

JULY-SEPTEMBER

1844

**Our One  
Unique  
Doctrine**



A Devotional Bible-Study Guide  
for Young Adults



<http://cq.adventist.org>

# 1844—Our One Unique Doctrine

JULY—SEPTEMBER 2006

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## This Quarter's Illustrator



Twenty-five-year-old Luciana Guizan was born in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She is just completing a bachelor's degree in architecture and urban design and will be graduating in July. She's been an Adventist all her life and sometimes does graphic work to help at church and works in the children's divisions.

# Getting the most Out of CQ

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

CQ is based on the conviction that the Word of God offers transforming power and that group study is one important way to tap into that power. CQ's purpose is to provide Seventh-day Adventist young adults with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed each week in Sabbath School. Many who use the *Adult Bible Study Guide* find that because CQ deals with the same topics, it enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Four hundred Adventist young adults contribute to CQ each year. The wide variety and occasional repetition of the content reflects the great diversity of its contributors around the world as they respond creatively and individually to the subject.

Circulation of CQ is about 70,000.

## POINTERS FOR STUDY

1. Through prayer, open your mind to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you study.
2. The Bible passages on which each week's lesson are based appear in bold type in the "Logos" portion of the lesson. Read these entire passages.
3. The Bible passages for the week are usually divided into sections on the "Logos" pages. When studying these sections, carefully reread the Bible passages indicated in bold headings before reading the comments beneath the headings.
4. Read the other sections for the week with the perspective you have gained from your own study of the biblical passages.
5. Keep in mind the purposes of each section of the Bible study guide:
  - "Introduction" is designed to stimulate your interest and focus your thinking on the week's theme.
  - "Logos" is a guide for direct study of the Bible passages for the week.
  - "Testimony" presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.
  - "Evidence" approaches issues raised by the lesson from a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective.
  - "How-To" discusses what the abstractions in the lesson mean for day-to-day living.
  - "Opinion" is a personal viewpoint on the lesson meant to encourage further thought and discussion.
  - "Exploration" provides the reader with a variety of open-ended, creative ways to explore the topic of the week's lesson.

## CQ AND THE CHURCH

CQ is the General Conference-approved Bible study guide for the young-adult age group. It upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *However, its contents should not be regarded as official pronouncements of the church.*

# Principalities and powers



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**“We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to  
angels as well as to men” (1 Cor. 4:9, NIV).**

# When Satan Told the Truth

Sabbath  
June 24

## INTRODUCTION

Psalm 51; Zech. 3:1–4

*“Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then [the Lord] answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, ‘Take away the filthy garments from him.’ And to him He said, ‘See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes’” (Zech. 3:3, 4, NKJV).*

It was amazing, wasn't it? I just couldn't believe what was going on! Standing in front of the Almighty God of the universe is obviously one of the things I have always dreamed about, but not like this.

I was standing there in the darkness when suddenly a frightening whisper told me I was not alone. When the darkness began to dissipate, I realized that it was the evil deceiver that was standing right next to me.

“Oh, my God,” I cried out, and a calm and friendly voice spoke from the immense light: “Here I am. Don't be afraid.”

In the light I noticed that my garments were filthy. I could tell that they were stained not with soil from earth but with the marks of my sins. This was the only time I ever heard Satan telling the truth, but unfortunately it was all about me and my sins.

**In the light I noticed that my garments were filthy.**

But look at me now! Though both Satan and God told me that I have sinned, that I could not hide the dirt, what God did was amazing! He rebuked Satan and simply changed my clothes. I don't even care that He treated me like a child who isn't able to change his clothes. I was glad He treated me just like one of His children.

Look at me now! I'm clean and I don't want to sin again. I'm thankful for the judgment!

Have you ever thought about the fact that God would be able to conduct the whole procedure of judgment in the blink of an eye? He will just look at your records, see the list of the sins you have committed, and then He will turn to the last page of your records to check whether or not you have accepted His gift of grace. If you have, He will simply give you a new set of clothes—perfectly fit for you!

