



## 11. THE EMPIRE FILES: Mysterious Numbers of The Sealed Scroll

Sadly injustice sometimes occurs in law courts. On a larger scale, we remember Auschwitz, Dachau, Kampuchea, Rwanda - the dreaded killing fields of the world. Don't you suppose there are millions of people who long for the record to be set straight and justice to be meted out? Whether we are innocent or guilty, there will be one last court of appeal. Jesus pointed out that we would all have to give account for our words in this final judgment (Matthew 12:36,37). The apostle Paul emphatically stated that even Christians ("we") must appear before God's judgment throne (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 4:4,5). He even noted that Christ would be the judge (Acts 17:31). Mark it well, both the Old and New Testaments are incontrovertibly clear – a judgment day has been scheduled and every man, woman and child will stand before that bar!

On what basis shall we all be judged? Daniel informs us that it will be according to the records of God's books (Daniel 7:9,10). In the divine courtroom of judgment the evidentiary materials are described as "books." Remember Jesus' words that every word will justify or condemn us in the judgment (Matthew 12:36,37). Somebody's keeping a record of every word I speak and every deed I do, which one day I will have to face up to in the final judgment! Now it could be that were Daniel writing today, he would have chosen to use the words – "And the court sat in judgment and the computer files were opened."

If ever there is a generation that should understand records of people's lives it's our generation. How often have you stood staring at those surveillance cameras in banks, supermarkets, and train stations? They exist for one purpose - the apprehension of persons engaged in criminal acts. The point is that God wants us all to know that an infallible, indelible record is being kept on every human life on this planet. Some of us might live a bit differently, knowing that one day we shall have to face the infallible records of our own lives?

But is it fair for God to judge us on the basis of our works and words? Isn't that a legalistic and unloving way for Him to treat His friends? Absolutely not when we consider that any person who accepts Christ's forgiving grace also becomes a new person whose life is radically changed into a life that becomes more and more like that of Christ if they continue to follow God's Spirit (2 Corinthians 5:17). University lecturer, Sakae Kubo writes - *"Let us consider what it would mean if the judgment were not based on works. By what would God judge us - our skin, our race, our social class, our education, our looks, our talents, our strength, our membership in the church, our mere profession of Christ? God can judge us only by our works - good or bad"* (Sakae Kubo, *Your Summons to Court* p 20). God simply has no other choice. He isn't being legalistic; He is being logical, He's being FAIR - let the record speak for itself.

By what standard will God measure the record of our lives in the judgment? The Bible answers our question in James 2:8-12. You and I shall be judged before God by the judicial standard of the Ten Commandments – the moral law of freedom – all TEN of the Ten Commandments, says James. You see, there are some people who try to excuse themselves by saying – *"Oh, I know the Ten Commandments speak about 'You shall not bear false witness,' but there are times when it's more profitable for me to tell a lie - my business depends on it, my career is enhanced by it, and so a lie now and then won't hurt anybody."* You're right - maybe it will hurt nobody - but James is unflinchingly honest with you and me in his declaration that in the judgment our infractions and our disobediences will in fact hurt ourselves permanently!

Some people say – *“Hey, what difference does it make which day I worship on - the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment doesn't have to be obeyed does it - 'Remember the 7th day to keep it holy' - why for me, it's more convenient on another day besides God's Day - surely He'll understand!”* But Jesus Christ Himself declared: *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).* A mere profession of Christ and Christianity will save no one! Notice what Jesus said is the hallmark of a true follower of His: *“If you love Me,”* Jesus said, *“keep My commandments” (John 14:15).* Obedience is always the hallmark of genuine love and trust. Do you think the great and eternal Law Giver will in the end simply dismiss His own law? *“Forget it, forget it, no big deal, do what you want, do as you please, it doesn't matter to Me how you live!”* Are you kidding? There isn't a parent, a wife, a husband, a lover, and a friend alive who would respond that way! How then could anyone suggest that God would treat His own law as inconsequential and allow His children to live any old way they please? Especially since we now know that All TEN of the Ten Commandments were given to us by God to protect and preserve our friendship relationship with Him and our relationships with each other. In the judgment you will never hear God exclaim, *“Oh, well, relationships don't matter anymore!”*

