgment, blotting out the record of our sins and cleansing the heavenly temple. Concerning this, Peter said:

“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.”—Acts 3:19.

This pre-advent judgment now going on in heaven investigates the records of all the righteous dead and of all the righteous who are alive in order to validate in the minds of the onlooking universe who will be among the saved when Jesus comes. As our Judge, Jesus “wipes out” all of the sins of the righteous from their life record in heaven, sweeping them away “like the morning mist” (Isaiah 44:22). He thrusts them into infinity—“as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12). Sin will vanish from the universe for all time (Revelation 21:1).

If you had the opportunity to alter your life record, what changes would you make? You'd probably rush to X out quite a few embarrassing entries. The good news is that Christ does this more thoroughly than we ever could. When your name comes up in judgment, it will be an easy matter to face your life record—IF you've accepted Christ as your Substitute, your Saviour.

Because Jesus is confident that after the righteous enter heaven they will never again sin, He clears their record of every trace of sin and credits them with His own perfect life. He then returns to

consecrated goat. He then carried its blood into the Most Holy Place and ministered before the ark of the covenant which contained the Ten Commandments beneath the atonement cover. The High Priest sprinkled this cleansing blood before the atonement cover to show that the blood of Jesus, the coming Redeemer, would pay the penalty for sin. The High Priest then symbolically removed the confessed sins from the sanctuary and placed them on the head of another goat, which was led out into the wilderness to die (Leviticus 16:20-22).

This ceremony on the yearly **Day of Atonement** cleansed the sanctuary from sin. **The people regarded it as a day of judgment** because those who refused to confess and seek divine pardon for their sins were considered unrighteous and were “cut off from His [God’s] people” (Leviticus 23:29).

What the High Priest did symbolically once a year, Jesus does **once for all time** as our High Priest (Hebrews 9:6-12). In the great judgment day

He removes from the sanctuary the confessed sins of all who have accepted Jesus as Saviour. If we have confessed our sins, He will forever blot out the record of our sins at that time. This is the work of judgment that began in 1844.

In 1844 when the hour of God’s judgment began in heaven and Jesus began His work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, a judgment hour message began to be preached throughout the world (Revelation 14:6-7). A future DISCOVER guide will deal with this special message.



perfect life (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Let’s take an in-depth look at what qualifies Jesus, our Advocate and Judge, to deal with our sin problem. (If you have trouble with mathematics, which many people do, we’d like to suggest that you read the next three sections through rapidly. Don’t get bogged down in the numbers. You can understand the important facts in the rest of this guide even if you don’t fully understand the math.)

2. CHRIST CAME ON TIME

At His baptism, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit:

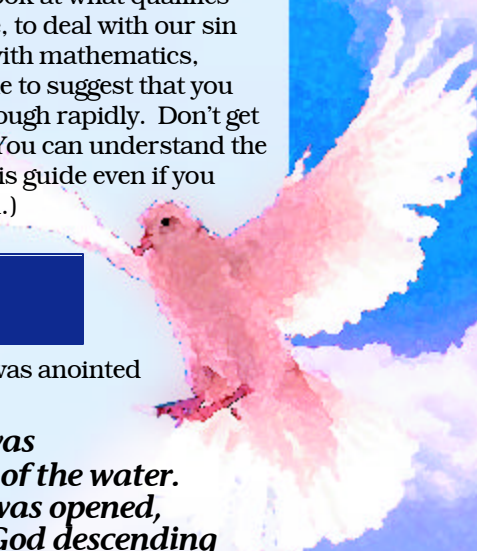
“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’”—Matthew 3:16, 17.

Following Christ’s anointing by the Holy Spirit at His baptism, the disciples realized that the Messiah had arrived:

“‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ).”—John 1:41.

Knowing that the Hebrew word Messiah and the Greek word Christ both mean “the anointed one,” the disciples concluded that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah at the time of His baptism.

Luke, a disciple of Jesus, recorded the date of Jesus’ anointing as the Messiah as the fifteenth year of



the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1, 2). To us that would be the year A.D. 27.

The coming of the Messiah was predicted by many of the Old Testament prophets, and Christ appeared right on time as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy. As He began His ministry, Jesus announced:

“The time has come . . . The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”—Mark 1:15.