One of the best things you can think about while studying this week's lesson is to contemplate the fact that all the angels in heaven are cheering for you to win over the evil, so all your sins will be returned to Satan.



# More Than a Reality Show!

## LOGOS

Ps. 51:1–4; Zech. 3:1–4; Matt. 22:11, 12; Rom. 3:4; Eph. 3:10; Heb. 2:14; 13:2;  
Rev. 12:7–13

### The Big Picture (Rev. 12:7–13)

The story of the dealings of God with humankind is very rich and exciting; that story has its beginnings not on this earth but in the heart of God. God desired to create humanity according to Him, in His image and likeness. Consequently, the great controversy erupted, and, although it was intended by Satan to destroy God Himself and failed, Satan turned his wrath on us, God's perfect creation. God's loving grace demanded obedience and at the same time allowed freedom to do otherwise. We all know the story and are now dealing with "spiritual-split-personality disease." We want to do what's right but we don't often do it. Welcome to the club!

### The Undeniable Reality (Ps. 51:1–4; Zech. 3:1–4)

You don't live long before you realize the presence of sin in this world. One of the saddest discoveries in your own journey is that you are at fault before God. Sin is so bad that it has a hold of all of us. According to Zechariah, Satan loves to come before God to show Him our fallen condition and to finally blame Him for it. Our only hope is to allow God to take away our sin. We live in a time when quick-fix solutions are always desired to fix our problems. When it comes to the problem of sin, there's only one solution: the saving-loving grace of God.

**Satan has auto-nominated himself as the lord and ruler of this planet.**

### Making Sure You Are Dressed Accordingly (Zech. 3:1–4; Matt. 22:11, 12)

Since we were all dressed with "filthy clothes" (Zech. 3:3, NIV), God's loving grace demanded, "Take off the filthy clothes." So we are made clean when we allow the loving grace of God to declare us clean. We are all invited to the big celebration God will have when the whole controversy is over. But only those who are dressed through the loving grace of God get to enjoy the party. Make sure you don't end up like the speechless guest of the book of Matthew!

### Salvation and the Church (Eph. 3:10)

Keep in mind that the controversy began in heaven and therefore extends



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beyond this world. It's hard to imagine what other beings must be like, but we are sure of one thing: In God's plan to save His people, He included the church. The church doesn't save; rather, the church is made up of normal, regular people. The only difference about the people in the church is that they have accepted God's saving grace and have joined forces to exert a greater impact on those who have not accepted God's loving grace. That's what the apostle Paul called the "wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10, NKJV).

## **Trading Places (Heb. 2:14)**

Heaven is a perfect place, where sin does not exist. God's promise to all of us is to live throughout eternity with Him. Paul attempts to explain to us what God did to make this a reality. We were sinners and deserved to die. He (Jesus) became like us (one of us—blood and flesh) and died on the cross, paying our debt in full. When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, He destroyed the power of death. In Christ we can all live eternally. That is the great news the world needs to know! We are free to live eternally! Free at last!

## **Who's the Boss in Your Life?**

The one with the most authority gets to be the boss. There's a difference between having power and pretending to have it. Because of the undeniable reality of sin, Satan has auto-nominated himself as the lord and ruler of this planet. So when I'm under sin, Satan is boss; but when I'm under the saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ, Satan loses all his power over me, and guess who rules my life? When God is the boss, I'm safe. No more fear; help is on the way if I just hold on until the end.

## **God's Grace for Dummies**

So you have discovered you're a sinner and are in need of redemption? Do you understand that Satan has and will continue to do all in his power to destroy you? Did you know this controversy started in heaven and was intended to destroy God? Do you belong to a church that is far from perfect but teaches God's grace as the only way to salvation? Did you realize that you have been bought for a price: the blood of Jesus Christ? Did you know that that makes you right with God? If your answer to these questions is yes, you are off to a good start.

