

# ***In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews Receiving an Unshakable Kingdom***

Lesson #12 for March 19, 2022

Scriptures: Hebrews 12:18-29; 13:15-16; Exodus 32:32; Daniel 7:9-10,13-22; Haggai 2:6-9,20-22; Psalm 15:5; 16:8.

1. We are nearing the end of this series of lessons on Hebrews.

**Hebrews 12:18-29, the passage for this week, is the climax of the letter,** and it sums up its main concern by repeating the idea with which it started: **God has spoken to us in the person of His Son, and we need to pay careful attention (*Heb. 1:1, 2; Heb. 12:25*) to Him.** The description of Jesus in Hebrews 12:22–24 epitomizes the letter’s assertions about Him: **Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant, and His blood provides salvation for believers. His priestly and royal ministry in our behalf is a cause for celebration for the heavenly hosts.** And finally, Hebrews 12:25–29 contains the last and climactic exhortation: **God’s judgment is coming.** It will bring destruction to His enemies—but vindication and a kingdom to His people (*Heb. 12:28, 29*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath, March 12.<sup>†§</sup>

2. **The onlooking universe saw the truth about God and His government after the life and death of Jesus so clearly demonstrated those facts. They will never again listen to Satan’s accusations!** They began celebrating when Jesus cried, “It is finished” as He died on the cross. Right at that point, they knew that the fate of Satan and his evil associate angels was fixed. At the third coming after everyone who has ever existed in the universe has had a chance to see the truth about God’s government and Satan’s government, that evil group all will finally be destroyed.

**Hebrews 12:18-29:** <sup>18</sup> You have not come, as the people of Israel came, to what you can feel, to Mount Sinai with its blazing fire, the darkness and the gloom, the storm, <sup>19</sup>the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of a voice. When the people heard the voice, they begged not to hear another word, <sup>20</sup>because they could not bear the order which said, “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.” <sup>21</sup>The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling and afraid!”

<sup>22</sup> **Instead, you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its thousands of angels.** <sup>23</sup>You have come to the joyful gathering of God’s firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, who is the judge of all people, and to the spirits of good people made perfect. <sup>24</sup>You have come to Jesus, who arranged the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that promises much better things than does the blood of Abel.

<sup>25</sup> Be careful, then, and do not refuse to hear him who speaks. Those who refused to hear the one who gave the divine message on earth did not escape. How much less shall we escape, then, if we turn away from the one

who speaks from heaven! <sup>26</sup>His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, “I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven as well.” <sup>27</sup>The words “once more” plainly show that the created things will be shaken and removed, so that the things that cannot be shaken will remain.

<sup>28</sup> Let us be thankful, then, because we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be grateful and worship God in a way that will please him, with reverence and awe; <sup>29</sup>because **our God is indeed a destroying fire**.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Hebrews 12:18-29). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].<sup>†‡</sup> [Does that sound friendly?]<sup>‡</sup>

**To sin, wherever found, “our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.... The light of the glory of God, which imparts life to the righteous, will slay the wicked.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 107.4-108.0.<sup>†</sup>

**The glory of His countenance, which to the righteous is life, will be to the wicked a consuming fire. Because of love rejected, grace despised, the sinner will be destroyed.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 600.2.<sup>†</sup>

**God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.**—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 764.1.<sup>†</sup>

3. **Why is it that the same glory, the glory of God’s presence, gives life to the righteous but destroys the wicked? What does sin do to us that causes that change when the glory of God appears to us?**

**Exodus 24:16-17:** <sup>16-17</sup> **The dazzling light of the LORD’s presence came down on the mountain. To the Israelites the light looked like a fire burning on top of the mountain.** The cloud covered the mountain for six days, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from the cloud.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [Try to imagine the children of Israel, watching Moses climb up that mountain and disappear into the cloud and fire!]<sup>‡</sup>

4. Paul took imagery from Daniel 7 to draw a conclusion to the book of Hebrews.

**Daniel 7:9-14:** <sup>9</sup> While I was looking, thrones were put in place. One who had been living for ever sat down on one of the thrones. His clothes were white as snow, and his hair was like pure wool. **His throne, mounted on fiery wheels, was blazing with fire,** <sup>10</sup>**and a stream of fire was pouring out from it. There were many thousands of people there to serve him, and**

**millions of people stood before him. The court began its session, and the books were opened.**

<sup>11</sup> While I was looking, I could still hear the little horn bragging and boasting. As I watched, the fourth beast was killed, and its body was thrown into the flames and destroyed. <sup>12</sup>The other beasts had their power taken away, but they were permitted to go on living for a limited time.

