

***The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment***  
***The Meaning of Judgment Today***

Lesson #14 for September 30, 2006

Scriptures: Job 1:7-11; Psalms 73:1-17; Matthew 5:16; John 14:2; Acts 1:11; 1 Corinthians 4:5,9; Ephesians 2:8-10; 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; Revelation 22:12.

1. So what have we learned about this unique doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Are you convinced that there is a solid biblical basis for what we have studied? Does the very existence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church depend upon our interpretation of this doctrine, as some believe? **What difference does it make to you in your life in the 21st century? What does it say to us about God?**
2. We are living in a period of time which has been described as “the delay”. In what sense is this a delay? If God is omniscient doesn't he know exactly when he will come? Of course! Does anyone else know exactly when he will come? Apparently not! So while it may not be a delay in God's sight, to the rest of us it appears like a delay. (Matthew 25:1-13; *Evangelism* pp. 694-697, see below). Ellen Whites states clearly that God could have come before the year 1868. What is the reason for this apparent delay? Is there something more for us to learn? (DA 764.4)
3. Are you convinced that the end of this world's history is coming soon? Do you believe that you are part of the Laodicean church?
4. Are you happy that God is judging right now? Are you happy that the wicked—your enemies(?)—will some day get what they deserve? Are you convinced that God's judgment will be perfectly open, fair, and just?
5. Is it really necessary for us to live through all of this evil?
6. **If, as we have suggested, the pre-Advent judgment is primarily for the benefit of the other beings in the rest of the universe, what are they learning about us? About the SDA church? About God? About how God conducts his government? Have you learned anything new about God this quarter?**
7. Jesus repeatedly assured us that he will come back soon. (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; Revelation 22:12). **Assuming that we have seen adequate evidence that we now live in the judgment period, is that an additional evidence that Jesus is coming soon? Jesus' promises to come soon were given almost 2000 years ago!**
8. Has God chosen the Seventh-day Adventist Church with our unique set of doctrines as a final warning to the world? How well are we doing at letting the world know?
9. **If there is some kind of delay, is it that we are waiting for God, or is God waiting for us?** Very soon after the Gospel began to be preached and people heard that Jesus was coming again and the end of the world would occur, skeptics, infidels and atheists arose questioning the very possibility of his coming back. (2 Peter 3:9).
10. Is it clear in your mind who is being judged during this pre-Advent judgment? God's chosen people? Everyone? God himself? The wicked? Is there any question about the ultimate outcome of this judgment? When God has finished judging us openly before the eyes of the onlooking universe, will it be clear how he runs his government and how open and fair he is? Will God win his case? (Romans 3:4; Psalms 19:9; Romans 3:25-27)
11. Let us review the whole sequence of judgment as we understand it:
  - 1) The pre-Advent judgment, beginning in 1844, is primarily to review the cases of those who have during their lifetimes professed the name of Jesus Christ. (COL 310.2) These are the people who might potentially spend the rest of eternity living with the onlooking universe and this is opportunity for these heavenly beings to be sure that it's safe! At the same time

a decision will be made for every person who has ever lived about whether each is going to be saved or lost.

**2)** When the righteous get to heaven, during the millennium, (Revelation 20) the cases of the wicked will be reviewed in more detail. (GC 480.1) The onlooking universe, and all of us, will get the opportunity to understand why those people who are not saved will not be there. This will also give us a chance to confirm what the onlooking universe has already decided: how fair and righteous God has been in his judgments.