What's next is what we call the Christian journey. The Christian journey is what your life looks like after you have been touched by the grace of God. That's why we study the Bible. That's why we obey. It's all because of the God-given grace for all of us. Since God so loved the world, we so love God!

## **REACT**

1. Why do I need the saving-loving grace of God?
2. What is my role in salvation?

---

*Carlos A. Camacho, Colton, California*

## Custom-Made Just for You

### TESTIMONY

Rom. 4:13

Considering the human condition, more is at stake than meets the eye. All heaven and the unfallen worlds are pulling for our victory. "The principalities and powers of heaven are watching the warfare which, under apparently discouraging circumstances, God's servants are carrying on. New conquests are being achieved, new honors won, as the Christians, rallying round the banner of their Redeemer, go forth to fight the good fight of faith. All the heavenly angels are at the service of the humble, believing people of God; and as the Lord's army of workers here below sing their songs of praise, the choir above join with them in ascribing praise to God and to His Son."<sup>1</sup>

"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given 'that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,' 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' Rev. 19:8; Eph. 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, 'is the righteousness of saints.' Rev. 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is

**God wants to clothe us with  
this robe of righteousness.**

imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.

"The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering."<sup>2</sup>

God wants to clothe us with this robe of righteousness. Even so there are many who claim to be Christians "and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet they feel no need of a transformation of character. They have never felt true repentance for sin. They do not realize their need of Christ or exercise faith in Him."<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 154.

2. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 310.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 315.

# Do We Stand a Chance?

## EVIDENCE

Eph. 6:12

What do you feel when you read Revelation 12:7–9, 12?

I personally have mixed feelings. On one hand, I rejoice that God beat Satan in heaven! That's right! And you know what? The devil didn't stand a chance!

But then I reach verse 12: The part that says that Satan, the dragon, is very angry and now he's coming after us! All of a sudden, the question becomes, Do we stand a chance? Let's think about this. Lucifer is an angel, and angels were created more powerful than humans (Ps. 8:4, 5). Lucifer was created perfect (Ezek. 28:15), while we as humans are born defective in so many ways. Lucifer is so cunning that he convinced a third of the angels in heaven to take his side (Rev. 12:4). Satan is very powerful, and he's going to use all that power and cunning to wipe us out.

How are we supposed to beat Satan and his angels? God already addressed that. Read Revelation 12:10, 11.

We really don't stand a chance against the dragon unless God is on our side! And, fortunately, God is more than willing to beat Satan once again in our lives. In these verses God refers to us as His

"brethren." And even though Satan accuses us because of our sins, we will overcome by accepting Christ's sacrificial blood, by standing behind the Scriptures and by loving Jesus more than life itself.

It's easy to forget that there's a lot going on around us. God and His angels continue to battle Satan and his amassed fallen angels for our very minds and hearts. And at the same time the entire universe is watching it all unfold.

You may think that your role in all of this is insignificant. But you have a great responsibility. Read the following and ask yourself, "What is that responsibility?"

"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:8–10, NKJV). We not only have the responsibility to present Christ ("the mystery") to all, but also to witness to beings from other planets ("the principalities and powers in the heavenly places").

**It's easy to forget that  
there's a lot going on  
around us.**

# It's Not Just About Us

## HOW-TO

Ps. 51:1-4; Rom. 3:3, 4

Angels! It's been a concept that we've been working on accepting for a long time. In this day and age we're finally, kind of, swallowing the concept. For us naturally curious humans, however, we want to know if there's more out there. We see sci-fi movies, but the truth is elsewhere. When we were created, it was to be members of a society with Christ along with God's angels and, yes, beings from other worlds. The Spirit of Prophecy tells us of how the great controversy is not just about us. "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12, NIV).

