



## AQUITTED!

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE ALL YOUR  
SECRETS REVEALED TO THE WORLD?

### TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 07

“Wikileaks’ publication... of more than 250,000 diplomatic cables was the largest unauthorized release of contemporary classified information in history, it contained 11,000 documents marked secret.” (Massimo Calabresi, *Time*, Dec 13, 2010)

# GUILT AND DESPAIR

02 – AQUITTED!



**Billie Joe Armstrong**, singer and songwriter for the punk rock band Green Day on their *21st Century Breakdown* album, expresses the despair that is common to many people today. In the title track he sings:

*My generation is zero ...*

*21st Century Breakdown*

*I once was lost but never was found*

*I think I am losing what's left of my mind*

*To the 20th Century Deadline ...*

*My name is 'no-one' the long lost son.*

That's a rather despairing view of life, but that's the way it is for many!

In a *Rolling Stone* interview Armstrong says, **“We're in a transition, from one destructive era to something new, that is just as frightening as the past.”** He talks frankly about the roots of his discontent, like the “years of disconnection” in his family after his father died. “...my mom had to work graveyard shifts as a waitress. The resentment grew.”\*

Punk began with the Sex Pistols, in 1976, singing “Anarchy in the UK.” **Malcolm McLaren** (died April 2010), manager of the Sex Pistols, said, “Rock 'n' roll is not just music. You're selling an attitude too.” According to Gary Herman, punk is “the glorification of powerless, soulless despair and nihilistic perversity.”\*\*

\*David Friske, May 2009. \*\**Rock 'n' Roll Babylon*

Nihilism is the belief that life is meaningless.

Green Day's previous album *American Idiot*, along with 5 songs from *21st Century Breakdown*, has been made into a Broadway rock opera, with a movie following. From this album Armstrong sings:

*I walk a lonely road*

*The only one that I have ever known*

*Don't know where it goes*

*But it's home to me and I walk alone*

*I walk this empty street*

*On the boulevard of broken dreams*

*Where the city sleeps*

*And I'm the only one and I walk alone ...*

*Sometimes I wish someone out there will find me*

*Til then I walk alone*

That's sad, because we don't have to feel lost and alone. Jesus came to save the lost (Luke 19:10, page 743).

Guilt and despair can be destructive. For 17 years hip-hop artist, G-Dep, carried a secret that “weighed on” him. “Trying to get right with God” he admitted to police that he had shot John Henkel on October 19, 1993 but he didn't realise his victim had died, the *New York Post* reported. He confessed despite family and friends telling him not to. He is now in jail for murder.

## Your Day in Court

As we learned in Guide 4, we live in a fallen world that has lost connection with God. The Bible says we're all guilty—that is, we all fall short of God's standard, and Paul says "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," and be judged by how

we've lived "whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10, page 818). How do you think you'll go? On what basis can sinners stand before God and be acquitted? It's a sobering question. This Bible guide is about how Billie Joe Armstrong (and you) can be right with God and be saved from guilt and despair - that's the good news!

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## The Purpose of the Bible

1. Jesus' brother James, discusses the law of God as the standard of judgment. How many times do we need to break the law to become a lawbreaker? James 2:8-13 (page 855 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society, 00195)

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just \_\_\_\_\_ point is guilty of breaking \_\_\_\_\_ of it.

God's standard is 100, not 99 per cent or anything less. And none of us measure up to it. Imagine that you're dangling by a chain over a crocodile-infested lake in "Who Dares Wins!" How many links of the chain would need to break for you to fall in? That's right, only one! It's the same with God's law.

So far this isn't good news but bad news—and it gets worse! But it will get better, I can assure you. So how can we be put right with God and be acquitted in the judgment? Before we answer that question we need to understand what it means to be "acquitted" or "justified."

2. How does Moses, in discussing a court case, say the judges should decide the case? Deuteronomy 25:1 (page 142)  
When men have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, \_\_\_\_\_ the innocent and \_\_\_\_\_ the guilty.

Moses is describing a court case to settle a civil dispute. Acquittal, or justification, is a legal verdict. In a court case conducted fairly, with sufficient evidence, there are two possible verdicts—guilty or innocent. In this passage the judge acquits the innocent and condemns the guilty. In giving these the judge doesn't make people either innocent or guilty. He **declares** them to be so.

God, in acquitting the guilty, doesn't make them innocent but declares them to be so. The crucial question is: "On what basis can God declare guilty people innocent?" On what basis does God pardon sinners, accept them and adopt them as His children and take them to heaven?

3. Can God acquit people because they are innocent? How many have sinned? Romans 3:10, 23 (page 797)

There is \_\_\_\_\_ righteous, not even one.

For \_\_\_\_\_ have sinned and fall \_\_\_\_\_ of the glory of God.