**3)** At the third coming of Christ to this earth, all of the wicked will be raised to life. They will prepare themselves, under Satan's leadership, to attack the new Jerusalem—and if possible reach the tree of life. Jesus will ascend high above the New Jerusalem, and a panoramic view of the great controversy will be shown across the heavens. Every person—righteous and wicked—will be able to see the part he/she played in the larger context of the entire great controversy. When that is finished they will all bow, even the devil himself, and proclaim that God was righteous and just in his judgments. (Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:5-10) Technically, these three separate judgments are all part of the “investigative” portion of God's judgment. Then the executive judgment or sentencing will be carried out and the wicked will perish, while the righteous will be given their places on earth to enjoy eternal life with God forever. (GC 662-670)

12. Are there still a lot of questions that are unanswered in your mind? Do you believe that God has good answers to your questions?
13. We have spent some time discussing in some detail the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, 8 and 9. We have looked at the parallels between these prophecies. Are you certain that we have correctly identified the four ancient kingdoms and the kingdom of God in these prophecies? Do you still have questions about the sequence of events between the downfall of the Roman empire and the establishment of God's kingdom which will last forever?
14. What is the relationship between the judgment—pictured in Daniel 7:9-14; 22, 26-28—and the “restoration” of the sanctuary—pictured in Daniel 8:13,14? Remember that “cleansing” is really not an adequate translation. The word really means “restored to its rightful condition”. Is it possible that the sanctuary which is restored to its rightful place could refer to God himself being vindicated in the judgment? (Revelation 21:22)
15. **The second coming of Jesus Christ is the major theme of the New Testament. Many verses support this idea. What is the best evidence in your mind that we are approaching the second coming?** The signs in the sun, moon, and stars? The increase of evil? The increase of knowledge? The progress of the church? The 1260-day and 2300-day prophecies? The fact that man seems about to destroy this earth in which we live? When you think about the pre-Advent judgment, do you feel assured that this is a promise of the soon coming? “Perhaps the greatest and most important point about the 1844 pre-Advent judgment is that it is a message of assurance. It's the promise that as long as we remain faithful to the Lord—living in humble faith, repentance, and obedience to Him and His commands—we have a faithful High Priest ministering in our behalf, a faithful High Priest who, indeed, stands as our Substitute in judgment (see last week's lesson). Though we are sinners, though we have violated God's law, though we deserve death, we have the assurance that we will be vindicated in judgment because we have Jesus standing there in our place. This is the most important message of the 1844 pre-Advent judgment.” (see *Adult SS Bible Study Guide*, Wed., Sept. 27, 2006) How do you feel about this statement? Do you feel that the pre-Advent judgment is an assurance of your salvation?
16. Many of our Christian friends believe that once you have become a Christian or been converted and confessed the name of Jesus, your name will be permanently inscribed in the Lamb's book of life and it can never be removed. This is sometimes called “once saved, always saved.” What Biblical evidence is there that this idea is not valid? (Ezekiel 18:24;

Matthew 24:13; Luke 8:5-15; Romans 11:16-21; 1 Corinthians 9:27)