It is up to us to take a step into believing that there is more to our situation than meets the eye. We need to have the God-said-it-and-I-believe-it frame of mind. But

to accomplish this goal in a cynical and modern world such as ours is a whole different story. "The whole heart must be yielded to God, or the change can never be wrought in us by which we are to be restored to His

**There is more to our situation than meets the eye.**

likeness."\* There are a series of things that we can do to help work toward believing unconditionally:

**1. Communicate with the Master.** This is our first step toward success. When we focus on God, wholeheartedly confess our sins as described in Psalm 51:1-4, tell the Master what's really on our minds, and, above all, ask Him to make us receptive to what He wants for us, only then we will have completed a very important part of the equation.

**2. Keep our focus on the Maker.** We need to get to know the Savior, who He is and what He's about. The only way to do this is to focus on the Word. "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14, NIV). We need to know about the Father to understand what He's about, and that comes only through constant study of the Word.

**3. Just believe.** Once we focus on Jesus and what He's done for us, everything He says makes sense. Everything falls into perspective and we can surrender all to Him, as the hymn says.

\*Steps to Christ, p. 43.

# An End to All Theories

## OPINION

Matt. 10:26

Conspiracy theories get the attention of many. In fact, pop culture is filled with these as evident in the countless movies, TV shows, books, and Web sites that touch on such subjects. Such matters as the World Trade Center bombing, JFK assassination, New World Order, Holy Grail, or secret societies often make for a very interesting discussion and often incite people to dig deeper into the issue.

That people's curiosity about world events and truth-seeking would be aroused is not necessarily bad news. We know, however, that these are also opportunities for the enemy to disseminate confusion and misinformation even on people with the best of intentions.

We know for a fact that sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Many people, however, will try to convince us that it really is no big deal if we choose to obey or not to obey the law of God. This world will try hard to lure us to exert most of our efforts to achieve fame, acquire wealth, and indulge in pleasure it can offer. Jesus, on the other hand, is telling us not to conform and instead to bear our cross (Luke 14:27).

**There is a conspiracy of a magnitude that involves all humankind.**

Satan knows that if he could pervert the facts regarding these matters, it would lead people eventually to believe that they know truth when they actually do not. Such is the case with the great controversy. To turn people away from God, the devil wanted to blur the lines between right and wrong. Truly, there is a conspiracy of a magnitude that involves all humankind and one that is spanning the ages.

Thankfully, God has provided us with His Word so we do not have to tread the path blindly. We need no longer be in the dark, confused as to which angle of the story is most acceptable or believable, because He has given the plan to His chosen people. We no longer have to weigh formulated human theories because Christ has already given the light toward the truth.

## REACT

1. What is your understanding or definition of the great controversy?
2. Realizing that there is rampant misinformation in the world today, how do we decide what to believe?
3. Because the Bible is our stronghold to clear all doubts, how do we make sure that we understand its contents correctly?



# Claiming His Righteousness

## EXPLORATION

Zech. 3:1–4

## CONCLUDE

Zechariah tells of the horror of standing before God in the filth of sin, facing Satan's accusations. Because Jesus took on sin for us, we can claim His righteousness—and a place in heaven. He offers us transforming power for a victorious new life, not just a cover-up for sin. God's cleansing and forgiveness are cause for celebration. Satan does his best to prevent us from accepting Jesus' gift of grace, and to distract us from our role in the cosmic drama.

## CONSIDER

- Thinking about the following quotation from *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 311: "The robe of Christ's righteousness contains not one thread of human devising." As a reminder, sew a few stitches of a contrasting color into a garment you're planning to wear today (don't knot the thread—it will be easier to remove later). Or copy the quotation onto an index card and tie it to your purse or backpack with yarn.
- Conducting a demonstration of Jesus' cleansing power. In a clear glass container, mix food coloring (or colored drink mix) into water to represent sin's pervasive effect. Add half a cup of bleach and stir; the "sin" disappears. After you've tried it, share the demonstration with a friend or a child. (Do NOT allow anyone to drink the water with bleach in it.)
- Creating and labeling an exhibit that illustrates "Before Jesus" and "After Jesus." Cut a new handkerchief in two; keep one piece pristine, and soil the other. (May use a pair of new socks instead.)
- Keeping a journal next week about specific instances in which you see God's grace and forgiveness in your life.
- Listening to several songs about grace by different artists. List common elements that you notice, or jot down your response to each one.