Again, more bad news. God's standard of judgment is higher than we imagine. It is nothing less than perfection (100 per cent obedience to His law), and our true condition in His eyes is worse than we had dared to hope. Let's imagine again: you and your mate are being chased by a wild bull. The only way to safety is to jump across a chasm that is six metres wide and 100 metres deep. You're a better jumper than your mate. Your mate can only jump three metres. Too bad for him. You jump five metres. Are you any better off? Does it matter whether you can jump further than your mate if you can't get to the other side?

In much the same way, we may make a favourable impression when compared with other people, but none of us can stand up against God's standard.

4. Can we be justified or declared righteous by our own obedience to the law? What does the law do? Romans 3:20 (page 797)

Therefore \_\_\_\_\_ will be \_\_\_\_\_ righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become \_\_\_\_\_ of sin.

5. In writing to the Galatian church, Paul uses strong language. Can we be acquitted partly by a gift of grace and partly by our obedience? Galatians 5:4 (page 825)

You who are trying to be justified by law have been \_\_\_\_\_ from Christ; you have \_\_\_\_\_ away from \_\_\_\_\_.

## Now the Good News

6. How are sinners justified in God's judgment? Romans 3:24 (page 797); Ephesians 2:8, 9 (page 827)

[Sinners] are justified \_\_\_\_\_ by his \_\_\_\_\_ through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

For it is by \_\_\_\_\_ you have been \_\_\_\_\_, through \_\_\_\_\_ - and this not from yourselves, it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God - \_\_\_\_\_, so that no-one can boast.

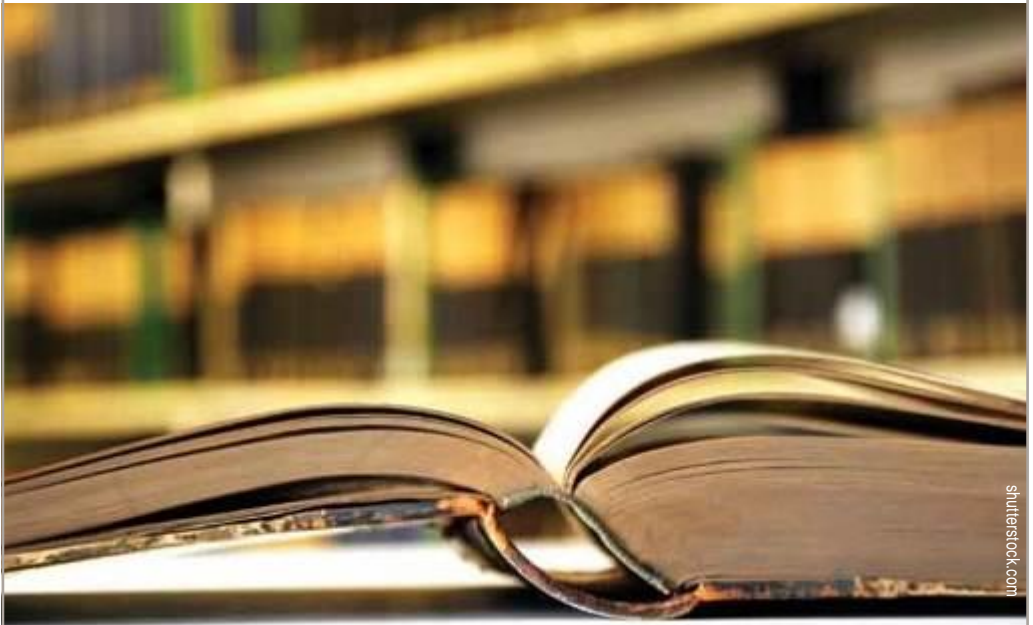
Grace is defined as "the free and unearned favour of God." Jesus revealed this grace in dying for us.

The word *redemption* means to "buy back."

7. What things are contrasted? How much does eternal life cost us? Romans 6:23 (page 799)

For the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin is \_\_\_\_\_, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of God is \_\_\_\_\_ life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

One characteristic distinguishing Christianity from all other religions is the teaching of salvation freely available by grace, through faith, apart from human works. It's a gift from God! When we accept Jesus, and what He's done for us, we receive God's gift of eternal life.



8. On what basis does God freely acquit us and declare us innocent or righteous in His sight? Romans 3:25, 26 (page 797); 1 John 4:10 (page 863)

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins.

Crucifixion (being nailed to a cross) was the common form of execution of criminals in Roman times. This is the way Jesus died.

## ATONEMENT = AT-ONE-MENT

The word *atonement* comes from two words, *at* and *one*. Jesus' death paid for the broken law (which is what sin is) that separates us from God. Now, through Jesus, we can be “**at one**” with God. We were made for friendship with God, and only in that relationship can we find our true meaning and happiness.