The baptism and anointing of our Saviour happened on time. The King James Version says, “The time is fulfilled.” But to what time does Christ refer? The time had arrived for Jesus to appear and be anointed. More than 500 years before Jesus came to this world, the prophet Daniel predicted the moment when Jesus would appear as the Messiah.

Did Daniel the prophet predict that Jesus would appear and be anointed as the Messiah in A.D. 27? Here is Daniel’s prophecy:

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens’ [margin: weeks] and sixty-two ‘sevens’ [weeks].”—Daniel 9:25.

Seven weeks and sixty-two weeks total sixty-nine weeks or 483 days (7 X 69 = 483 days). In symbolic Bible prophecy we count each day as equaling one year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34), so the 483 days equals 483 years. Daniel predicted that a command would go forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and



5. THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY CLEANSED—A JUDGMENT

The angel told Daniel that in 1844, at the end of the 2,300 years, “the sanctuary will be reconsecrated [cleansed, KJV].” But what does that mean?

Since A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed the temple at Jerusalem, God’s people have had no temple on earth. So the sanctuary to be cleansed, beginning in 1844, has to be the heavenly sanctuary of which the earthly temple was only a replica.

Now, what does the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary mean? Ancient Israel called the day for cleansing the earthly sanctuary Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It was really a day of judgment to the Hebrew people.

As we discovered in guide 12, Christ’s activity for us in the sanctuary has two phases: **1. The daily sacrifices** and ceremonies focus on the priest’s ministry in the first room of the sanctuary, **the Holy Place**. **2. The yearly sacrifices** and ceremonies concentrate on the High Priest’s ministry in the second room of the sanctuary, **the Most Holy Place** (Leviticus 16 and 23; Hebrews 9:1-5).

In the earthly temple, as people confessed their sins day by day, the blood of slaughtered animals was sprinkled on the corner of the altar, and the priests ate the meat in the Holy Place (Leviticus 4 and 6). Thus, in symbol, day after day the confessed sins were brought into the sanctuary and laid up there.

Then each year, on the Day of Atonement, the sanctuary was cleansed from all sins confessed during the past year (Leviticus 16). To effect this cleansing, the High Priest made a special sacrifice of a

Persia and Greece (Daniel 8:1-12, 20-26).

What is the fourth part of the prophecy?

“How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice . . . ? He said to me, ‘It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings [or days, KJV]; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated [cleansed, KJV].’”—Daniel 8:13, 14.

Daniel fainted before the angel could explain the 2,300-day part of the prophecy, and the eighth chapter closes with no interpretation of it. But later the angel reappeared and stated:

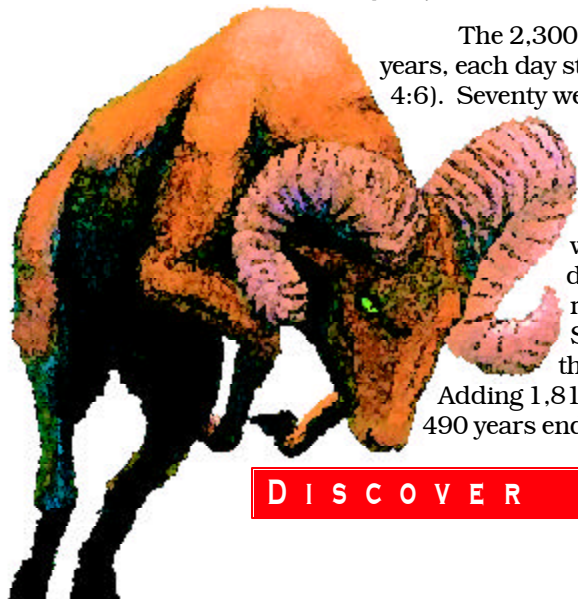
“I have now come to give you insight and understanding. . . . Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: seventy ‘sevens’ [margin: weeks] are decreed [cut off, KJV] for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness”—Daniel 9:22-24.

The 2,300 days are, of course, 2,300 years, each day standing for a year (Ezekiel 4:6). Seventy weeks, or 490 years,

constituted the first section of the longer period of 2,300 years. Both time periods started in 457 B.C. when Persia issued the decree “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.”