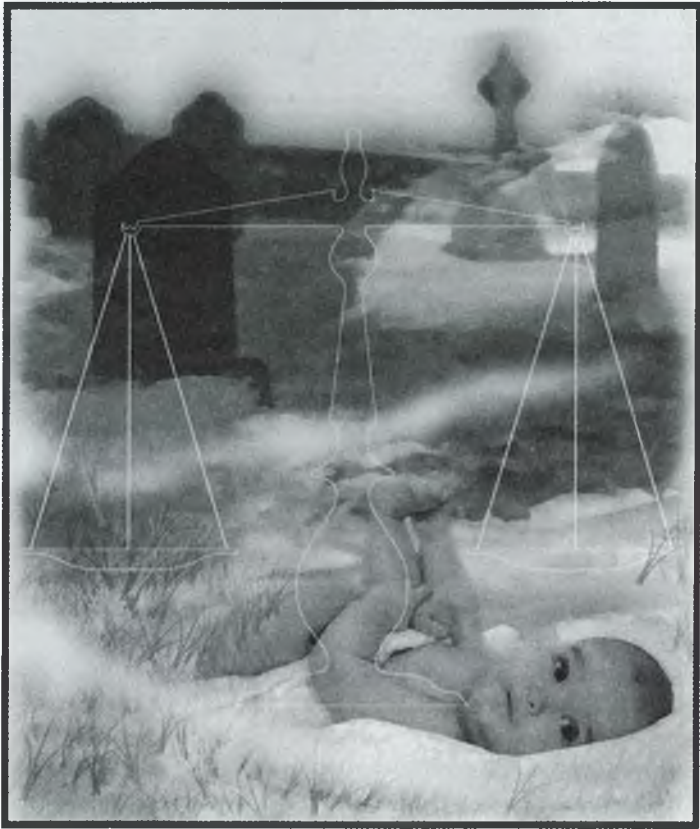
## CONNECT

*Christ's Object Lessons*, "Fit for a Wedding."

G. Daniells, *Christ Our Righteousness*; Max Lucado, *Grace for the Moment*; Dwight K. Nelson, *Outrageous Grace*; Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*



# Judgment must begin



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"In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16, NKJV).

## INTRODUCTION

2 Cor. 5:10

When I was in school, I imagined Judgment Day as one of those final school year days when the roll of students who passed was posted. There were times when I would happily verify the results, quite sure that I had passed. But there were other times when I knew I had not been a good student.

By our attitude and daily choices, we may already feel either calm or troubled about the judgment. Considering we are fully aware of what is God's will, we should obey Him. He assures us of His pardon and forgiveness. We need not be afraid of God's judgment, for He has forgiven us (Rom. 8:1). What we need is to live according to God's holy will.

In such a case, judgment is wonderful news! God's judgment has already begun in heaven and has been taking place since 1844. "The work of judgment which began in 1844, must continue until the cases of all are decided, both of the living and the dead; hence it will extend to the close of human probation."<sup>1</sup>

### **Jesus is the Advocate for the defense.**

For some people, judgment is as frightening as bad news. In the Scriptures, however, it is always considered good news for God's people.

Jesus is the Advocate for the defense. He is like a public defender; He does not charge for His services. He paid the bail with His own life. God, the Father, is the Judge, and after Jesus' death and His ascension to heaven, the Father gave Him full authority, both in heaven and on earth. Have you ever seen a judgment in which the advocate for the defense is the judge himself? Well, that's the case in our judgment. If we accept Jesus and His sacrifice, we are already saved; if we reject Him, we are already condemned by our own sins.