17. Ultimately, in the judgment, which is more important: the history of our past sins? Or the lives that we will live in the future? If we are perfectly safe to save and live next door to for the rest of eternity, does it really matter what kind of thoughts, or motives we had, or actions we did in the past? Is it possible for God and the onlooking universe to determine whether we are that kind of people in the pre-Advent judgment?
18. **Is it more important to determine how many sins are unforgiven or the trend of our lives? If we have proclaimed ourselves to be followers of Jesus Christ, shouldn't that make a difference in the way we live? Shouldn't that be apparent in the heavenly records about us?**
19. When the second coming is past and we are taken into the kingdom of heaven, how many questions do you think you will have? Will those questions be primarily "why" questions? What evidence will be left of the history of sin? "This new cosmos will forever be in harmony with God's eternal purposes and the home of the redeemed. The only evidence it will contain that sin ever existed will be the scars in the Redeemer's hands and feet. In that new earth, we will celebrate throughout eternity the love of God and the faithfulness of His promises these scars symbolize." (Adult SS Bible Study Teacher's Guide, p. 169)
20. Do you believe this? And what would be the point of having scars in the hands of Jesus feet and hands if there is no record to explain how they got there? **Will all memory of sin be wiped out? Then what was the purpose of having the great controversy in the first place?** The Bible and the record of the great controversy will be preserved forever as eternal evidence of God's righteousness and the dangers of sin and the importance of "doing what is right because it is right" and not rebelling as sinful creatures are prone to do. If the record of the great controversy is not somehow preserved then God is subjecting us to a terrible trick. But if this record will make the universe eternally secure against sin, then it's worth doing. Will there be an enormous Bible burning at the second coming?
21. Is it clear in your mind that we are saved by faith but judged by works? Does your life and everything that you do demonstrate to those who know you that you are a Christian? (Ephesians 2:8-10; Ecclesiastes 3:17; 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 1:17). What kind of message are you giving to those you associate with—and even to the onlooking universe—about your Christianity? Is it clear in your mind that the entire onlooking universe—both the good and the bad—are watching us? (Job 1:7-11; Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10)
22. Moreover, those who are rejoicing in the good news of salvation and the truth about God will want to tell everyone! (Daniel 12: 3)
23. If you had lived through the 1844 disappointment with the knowledge that you now have about the book of Daniel and its relationship to the rest of Scripture, do you think you would have remained a faithful member of the little flock—those who later became the Seventh-day Adventist Church?
24. Could you explain to another Christian or Bible-believer the basis for our understanding of the 3 1/2 year-1260 day-42 month prophecy? What about the 490 year prophecy? The 2300 day prophecy? If not, why not? In your mind, is the evidence not there? Have you not taken time to understand it clearly? Do you need to go back over the events of this quarter?

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***The Reason for the Delay - Evangelism pp. 694-697***

Deferred in Mercy.--**The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.**-- Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868)

The Work Might Have Been Done.--Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving to the world the message of mercy, Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth, and the saints would have received their welcome into the city of God.-- Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 450. (1900)

**I know that if the people of God had preserved a living connection with Him, if they had obeyed His Word, they would today be in the heavenly Canaan.** --General Conference Bulletin, Mar. 30, 1903.

Satan Has Stolen a March on Us.--If every watchman on the walls of Zion had given the trumpet a certain sound, the world might ere this have heard the message of warning. But the work is years behind. While men have slept, Satan has stolen a march upon us.--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 29. (1909)

No Failure of God's Promises.--The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. **It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional.**

God had committed to His people a work to be accomplished on earth. The third angel's message was to be given, the minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people. The Sabbath reform was to be carried forward. The breach in the law of God must be made up. The message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of earth might receive the warning. The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming.

**Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providence of God, receiving the message of the third angel and in the power of the Holy Spirit proclaiming it to the world, they would have seen the salvation of God, the Lord would have wrought mightily with their efforts, the work would have been completed, and Christ would have come ere this to receive His people to their reward.** But in the period of doubt and uncertainty that followed the disappointment, many of the advent believers yielded their faith. . . . Thus the work was hindered, and the world was left in darkness. Had the whole Adventist body united upon the commandments of [696]God and the faith of Jesus, how widely different would have been our history!

**It was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be thus delayed. God did not design that His people, Israel, should wander forty years in the wilderness.** He promised to lead them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, healthy, happy people. But those to whom it was first preached, went not in "because of unbelief." Their hearts were filled with murmuring, rebellion, and hatred, and He could not fulfill His covenant with them.

**For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord's professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.**--Manuscript 4, 1883.

Charge It Not to God.--We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel; but for Christ's sake, His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.--Letter 184, 1901.

We May Hasten the Day.--By giving the gospel to the world it is in our power to hasten our Lord's return.--The Desire of Ages, p. 633. (1898)

It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to [697] gather the precious grain.--Testimonies, vol. 8, pp. 22, 23. (1904)

When the Message Is Finished.--It [the coming of the Lord] will not tarry past the time that the message is borne to all nations, tongues, and peoples. Shall we who claim to be students of prophecy forget that God's forbearance to the wicked is a part of the vast and merciful plan by which He is seeking to compass the salvation of souls?--Review and Herald, June 18, 1901.