Subtracting 490 years from the 2,300 years, leaves 1,810.

Adding 1,810 years to A.D. 34, when the 490 years ended, brings us to A.D. 1844.



exactly 483 years after this command, the Messiah would appear.

Did Jesus appear as the Messiah at the appointed time? Artaxerxes issued the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in the year 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:7-13, 21-26). The period of 483 years, then, ended in A.D. 27. (457 B.C. + A.D. 27 = 484.) However, the decree went forth during the year 457 and Christ was anointed during the year 27, making them both partial years, so the correct span of time would be 483 years.)

At the very time appointed, in A.D. 27, Jesus appeared with the message: “The time has come.” The accurate fulfillment of this Bible prophecy is impressive confirmation that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah, God come down to our world in human flesh.

How long was Jesus to confirm the promise?

“He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven’ [margin: week].”—Daniel 9:27, first part.

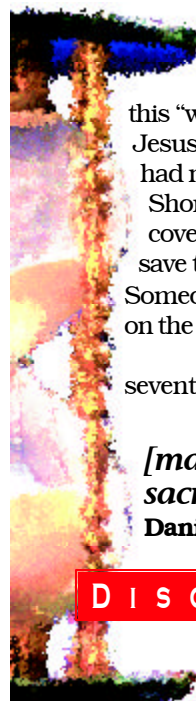
When we apply the year-day principle, this “week” would be seven years. So, for seven years Jesus would “confirm a covenant,” or promise. He had made to humanity—from A.D. 27 to A.D. 34.

Shortly after Adam and Eve sinned, God made a covenant promise to them, stating that He would save the human race from sin through the death of Someone He would send (Genesis 3:15). Jesus’ death on the cross fulfilled that covenant promise.

What was to happen in the middle of this seventieth week?

“In the middle of the ‘seven’ [margin: week] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.”—

Daniel 9:27, last part.



Jesus was crucified in A.D. 31, in “the middle of the week.” At the moment of Christ’s death, “the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:51). The sacrificial offering that was about to be slain (a symbol of Jesus “the Lamb of God”) escaped from the priest’s hands. These events became a sign that God no longer wanted humanity to offer animal sacrifices. Fulfilling prophecy down to the letter, Jesus “put an end to” any need for animal sacrifices to be offered (Daniel 9:27). Since the time of Christ’s death, we have direct access to God through Jesus, the Lamb of God and our High Priest.

3. THE ASSURANCE OF SINS FORGIVEN

According to Daniel’s prophecy, why did Jesus die?

“The Anointed One will be cut off but not for himself.”—Daniel 9:26, margin.

At his death on the cross, Jesus was “cut off, but not for himself.” Jesus lived a perfect life, the only one to do so in our world. He died “not for himself,” not to pay a penalty for His own sin, but to pay a penalty for your sins and my sins and for the sins of the entire world.

How can we know that God has forgiven all our sins and accepted us?

“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. . . . ALL HAVE SINNED and fall short of the glory of God, and are JUSTIFIED freely BY HIS GRACE through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement [margin: taking away sin], THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.”—Romans 3:22-25.

The key points in these verses are: We “all have sinned,” but because of God’s “grace,” all “are justified” who have “faith” in the cleansing power of Christ’s “blood.”

Two things happen when we are justified:

1. God declares us forgiven, atoning for, or taking away, the guilt of our past sins.

2. God declares us righteous; “righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ.”

God’s way of giving us complete security is to justify us by faith in Christ. Jesus promises, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). All of us worn out by the struggle to be good enough, to measure up on our own, can find real rest in Christ’s gracious acceptance. All of us who are burdened by scars from the past and by an aching sense of inadequacy and shame, can find peace and wholeness in the Christ who at the cross opened His arms to us.

4. THE TIME FOR THE JUDGMENT TO BEGIN

The eighth and ninth chapters of the great prophecy of Daniel are closely connected. (After you complete the DISCOVER Guides, you will have the opportunity to take a bible course on Daniel that gives a detailed explanation of both chapters.)

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, an angel showed the prophet a great panorama of the future. Daniel saw a ram and a he-goat, representing respectively Medo-