<sup>13</sup> During this vision in the night, **I saw what looked like a human being.** He was approaching me, surrounded by clouds, and he went to the one who had been living for ever [sic] and was presented to him. <sup>14</sup>**He was given authority, honour, and royal power, so that the people of all nations, races, and languages would serve him. His authority would last for ever, [sic] and his kingdom would never end.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

**Daniel 7:18:** And the people of the Supreme God will receive royal power and keep it for ever [sic] and ever.—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

5. In Hebrews 12:22-24, we read about a “joyful gathering of God’s firstborn, whose names are **written** in heaven.” (*GNB*\*†) What kind of records are kept in heaven? There are many references in the Bible, describing the people whose names are written in heaven. See, for example, Exodus 32:32; Psalm 56:8; Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16; Luke 10:20; Revelation 13:8; and Revelation 17:8. While it is quite certain that there are no actual books in heaven with things written down as would have been done 100 years ago, **God has a complete and perfect record of everything that we have ever done or thought.** That is what we call His *omniscience*. To some people this idea is frightening.
6. The ultimate victory of Christ will come at the third coming when He is raised up high above the New Jerusalem; everyone who has ever lived will see Him crowned with glory forever and ever, the wicked outside the New Jerusalem and the righteous inside. At that time, the wicked will have been raised and will suddenly have revealed to their minds everything that they have ever done. They will understand exactly why they are outside the city and not inside. There will be no question even in Satan’s mind about who is right and who is wrong in the great controversy. Everyone will know.
7. For more details on how that will play out, see the *Great Controversy* pages 662–671.
8. But, the universe already has begun its celebration. As we said earlier, they began celebrating the moment Jesus cried, “It is finished” and died. At that time, all creatures in the universe except humans knew that Satan’s fate was sealed.
9. Why should we not rejoice with them? We realize that Jesus has won the great controversy by answering all the Devil’s accusations and questions about the character and government of God. Jesus has now returned to heaven and joined the Father and the Holy Spirit in speaking on our behalf and turning the accusations of Satan back on Satan himself. This is what is happening right now in heaven.

**Zechariah 3:1-5:** <sup>1</sup>In another vision the LORD showed me the High Priest Joshua standing before the angel of the LORD. And there beside Joshua stood **Satan, ready to bring an accusation against him.** <sup>2</sup>The angel of the LORD said to Satan, “May the LORD condemn you, Satan! May the LORD,

who loves Jerusalem, condemn you. This man is like a stick snatched from the fire.” [This was the Joshua who was the high priest when the children of Israel came back to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile.]

<sup>3</sup> Joshua was standing there, wearing filthy clothes. <sup>4</sup>The angel said to his heavenly attendants, “Take away the filthy clothes this man is wearing.” Then he said to Joshua, “I have taken away your sin and will give you new clothes to wear.”

<sup>5</sup> He commanded the attendants to put a clean turban on Joshua’s head. They did so, and then they put the new clothes on him while the angel of the LORD stood there.—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†‡</sup> [See also “Joshua and the Angel” in *Prophets and Kings* 582-592 and the chapter in *Great Controversy* 479-491 which has had various titles including: “The Pre-Advent Judgment,” “Facing Life’s Record,” and “The Investigative Judgment.”]<sup>‡</sup>

10. If Jesus has won the great controversy by His life, His death, and His resurrection, then why does Hebrews describe God as now standing in the position of a Judge?
11. God will never bring the great controversy to a conclusion until every person who has ever lived—saints and sinners alike—has had a chance to review his own life against the great record books of heaven and the Bible. Then, all, even Satan himself, will admit that God has done everything He possibly could to save everyone. (Philippians 2:5-11)

**Daniel 7:9-10,22:** [See Daniel 7:9-14 in Item #4 above.]

<sup>22</sup>Then the one who had been living for ever [*sic*] came and pronounced judgement in favour of the people of the Supreme God. **The time had arrived for God’s people to receive royal power.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†‡</sup>

12. From these verses we can conclude that **the judgment takes place in heaven with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all defending us against the accusations of Satan.** And the onlooking jury consists of more than 100 million angels, including our own guardian angel. This judgment is good news because putting the prophecies of Daniel 7 together with Revelation 13 and 17, we see that all of God’s enemies and our enemies finally will be destroyed, and God’s kingdom will remain forever.
13. We also know exactly what the criteria are for that judgment.

