

The Sanctuary

The Pre-Advent Judgment

Lesson #9 for November 30, 2013

Scriptures: Daniel 7; Genesis 3:8-20; 2 Timothy 2:19; Psalm 51:4; 96:11-13; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

1. Seventh-day Adventists got their roots from people like William Miller who had carefully studied the Bible including the book of Daniel. In this lesson we will discuss the implications of Daniel 7, comparing it with Daniel 2. We will speak briefly about the kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome; but we will speak especially about Daniel 7:9-22. These verses point out that at some time near the end of this earth's history, God will judge everyone. Many people are very much afraid of God's judgment. But, there is also good news in the judgment for those who come to trust God. (Romans 8:1)
2. Read Daniel 7:1-14. After reading about the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the nondescript beast, we suddenly hear about a little horn that threatens God's people and boasts of its power. But, in Daniel 7:9-14, we see an obvious judgment scene. If we read on through Daniel 7, we discover that this judgment scene is the pivotal point in the chapter. Just as in Daniel 2, we see God judging **in favor of** the saints and against God's enemies.
3. It is interesting to note in Matthew 24:30 and 26:64 that Jesus applied the prophecies of Daniel 7 to Himself. Jesus was clearly referring to a judgment scene. Is there anything in the ancient sanctuary system that is somehow equivalent to a judgment scene? The clear choice is the Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus 16.
4. There are several books mentioned in Scripture: 1) The "book of life" (Psalm 69:28; Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8, *NASB*); 2) The "book of remembrance" (Malachi 3:16); 3) The books of "deeds" (Revelation 20:12); and 4) God's "book" (Exodus 32:32-33; Psalm 56:8). Is it clear from the context what each of these books represents? Does God need books in heaven to remind Him of what has happened here on this earth? God has an infinite memory and has not forgotten anything that has ever happened. He knows every detail of our lives including our motives and our most secret thoughts. Can you imagine being judged by such a God? You will be! What kind of a chance would you have if the only basis for judgment was your personal experience? Could you honestly vote for yourself?
5. There are five judgments that take place between 1844 and the making of the new earth.
 - 1) The pre-advent judgment which is taking place right now in heaven. (Daniel 8:14; 7:9-10)
 - 2) The first executive judgment at the second coming; the time when God takes the righteous to heaven and destroys the wicked on this earth. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Luke 17:28-30; Malachi 4:1)
 - 3) During the millennium, the righteous will sit in judgment to look over the records of those who are not there to determine if they agree with God's judgments. (Revelation 20)
 - 4) During the panorama and immediately following it at the third coming, each person—whether he is inside or outside the gates of the city—will determine that he is where he belongs. Each person ultimately judges himself. (Philippians 2:10-11; GC 666.2)
 - 5) The final executive judgment when the fire of God's presence destroys all evidence of sin and sinners and remakes the heavens and the earth—restoring the Garden of Eden. (Isaiah 66:24)
6. Read Genesis 3:8-20. There are a number of places in Scripture where it says God "came down" to "investigate" and "inquire" about what had happened and to impose a judgment based on what He found. In the case of Adam and Eve, He found them hiding in the garden. (Genesis 3:8-19) He "investigated" what they had done. After offering a promise of future salvation, (Genesis 3:15) He pronounced His judgments.
7. A similar pattern was found with Cain (Genesis 4), at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11), and with

Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18,19). Later, God instructed the newly established judges in Israel to “investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly” each case that was brought to them. (Deuteronomy 13:14, *NASB*; compare Deuteronomy 19:18).

8. God’s judgments always involve a careful and thorough investigation to determine what is fair. And God’s government is completely transparent. The entire universe is watching everything He does. That is exactly the picture we see in Daniel 7:9-10.
9. Hopefully, none of us has any question about God’s omniscience. He already knows exactly who is going to be saved and who is going to be lost. There is no reason for Him to investigate anyone’s case for His own benefit. The “investigative” or pre-advent judgment is for the benefit of the onlooking universe because God is about to bring some of us former sinners back into the society of heaven. And what is the verdict for the saints? (Daniel 7:22) God does all of that in a completely transparent way while the whole universe is watching. God needs to have everyone to make the right decision for the right reasons.
10. There are two chapters in the writings of Ellen White that very carefully spell out the details of God’s pre-advent judgment: 1) *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 47- “Joshua and the Angel,” pp. 582-592; and 2) *The Great Controversy* chapter 28 - “Facing Life’s Record,” pp. 479-491.
11. How does God’s judgment work? How do you understand the following words? (Read John 3:17-21; 12:47-48)

The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name. Those who are indeed purifying their souls by obeying the truth will have a most humble opinion of themselves. . . . But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 471,472. (Compare Zechariah 3:1-5; John 3:17-21)

12. Does the book of Daniel give us any hint about when the pre-advent judgment will take place? (Daniel 7:7-10,21-22,25-26)

Both in the vision and in the angelic interpretation, the judgment follows as God’s response to the horn’s presumption and climaxes with the transfer of the kingdom to God’s saints. The Bible describes the judgment as occurring during the time when the horn power is still in existence (*Dan. 7:8, 9*). The horn’s dominion is taken away only after the court sits in judgment; then, when the judicial procedures are ended, all earthly kingdoms are destroyed (*vs. 26*).

What this means, clearly, is that the judgment must take place before the Second Coming. It is a pre-Advent judgment that begins sometime after “a time, times, and half a time” (*vs. 25, NASB*). How could there be a final reward or punishment if there were not a judgment that preceded it?

Indeed, the saints are rewarded at the time of Christ’s advent, which presupposes that they have already been judged. Similarly, the wicked, including the demonic powers, will be judged during the millennium before God executes the final judgment (*see Revelation 20*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Tuesday, November 26.