"The final judgment is a most solemn, awful event. This must take place before the universe. To the Lord Jesus the Father has committed all judgment. He will declare the reward of loyalty to the law of Jehovah. God will be honored and His government vindicated and glorified, and that in the presence of the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds. On the largest possible scale will the government of God be vindicated and exalted. It is not the judgment of one individual or of one nation, but of the whole world. Oh, what a change will then be made in the understanding of all created beings. Then all will see the value of eternal life."<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

2. *This Day With God*, p. 296.

# The Wedding Clothes

## EVIDENCE

Matt. 22:1–13

In His ministry Jesus had many confrontations with the Jewish religious leaders. They were always trying to catch Him and establish a reason to kill Him. The event recorded in Matthew 22:1–13 is the climax of their meeting with Jesus at the temple, the week before the Crucifixion. At that time the elders and chief priests started questioning the authority of Jesus. He once more answered properly and left them speechless (21:23–27). Jesus then begins to tell them some parables: the two sons (verses 28–32, KJV); the tenants (verses 33–46, NIV); and the wedding banquet (22:1–14, NIV).

In all these parables Jesus told His questioners that the way they were acting with God and His messengers was taking the kingdom of God away from them. And for that reason it would be given to tax collectors and prostitutes (21:31), to people who would produce fruits (verse 43), and to anyone, both good and bad (22:10). And for His challengers would remain death and the destruction of their city (verse 7).

But beginning in Matthew 22:11, the focus of the story changes. If before the main issue was the Jewish leaders, now Jesus speaks about those who will replace them in the kingdom of God. Some authors suggest that this portion is another parable told by Jesus, and that maybe Matthew had put together two parables about the judgment illustrated with a wedding.

The story begins: “ ‘When the king came in to see the guests’ ” (verse 11, NKJV). The party hadn’t begun and the king wanted to meet those brought by his servants to the wedding banquet, but something wasn’t right. “ ‘He noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes’ ” (verse 11, NIV). The wedding clothes were special clothes—usually white. That man was dishonoring the king by using his common clothes. When the king spoke to him, he was speechless. So there was no other alternative for the king but to banish that man from the banquet.

We are invited to be in the kingdom of God. But there is a requirement: We must be wearing wedding clothes. The invitation is the gospel of the salvation of Christ Jesus. This message is brought to us by the Bible. Changing the common clothes for the wedding clothes means a complete life change. The judgment is not a time when God decides to accept or reject us. The judgment is the time when God finalizes our decision whether or not we have accepted Him, a decision revealed by whether or not we have the garment on.

**We are invited to be in the kingdom of God.**

# The Judgment: An Overview

## LOGOS

Eccles. 12:14; Dan. 12:1, 2; Matt. 8:12; 22:1–13; 25:31–33, 46; John 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:10

### **The Need of a Judgment (Dan. 12:1, 2; Acts 17:31; 2 Cor. 5:10)**

Have you ever attended a judgment? If you have, you know that it is one of the most respected solemnities in which reverence and respect for the judge calls our attention. When we think about a judgment, the idea immediately comes to mind that someone needs to be judged for a specific crime or misdeed.

The Bible is clear in affirming that we are all sinners who deserve death, but God offered His Son to die in our place. Sin, however, still exists, and final judgment will come when it will be made plain to all humankind the malignity of sin and its consequences, as well as the cleanness of those transformed by God's power.

Judgment will come to bring an end to all sadness and injustice in this world and to assure each person's reward. One that is accused of a given crime cannot be imprisoned for life without having faced judgment, without his case being evaluated and a decision made. The same

**It is comforting to know that the invitation for salvation is still available today.**

happens with sin. Sin cannot go on forever without a definite action being taken, and those who hold on to it will be charged for their own voluntary and conscious adherence. God promises to make clear all the facts very soon—in a way that no doubt will remain as to the dilemma of impiety versus piety. "God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil" (Eccles. 12:14, NKJV).