**John 3:17-21:** [Jesus said:] <sup>17</sup> “For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour.

<sup>18</sup> “Those who believe in the Son are not judged; but those who do not believe have already been judged, because they have not believed in God’s only Son. <sup>19</sup>**This is how the judgement works: the light has come into the world, but people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil.** <sup>20</sup>**All those who do evil things hate the light and will not come to the light, because they do not want their evil deeds to be shown up.** <sup>21</sup>**But those who do what is true come to the light in order that the light may show that what they did was in obedience to**

**God.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†† [We actually judge ourselves by the way we respond to the truth in the Bible.]‡

14. Paul recognized that although the great controversy has ultimately been won and the final results are beyond question, there is still something that needs to happen. Several places in both the Old Testament and the New Testament suggest that **God will “shake” heaven and this earth**. See Haggai 2:6-9,20-22; Psalm 96:9-10; and Hebrews 12:26-27.
15. The people’s response to God’s judgment is described clearly in Isaiah 33:10-16.  
**Isaiah 33:10-16:** <sup>10</sup> The LORD says to the nations, “Now I will act. I will show how powerful I am. <sup>11</sup>You make worthless plans and everything you do is useless. **My spirit is like a fire that will destroy you.** <sup>12</sup>You will crumble like rocks burnt to make lime, like thorns burnt to ashes. <sup>13</sup>Let everyone near and far hear what I have done and acknowledge my power.”  
<sup>14</sup> **The sinful people of Zion are trembling with fright. They say, “God’s judgement is like a fire that burns for ever. [sic] Can any of us survive a fire like that?”** <sup>15</sup>**You can survive if you say and do what is right. Don’t use your power to cheat the poor and don’t accept bribes. Don’t join with those who plan to commit murder or to do other evil things.** <sup>16</sup>**Then you will be safe; you will be as secure as if you were in a strong fortress.** You will have food to eat and water to drink.—*Good News Bible*.\*††
16. The ***shaking of the earth*** is a **metaphor in the Old Testament for the appearance of God**. (See, for example, Isaiah 13:13 and Isaiah 24:18-23.)
17. In Hebrews, Paul was trying to point out the ways in which Jesus has become the Overcomer, superior to all others. Thus, the *shaking of heaven and earth* in Hebrews describes **the destruction of God’s enemies**. This was promised in Hebrews 1:13.
18. While we know that Jesus has won the great controversy, God’s enemies have not yet been destroyed. See 1 Corinthians 15:23-25.
19. God will finally destroy His enemies when He shakes the heavens and the earth.
20. Is it hopeful to us to know that, someday, all the causes of evil, sin, sickness, death, and disease will be destroyed?
21. The good news is that while there will be a terrible shaking and God’s enemies will ultimately be destroyed, those whose names are written in the books of heaven have a foundation which is unshakable.

**Psalm 16:8:** I am always aware of the LORD’s presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Psalm 21:7:** The king trusts in the LORD Almighty;  
and because of the LORD’s constant love  
he will always be secure.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Psalm 62:2:** He alone protects and saves me;  
he is my defender,  
and I shall never be defeated.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Psalm 112:6:** A good person will never fail;

he will always be remembered.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Hebrews 12:27:** The words “once more” plainly show that the created things will be shaken and removed, so that the things that cannot be shaken will remain.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

22. While all traces of evil finally will be destroyed, we have promises in Isaiah 65:17 and Revelation 21:1-4 that **there will be a new heaven and a new earth.**

**Isaiah 65:17:** The LORD says, “I am making a new earth and new heavens. The events of the past will be completely forgotten.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Revelation 21:1-4:** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. <sup>3</sup>I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: “Now God’s home is with human beings! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. **There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared.**”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

23. Soon, Jesus will reign forever; His faithful people will join Him. Reading again:

**Hebrews 12:28:** Let us be thankful, then, because we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be grateful and worship God in a way that will please him, with reverence and awe.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