It is critical to note that John saw 3 angels flying through heaven with 3 urgent messages to prepare the world for the second coming of Jesus. The 1st message was that the judgment had begun (Revelation 14:7). The second and third messages come after the 1st in time and before Jesus comes (Revelation 14:14,15). Clearly judgment begins before the second coming of Jesus.

But now with all solemnity I must tell you that God's final judgment in the courtroom above has already begun – we are in this great and final judgment hour! Many people believe that there is some sort of celestial judgment that takes place some time in the distant future. But according to what you're about to read, the great judgment has already begun and the human race is already being arraigned before the judgment bar!

Daniel saw a war between a goat representing Medo-Persia, and a ram representing Greece (Daniel 8:3-8,19-22). He noticed a little horn, which attacked Christ, destroyed the temple and its services, cast down truth, and destroyed God's people (Daniel 8:9-12,23-25). This was the power of Rome in its 2 phases: **1).** The Roman Empire, which killed Christ and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem; **2).** The church centered in Rome as it fell into apostasy, and persecuting the followers of Jesus for 1260 years. The question was asked, *“How long would all this go on” (Daniel 8:13)?* The answer came, *“Unto 2300 days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14).* Daniel knew 1 day represents 1 year in prophecy, and thus 2300 days represent 2300 years (Ezekiel 4:6). But why so long? Unable to understand he became sick over it all (Daniel 8:27). In the next chapter he was visited by the angel Gabriel and told to understand the time now (Daniel 9:22,23). He was told that the 70 weeks represent 490 years and were *“cut off” (Hebrew)* from the 2300 years (Daniel 9:24). We studied the 490 years previously and discovered: the prophecy began in 457 BC; that Christ's baptism was in 27AD; His death was in 31AD; and the gospel started to go to the non-Jews in 34 AD. Since these events all happened on time, therefore the end date - 1844 (34AD plus the 1810 years left when we subtract 490 from 2300) must be correct. But what sanctuary would be cleansed in 1844 (Daniel 8:14)?

There has been no earthly temple to God since 70AD, but the Bible reveals there is a heavenly temple where Jesus is High Priest (Hebrews 8:1,2; Revelation 11:19). Thus the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed, but what does that mean? Every day of the year, the confessed sins of the Israelite nation went into their temple via the sacrificial death and blood of slain animals and through the mediation of the priests. Thus the temple or sanctuary was becoming ceremonially defiled. Once a year Israel had a day of cleansing of their sanctuary, called the Day of Atonement, when the sins of the people needed to be taken out of the temple (Leviticus 16; 23:26-32). A goat was killed and its blood taken into the Most Holy Place, where the ark of the 10 commandments was, and sprinkled on the lid, called the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:14). Thus the whole sanctuary and the people were said to be cleansed. This day was regarded as a day of Judgment - a symbol of the end-time judgment (Leviticus 16:29-32). Thus Daniel's *“cleansing of the sanctuary”* refers to the fact that since 1844 judgment has been in session in Heaven.

The Bible knows no time prophecy beyond 1844. We are living in borrowed time. Now is the time to accept Jesus. The judgment is a time of confidence for Christ's friends, for He is not only our defense lawyer or High Priest (1 John 2:1; Heb 4:14-16; 7:24,25), but also our Judge (Acts 17:31) and the one who took our sins and the condemnation we deserve (1 John 2:2). We go to go to court with confidence. Our *“Big Brother”* is our friend. We don't know when Jesus will come (Matthew 24:30). We must come as we are to Him right now (Hebrews 7:25). Why not make the firm decision to place your life in His hands this very moment, and be secure in this time of judgment?