13. We know that God does not need to investigate anything. He “knows those who are His.” (2 Timothy 2:19, *KJV*) So, why does He go through this exercise? This is a very important point because it demonstrates that the entire universe is involved. There are beings living on other worlds and there are angels in heaven who need to see and understand God’s judgment. They want to know that it is safe to admit us into their society.

14. Read Daniel 7:14-26; Psalm 51:4; and Romans 3:4. In these verses we learn of several very significant game-changing actions that take place: 1) The Son of Man is crowned King for the rest of eternity (Daniel 7:14). 2) God's saints receive the kingdom forever (Daniel 7:22). Those saints are invited to share the power of the kingdom with Jesus (Daniel 7:27). This results in the greatest happiness both for God and for His redeemed children (Luke 15:7,10). 3) God's enemies are defeated and destroyed. All excuse for sin is eliminated, and God's enemies are judged (Daniel 7:25-26). 4) The fairness of God's judgment is demonstrated. The transparency of God's government is obvious. Ultimately, no one—not even the Devil himself (Philippians 2:10-11)—will have any basis for questioning God's judgment (Psalm 51:4; Romans 3:4). When the great controversy is over, everyone left alive will be praising God because of the way He has handled things.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

15. And what is the final result? Read Psalm 96:11-13. Many people are very much afraid of any kind of judgment. This is partially due to the fact that in the court systems as we know them, so many people who are brought there are convicted and condemned because they have committed crimes. But, in God's judgment **everyone** is judged. And certainly not everyone is going to be condemned. God will rule with absolute fairness, transparency, and justice by doing what is right in every case. Read John 3:17-21; 5:22; 12:47-48; Psalm 7:8; 54:1; 26:1. Clearly, it is God's intention in the judgment to vindicate those people who are on His side and who have been His faithful followers. This is certainly no threat to our assurance of salvation. God's judgment means salvation for those who are willing to trust Him.
16. Read Romans 14:10-12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. Having this kind of understanding of God's judgment and how it is carried out should affect us in our daily lives. Is it possible for us as Christians to be comfortable with the idea of God's judgment? Thinking about God's judgment, are you encouraged to live as a Christian?
17. How does God feel about the judgment process? (Hosea 11:8-9)

He who dwells in the heavenly sanctuary judges righteously. His pleasure is more in His people, struggling with temptation in a world of sin, than in the host of angels that surround His throne. [Luke 15:7,10]—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 176. [Content in brackets is supplied]

18. And what is Satan's attitude toward all of this?

Satan has an accurate knowledge of the sins that he has tempted God's people to commit, and he urges his accusations against them, declaring that by their sins they have forfeited divine protection, and claiming that he has the right to destroy them. He pronounces them just as deserving as himself of exclusion from the favor of God. . . . But while the followers of Christ have sinned, they have not given themselves up to be controlled by the satanic agencies. They have repented of their sins and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls. They are graven upon the palms of My hands. They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them."—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 588,589.

19. Seventh-day Adventists are unique in their understanding of the breadth and depth of the great controversy over God's character and government. Where do we believe sin and the great

controversy first began? (Revelation 12:1-12) Did sin really develop in God's home and among His family?

20. Seventh-day Adventists believe in the non-immortality of the soul. When a person dies, he is asleep in death. (John 11:11-15) Every human being whether dead or alive will pass through the pre-advent judgment before Christ comes the second time. Obviously, the wicked perish, and the righteous are taken to heaven at that time; so, there must be a decision made before that point. Many of our Christian friends believe in the immortality of the soul. They believe that a person goes to his reward immediately upon death. This makes their understanding of the judgment very confusing in light of biblical passages. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)
21. Thus, Seventh-day Adventists have to convince their Christian friends about our doctrine of the non-immortality of the soul before we can talk to them about the pre-advent judgment. In your discussions with other Christians, have you found this to be a major barrier? Have we traditionally presented the pre-advent judgment as a time when God speaks out in favor of His children?
22. Remember that the Scriptures state clearly that Satan is our adversary and accuser. (Zechariah 3:1-5; Revelation 12:10-12) On the other hand, all three Members of the Godhead speak in our favor if there is any way They can do so honestly. (Romans 8:26-31)
23. What is your understanding of the little horn's activities? Is it clear in your mind what person or group is represented by the little horn?
24. We live in the theater of the universe. (1 Corinthians 4:9) Do we live as if we recognize that the entire universe is watching us? Do we honestly believe that they will give us a good report when our cases come up?
25. What do you think of first when someone mentions God's judgment? Almost everyone mentions *fear!* Should we really be afraid of God's judgment?
26. What does the Bible teach about the outcome of the judgment? Look at John 5:24 in several different translations. What does it mean to say that the righteous do not come into judgment? Is that in direct contradiction with 2 Corinthians 5:10 which says we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ? Is it clear in your mind that the judgment of condemnation only occurs at the third coming and is addressed to those who reject God by the way they live their lives?
27. Look at some other examples from Scripture suggesting that God's judgment is not supposed to be fearsome:
 - 1) In the book of Judges, judges are also called "deliverers" and "liberators."
 - 2) David called for God to judge him. (Psalms 7:8; 26:1; 35:24) If he expected God to condemn him, would he be calling for God's judgment?
 - 3) God's judgment also means salvation for those who trust Him. (Psalms 76:8-9)
 - 4) Isaiah 35:4 suggests that when God comes, we should not fear; we should be strong because He is coming to save us. (Compare Isaiah 25:9)
28. Is there any way that God could save everyone? Is God's judgment really necessary? When God chose to create a universe operating on the basis of love and truth, He had to allow freedom; freedom meant that someone could turn against Him. The truth must win in the end. Thus, it is necessary for God's judgment to be transparent. We can trust God to always do what is right.

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