24. In Ephesians 4:14 and Hebrews 5:11-14, Paul said:

**Ephesians 4:14:** Then we shall no longer be children, carried by the waves and blown about by every shifting wind of the teaching of deceitful people, who lead others into error by the tricks they invent.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**Hebrews 5:11-14:** <sup>11</sup> There is much we have to say about this matter, but it is hard to explain to you, because you are so slow to understand. <sup>12</sup>There has been enough time for you to be teachers—yet you still need someone to teach you the first lessons of God’s message. Instead of eating solid food, you still have to drink milk. <sup>13</sup>Anyone who has to drink milk is still a child, without any experience in the matter of right and wrong. <sup>14</sup>**Solid food, on the other hand, is for adults, who through practice are able to distinguish between good and evil.**—*Good News Bible*.\*† [In order to be able to distinguish between good and evil, do you have to be exposed to evil?]<sup>‡</sup>

25. Are we becoming adults who through practice are able to distinguish between good and evil? Or, are we like the Israelites of long ago?

**Isaiah 1:11-17:** <sup>11</sup>He [the LORD] says, “Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me? I have had more than enough of the sheep you burn as sacrifices and of the fat of your fine animals. **I am tired of the blood of bulls and sheep and goats.** <sup>12</sup>Who asked you to bring me all this when you come to worship me? Who asked you to do all this tramping about in

my Temple? <sup>13</sup>It's useless to bring your offerings. **I am disgusted with the smell of the incense you burn. I cannot stand your New Moon Festivals, your Sabbaths, and your religious gatherings; they are all corrupted by your sins.** <sup>14</sup>I hate your New Moon Festivals and holy days; they are a burden that I am tired of bearing.

<sup>15</sup> "When you lift your hands in prayer, I will not look at you. No matter how much you pray, I will not listen, for your hands are covered with blood. <sup>16</sup>Wash yourselves clean. **Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil <sup>17</sup>and learn to do right. See that justice is done—help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.**"—*Good News Bible*.\*††

**Micah 6:6-8:** <sup>6</sup> What shall I bring to the LORD, the God of heaven, when I come to worship him? Shall I bring the best calves to burn as offerings to him? <sup>7</sup>Will the LORD be pleased if I bring him thousands of sheep or endless streams of olive oil? Shall I offer him my firstborn child to pay for my sins? <sup>8</sup>**No, the LORD has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

26. We need to be worshipping God in the right way by offering sacrifices of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and good works. Those are the things that please God.
27. But, God calls for more; we are actually supposed to be priests who are reaching out to those around us to teach them the truth about God.

**Exodus 19:4-6:** <sup>4</sup> [God told Moses to tell the Israelites:] "You saw what I, the LORD, did to the Egyptians and how I carried you as an eagle carries her young on her wings, and brought you here to me. <sup>5</sup>Now, if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people. The whole earth is mine, but you will be my chosen people, <sup>6</sup>a people dedicated to me alone, and you will serve me as priests."—*Good News Bible*.\*†

**1 Peter 2:9-10:** <sup>9</sup> But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light. <sup>10</sup>At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people; at one time you did not know God's mercy, but now you have received his mercy.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Revelation 1:6:** And made us a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father. To Jesus Christ be the glory and power for ever [*sic*] and ever! Amen.—*Good News Bible*.\*† [What will we do as priests in heaven?]<sup>‡</sup>

**Revelation 5:10:** "You have made them a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they shall rule on earth."—*Good News Bible*.\*

28. Paul was aware of all these things, and he wrote:

**Hebrews 13:1-6:** <sup>1</sup> Keep on loving one another as Christian brothers and sisters.

<sup>2</sup>Remember to welcome strangers in your homes. There were some who did that and welcomed angels without knowing it. <sup>3</sup>Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering, as though you were suffering as they are.

<sup>4</sup> Marriage is to be honoured by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

<sup>5</sup> Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." <sup>6</sup>Let us be bold, then, and say:

"The Lord is my helper,

I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?"—*Good News Bible*.\*

29. Ellen White added:

**During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place.** The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." 1 Corinthians 4:5. Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, "judgment was given to the saints of the Most High." Daniel 7:22. At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." "They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:4, 6. It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, "the saints shall judge the world." 1 Corinthians 6:2. **In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts [and thoughts] with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body.** Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.

Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and His people. Says Paul: "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Verse 3. And Jude declares that "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 660.4-661.1.†‡

**1 Corinthians 4:5:** So you should not pass judgement on anyone before the right time comes. **Final judgement must wait until the Lord comes; he will bring to light the dark secrets and expose the hidden purposes of**

**people's minds [that is, their thoughts]. And then all will receive from God the praise they deserve.—Good News Bible.\*†‡**

30. Read 1 Corinthians 6:3 and Jude 6.

**1 Corinthians 6:3: Do you not know that we shall judge the angels? How much more, then, the things of this life!—Good News Bible.\*†**

**Jude 6:** Remember the angels who did not stay within the limits of their proper authority, but abandoned their own dwelling place: they are bound with eternal chains in the darkness below, where God is keeping them for that great Day on which they will be condemned.—*Good News Bible\**

31. **One of the most incredible things about God is how transparent His government is. There are no secret sessions behind closed doors in God's government. Everything is clearly open before everyone in the judgment.**
32. After all that we have reviewed, Paul concluded in Hebrews 12:28-29 that we should be thankful because we have a permanent foundation that is unshakable.
33. So, what do we know about that final judgment?

What is the **biblical basis for the pre-Advent judgment**? Here we need to look at the book of **Daniel**. (For a deeper study of the pre-Advent judgment, the Apocalypse of John also should be consulted.) The key passage for the pre-Advent judgment is **Daniel 7**. This chapter displays a succession of kingdoms, symbolized by a series of beasts, namely, the lion; the bear; the leopard; and a terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly strong animal. A comparison of Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 make it apparent that these two chapters are dealing with the same general subject: **prophecies regarding the rise and fall of four major Mediterranean world powers**. These world powers can be readily identified as **Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome**. After Daniel sees the terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly strong beast with its ten horns, a "little horn" emerges from among them. Suddenly, the **vision shifts from the earth toward heaven, and a bright throne room comes into view** (*Dan. 7:9–14*). The scene unfolds in three stages: (1) a **court scene** in which thrones are set in place (*Dan. 7:9, 10*), (2) the **outcome of the judgment** in which the beast is put to death (*Dan. 7:11, 12*), and (3) the **transfer of the kingdom to the Son of man** (*Dan. 7:13, 14*). The chronological events of the chapter display Babylon, Media-Persia (see *Dan. 8:20*), Greece, Rome, the little horn, judgment, and the possession of the kingdom by the saints.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 160.†§

34. **Daniel 7 repeats that there is a sequence: The fourth beast is followed by a little horn, judgment, and the possession of the kingdom by the saints.**

**Daniel 7:19-27:** <sup>19</sup> Then I wanted to know more about the fourth beast, which was not like any of the others—the terrifying beast which crushed its victims with its bronze claws and iron teeth and then trampled on them. <sup>20</sup>And I wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and **the horn that had come up**

**afterwards and had made three of the horns fall.** It had eyes and a mouth and was boasting proudly. It was more terrifying than any of the others.

<sup>21</sup> While I was looking, that horn made war on God's people and conquered them. <sup>22</sup>Then the one who had been living for ever [*sic*] came and **pronounced judgement in favour of the people of the Supreme God. The time had arrived for God's people to receive royal power.**

<sup>23</sup> This is the explanation I was given: "The fourth beast is a fourth empire that will be on the earth and will be different from all other empires. It will crush the whole earth and trample it down. <sup>24</sup>The ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. **Then another king will appear; he will be very different from the earlier ones and will overthrow three kings.** <sup>25</sup>He will speak against the Supreme God and oppress God's people. **He will try to change their religious laws and festivals,** and God's people will be under his power for 3.5 years. <sup>26</sup>**Then the heavenly court will sit in judgement, take away his power, and destroy him completely.** <sup>27</sup>**The power and greatness of all the kingdoms on earth will be given to the people of the Supreme God. Their royal power will never end and all rulers on earth will serve and obey them.**"—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†‡</sup>

35. A pre-advent judgment is not something surprising in the Bible. Think of the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in which God carefully came down and reviewed with them what the issues were before He pronounced judgment on them. (Genesis 3) The same is true in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. God came down, consulted with His friend, Abraham, and sent His angels, in effect, to evaluate Sodom and Gomorrah before they were destroyed. (Genesis 22) Think about the story of Job.
36. Is there any reason to be afraid of the investigative judgment, otherwise known as a pre-advent judgment? Once again, note that the criteria for that judgment are clearly spelled out in John 3:17-21. **Each of us judges ourselves.**
37. Do God's criteria seem unreasonable or unfair? Would it be safe to admit to heaven anyone who does not live up to those criteria?

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