**Wikileaks** has received world-wide media attention since publishing leaked classified U.S. documents that have embarrassed especially the U.S. While some want founder Julian Assange tried for treason and executed, others consider the leaks show the skills of US diplomats, not their failings. Wikileaks is targeting the corporate world as well. **How would you feel if all your secret actions, words and thoughts were made public to everyone?** That would be more than embarrassing!

9. What does God do with our sins? Ephesians 1:7, 8 (page 827)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the \_\_\_\_\_ of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's \_\_\_\_\_ that he \_\_\_\_\_ on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Unlike Wikileaks, God will cast our sins into the "depths of the sea", separate them from us "as far as the east is from the west" and "remember" our sins "no more" (Micah 7:19; Psalm 103:12; Isaiah 43:25, pages 660, 428, 515). Isn't that great news!



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## God Requires Perfect Obedience

10. By whose obedience are we acquitted and declared righteous? Romans 5:18, 19 (page 799)

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the of the one man [Adam] the many were made \_\_\_\_\_, so also through the \_\_\_\_\_ of the one man [Jesus] the many will be made \_\_\_\_\_.

God requires 100 per cent obedience to the law, but we can't do it. The only way we can be righteous is through faith. By faith we can claim the goodness of Jesus, and God places this to our account. Jesus' obedience (righteousness, goodness) is accepted in place of our mistakes and God accepts and pardons us because of what Jesus has done.

11. How does this gift of righteousness and eternal life become mine? John 3:16 (page 752)

For God so loved the world that he \_\_\_\_\_ his one and only Son, that \_\_\_\_\_ in him shall not \_\_\_\_\_ but have \_\_\_\_\_ life.

God offers us the gift of eternal life. When we accept Jesus, and what He has done, we receive this gift. We'll say more about what faith is in the next Bible guide.



### THREE POSSIBILITIES

When faced with the problem of sin, God had **three possible options**:

- 1 To uphold the law and allow sinners to suffer the consequence - a broken relationship that results in death. God's mercy wouldn't allow Him this option because He loved us too much. Think of how a parent feels about a wayward child.
- 2 To forgive sinners and disregard His law. God's justice wouldn't allow this option, as it would result in chaos in the universe. On a smaller scale, imagine what would happen if people were allowed to disregard road laws when driving, or the rules of the game when playing basketball.
- 3 The third option is the only one that satisfies both God's justice and mercy. He would pay the penalty for our disobedience, thus upholding the law and at the same time forgiving us.



Jesus not only bridges the chasm that separates us from God, He also carries us across. He lived on earth and faced trials and temptations just as we do, yet He didn't make any mistakes. He took the blame for our sins and died for us so that we could be forgiven. He now offers to give us His righteous life in place of our sinful life.

When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, then, no matter what wrongs we've done, for His sake we're accounted righteous or perfect. Jesus' life stands in place of our life and we're accepted before God just as if we hadn't done anything wrong.

Let's illustrate. Consider two Year 12 high school students - one gets straight As, the other all Fs. It's obvious which one will pass and which one will fail. Supposing the teacher somehow swapped the names on the report cards. Based on those cards the A student would fail and the F student would pass. Well, that's what Jesus has done for us. He has swapped His record for ours. He died so that we could go to heaven, if we choose to accept Jesus and what He's done for us. That's a pretty good deal in anyone's terms.

## Bought to Set Free

The story is told of a big African slave in America who was up for sale. How inhuman can people get, that they can sell a fellow human being as one would sell an animal. Well, this slave still had some dignity left. He had decided he had had enough - he wouldn't work again. As he was being displayed before the buyers and they made their bids, he shouted as he raised his chained hands, "I won't work. I won't work!" One man persisted in bidding as others, realising they would have difficulty with this man, dropped out. The auctioneer called, "Sold to the highest bidder."

As the big black man was led to his new owner he shouted at him, "I tell you I won't work! I won't work!" The new owner said: "That's all right. I bought you to set you free." The black man's voice died as the words sunk into his mind. Was this a trick? He'd been a slave for so long. He couldn't believe his ears, until the man unlocked his chains and said: "You're free!" Free? It was too good to be true! He turned to the man and, falling at his feet, said, "I'll work for you for the rest of my life!"

What made the difference? As a slave he was forced to work, but being set free he was willing to work out of gratitude. That's the way it is in the Christian life. Jesus has set us free from condemnation and death. How would you like to respond to His gracious gift?



- I'm thankful for the free gift of forgiveness and acceptance by Jesus. I
- would like to accept what Jesus has done for me.
- I'd like to learn more about the meaning of grace.

From what does Jesus' grace set you free?

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