

## *The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment* *The Pre-Advent Judgment*

Lesson #12 for September 16, 2006

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 25:1; 1 Kings 8:32; Psalms 51:1-4; Matthew 22:1-13; Hebrews 9:22-24; Revelation 20:12; 22:12.

1. What is the eventual outcome of all of these world powers as pictured in Daniel 2, 7 and 8? Do these visions and their results scare you, or do they give you confidence that God will eventually triumph?
2. So what exactly happens when the sanctuary is cleansed? What happened to the sanctuary to make it dirty, contaminated etc.? In your mind is there a clear relationship between the Day of Atonement and judgment? Between the cleansing of the sanctuary and the pre-advent judgment?
3. As we have mentioned before, many of our Christian friends are not certain that even God has the ability to predict the future. By linking and paralleling Daniel 2, 7 and 8 we have seen that four world empires were predicted. Then there is a period of time during which the little horn seems to dominate and finally God's kingdom is set up. Have these prophecies proved to be accurate so far?
4. Step back in your mind a moment and ask yourself this question: what does God need/want to accomplish through the entire great controversy? Where did the controversy begin? Wasn't it in the sanctuary in heaven? Beside the throne of God? What needs to happen in order to correct all the falsehood and misrepresentations and lies that began right there? What needs to happen to God's people to make them safe to have in heaven for the rest of eternity? Why do you think God represents this ultimate victory for his people here on this earth as a "cleansing of the sanctuary" and a pre-advent judgment? Daniel 7:18 suggests that the saints will possess God's eternal kingdom. Would it be safe for God to hand his kingdom over to any group of human beings now living on planet Earth? What would need to happen to that group of people to make it safe?
5. Why is a pre-advent judgment needed? Let us review. **1)** We have heard many jokes about St. Peter at the pearly gates. What does this symbolize? All Christians believe that there will be some kind of "pre-advent judgment" except for those who believe in complete Universalism, that is, that everyone—even Satan—will eventually be convinced and return to heaven. If there is going to be a separation between those who are God's true people and those who have rejected him, (Matthew 25:31-46) then there must be some kind of "judgment". **2)** This judgment then must take place either at the person's death or sometime before the second advent of Jesus. For those Christians who believe in the immortality of the soul it must take place at that person's death. **3)** In order for a pre-advent judgment to make any sense, then, one must believe in the non-immortality of the soul as Seventh-day Adventists do. **4)** If we believe that God is omniscient (all-knowing), then there is no reason why he would need a pre-advent judgment. He could simply post a list of those who will be saved and those who will be lost. He could have done so back at the beginning of human history. So the pre-advent judgment cannot be for God's benefit. It must be for the benefit of others. Who are these others? The rest of the beings in the universe. If you do not believe such beings exist, then the pre-advent judgment would make no sense. **5)** Furthermore, in order for the pre-advent judgment to be fully comprehended, one must understand the great controversy which is taking place between Satan and God. One must understand the accusations that Satan has

made that God is arbitrary, vengeful, exacting, unforgiving, and severe; that he is an arbitrary judge and a harsh, exacting creditor. (These are all terms Ellen White uses.)

6. So how do we decide whether God or Satan is telling us the truth? The clearest way would be to observe how God deals with sinners. Everyone is nice to their friends, but a person's character can be really tested by the way he deals with his enemies. So how does God deal with his children who have turned into enemies? If all the false accusations and misunderstandings and lies about God could be cleared up—all of which began remember in the heavenly sanctuary—wouldn't that be correctly represented as a cleansing? If we could see through an open court system how God judges every one of his children, wouldn't we be able to make a clear decision about his trustworthiness? Without all of this background, it is difficult to make sense of the pre-advent judgment.
7. So who is judged at the time of the pre-advent judgment? The books of Daniel and Revelation seem to suggest that it is God's professed followers—people who have their names written in the Lamb's book of life. But Romans 3:4 seems to suggest that God himself is also being judged! How does this happen? If the truth becomes apparent in contrast to all the lies and misrepresentations of Satan and his emissaries here on this earth represented by the little horn, would that constitute a judgment, condemnation and a punishment for the little horn? Wouldn't the position of God's true people (referred to as saints) be vindicated and exonerated?
8. Is it important for God's judgment to be done in an open way before the entire onlooking universe? Why? Or why not?
9. Remember that God considered these issues so important that he was willing to die to answer the questions that had been raised against his character and government. As we have noted previously in Daniel 7-9, Daniel was pointed down to the time God would give his final answers: through the life and ministry of Jesus, (Daniel 9:24) Satan's accusations were all answered, and through the 2300 evenings and mornings prophecy (Daniel 8:14) he was pointed to the time when God would begin to judge the earth and vindicate his righteous children as he condemns Satan and his followers.
10. Who is judged in the pre-advent judgment? Read Matthew 22:1-14 and 25:31-46. Which of these parables do you think most closely represents the pre-advent judgment?
11. In Old Testament times the Day of Atonement was regarded as the day of judgment.
12. Is it important for us to recognize that in order for the judgment to be complete, the righteous must be shown to be right and the wicked must be shown to be wicked? How does this fit with Revelation 22:11? What is the ultimate standard by which we are judged? (John 3:17-21; 12:47,48) In what way does the truth serve as our judge? If God is able to replay our lives in 3-D, living color would that serve to demonstrate the truthfulness of his judgments and make clear our status? Or are motives rather than actions the critical issue?
13. In Hebrew thinking, for judgment to take place fairly, the righteous must be vindicated and the wicked must be punished. (Deuteronomy 25:1; 1 Kings 8:32).
14. In the context of our lessons how much is included under the title "the little horn"? Would it be a certain pope? All popes? The Roman Catholic system? All Catholics? All who have been led astray by Satan's lies and misrepresentations? Satan, himself?
15. Since the cleansing of the sanctuary appears to be the antitypical fulfillment of the Day of Atonement, what do you understand happened in that ancient sanctuary system on that special day? Was this a time of judgment? Cleansing? In the typical Day of

Atonement, sacrifices were offered for the priests and for the people; then the high priest carried the blood of the sacrificial animal into the most holy place where he in symbol picked up the sins of the whole year that had been transferred to the sanctuary and carried them out and placed them on the head of the Azazel goat. This goat was then led away into the desert never to return to God's people. This was a very concrete example of God's plan to separate sins from his people. (Leviticus 16)

16. **For those of us living at this end of the world's history, what do we believe must happen in order to bring sin, wickedness, death, sickness, and disease to a final end? What needs to happen to defeat Satan?** Does everyone in the universe need to see clearly that his lies and misrepresentations are false? How can God make that clear? When sin and sinners are no more, no one who remains alive among the righteous will ever again sympathize with Satan. How does God accomplish that?
17. On the other side of the coin, what does God need to do to vindicate his own handling of the sin problem? How does he convince us that his kingdom, his character, and his government are all just and righteous and that it is safe for us to live in harmony with them for the rest of eternity?
18. Would it be unreasonable for the beings in the rest the universe to have questions about God's plan to bring some of us former rebels back into the kingdom of heaven? After God has openly reviewed the cases of all who are being judged, will it be apparent to all those who are observing (Daniel 7:9,10) that he is righteous and that all of Satan's accusations are false? Will God be proved to be right in what he has said? (Psalm 51:4; Romans 3:4) Will there be any questions about God, or about the devil, left in the minds of the onlooking universe when God has finished with this judgment process?
19. When Jesus comes back again he collects the righteous dead and living and takes them home to heaven with him. The wicked either remain dead or die at that point. Does this suggest that the ultimate final judgment of every case has already been made? Why would it be necessary for God to judge the wicked later? What group of individuals might still have questions about God's judgment? Is the purpose of the millennium so that we as human beings will have a chance to review God's judgments?
20. "Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming" (MS 173, 1902). *S.D.A. Bible Commentary* Vol. 4, p. 1161; *LDE* 219; *Maranatha* 200; *FLB* 287; *1MR* 249,250; *10MR* 252. What is it that we need to be fully convinced about? Could we, before the second advent, be so convinced of the truth about God and about the devil that we would never be tempted to rebel again? Would that prepare us for the second coming?
21. Clearly, judgment is a scary thing for us as human beings. Imagine standing before an all-knowing God on the day of judgment! There will be no lawyers to twist the truth! Who is the "accuser of the brethren"? (Revelation 12:10) If you were allowed to sit beside God in the judgment and listen to Satan rehearsing your life story, do you think you could vote for yourself? The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit all speak for us, (Romans 8) while the devil is trying to accuse us. What is the result of this judgment? Will God be shown to be a perfectly righteous judge? (Romans 3:4) Will Satan be shown to be a liar, a murderer, a slanderer, and a false accuser of God's true people?
22. As you understand this judgment process how is it that we are "saved by faith" and "judged by works" but yet we face the judgment "on the basis of Christ's merits and not

our own.” Can you put all of this together clearly in your own mind and make sense of it? Do our works demonstrate our faith and our relationship to Christ?

23. **Scripture seems to suggest that every sin is a distrust of God. (Romans 14:23) If we really believed that God’s way was the best in every situation, and we understood that way clearly, would we always follow it? If we don’t do so now, what will happen to make it possible for us to decide to trust God forever in the future? While we talk a great deal about faith and trust and belief, do our lives demonstrate that we really trust God now?**
24. If you were an angel, or a being living on one of God’s other worlds that remained faithful, would you want anyone to be admitted to the heavenly kingdom without a careful evaluation of the safety of doing so? Certainly this would have to take place before that person was invited to come to heaven! God must at all cost prevent sin from arising ever again! When Jesus returns, he states clearly that he will have his rewards with him. (Revelation 22:12) Moreover, we will be judged by our works. (Matthew 25:31-46; Ecclesiastes 12:13,14; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:12) This requires a pre-advent judgment.
25. If the destiny of every person who has ever lived on our earth is to be decided in this pre-advent judgment, surely this must be considered as a momentous occasion. How we look at it, and how we understand it, depends on how we understand God’s character. In the great-controversy-trust-healing model such a pre-advent judgment is absolutely essential to our understanding of the vindication of God’s character.
26. While we may have come to formulate a fairly clear picture in our own minds about how all of this takes place, we should not rush to condemn our Christian friends who have trouble understanding it. It seems hard for them to understand why it would be necessary for a heavenly sanctuary to be cleansed! If you don’t understand the issues in the great controversy, it does not make any sense.
27. So what is your hope and assurance as you face this pre-advent judgment? Do you have hope because you are covered by the robe of Christ’s righteousness? Because, in your place, God sees only the records of Christ’s merits? Because you understand the character of God and how the judgment takes place? Or because after the third coming you recognize that every individual—even among the wicked including the devil himself—will bow and say that God’s judgments were fair and righteous and that his dealing with each of them was the right thing to do? (Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:5-11)
28. Do we need to see eventually how God has gone about the judgment process, vindicating the righteous and condemning the wicked? What could we learn from that? Will it help to make us certain of our trust in him?
29. Why does God allow himself to be judged by his children both righteous and wicked on the basis of how he, in turn, judges them? What is accomplished by this?
30. Are you thankful for the picture of God that we have? Do you feel comfortable with him? Do you believe that he will be fair to you in the judgment?

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