### **God's Judging Criteria (Matt. 25:31–33, 46; James 1:12)**

At any common judgment a judge will administer a sentence only after reviewing all the evidence presented, and after, at least, hearing both parties involved: accusers and defenders. It is evident that there is no accurate judgment without established criteria. The same is true about the Christian life. God will certainly not judge people without letting them know the exact reason for their being condemned or saved. All our actions, be they good or bad, are a result either of our relationship with the Lord or of our straying away from Him. The evaluation of our deeds in this world is permanent, but we must not forget that these deeds are a



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consequence of our love for the Lord. Jesus Himself affirmed: " 'If you love Me, keep My commandments' " (John 14:15, NKJV). The judgment basis is the law of God (law of freedom) expressed in the commandments, and we can be obedient to it only if we are connected to our heavenly Father. The observance of the commandments is perceived in our daily thoughts and attitude, particularly in our compassion for those around us who are suffering.

"That men may be prepared to stand in the Judgment, the message commands them to 'fear God, and give glory to him,' 'and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.' The result of an acceptance of these messages is given in the words, 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' In order to be prepared for the Judgment, it is necessary that men should keep the law of God. That law will be the standard of character in the Judgment."<sup>1</sup>

### **Mercy and Justice: A Perfect Combination (Lam. 3:22, 23; Ezek. 18:30–32; Matt. 22:1–13)**

It is in this that a great difference is seen between human and divine judgment. How many prisoners cry out for mercy from the government to escape the death penalty? They wait long years, many times, for the fatal sentence, and try everything to appeal the judge's decision, but still end up being executed. We are grateful to God because His judgment is different, and because it combines mercy and justice so perfectly. The Lord maintains that sin will not arise a second time and that evil will be finally eradicated, but His mercy is available today to reach us.

It is comforting to know that the invitation for salvation is still available today to all those who want eternal life. God is not pleased in the destruction of any human being. His wish is that all may repent, confess their sins, and have their lives transformed by divine intervention. The Holy Spirit works in order to convince us of sin, of justice, and of judgment. And we must not harden our hearts, but we must accept the free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

God is the Great Judge that will do justice to all people from all times, but He assigned Christ to be our Advocate, One who in the heavenly sanctuary intercedes for us as a perfect High Priest, and who also suffered penalty in our place.

"The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy-seat, before which Christ pleads his blood in the sinner's behalf. Thus is represented the union of justice and mercy in the plan of human redemption. This union infinite wisdom alone could devise, and infinite power accomplish; it is a union that fills all Heaven with wonder and adoration."<sup>2</sup>

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1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 436.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

## Why Would You Fear?

### TESTIMONY

Dan. 12:1

Suppose you are at home, doing your usual activities, and suddenly you are taken by the police. They tell you that there has been a murder on the previous night, and that you are the main suspect. You tell them that you were in church at that time and you have witnesses to prove it. But they say you will have to explain that in court. You are innocent, so why would you fear?

"When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. . . . The final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received 'the seal of the living God.' Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, 'It is done.' . . . When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. . . . The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."<sup>1</sup>

Ellen White describes the time identified by Daniel as the "time of anguish" (Dan. 12:1, TLB), a time when those who honor the law of God will be regarded as "the cause of the fearful convulsions of nature and the strife and bloodshed among men."<sup>2</sup>

**God never forsakes His  
children.**

But God never forsakes His children. For this reason He alerted us about the happenings, so that we

would be prepared and would help to prepare others too.

"With Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days. All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them."<sup>3</sup>

It will be a time when those who are unjust will be unjust still and those who are holy will continue to be holy. If we really love God and are trying to follow His will, we have nothing to fear. God always protects His people, and even death should not frighten us.

1. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 613, 614.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 614.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 488.



# Deleting Sins

## HOW-TO

Rom. 2:16

How simple would it be for God if He just had to press the “delete” key every time someone sinned? God is sovereign and just. He knows who wants His forgiveness, and He wouldn’t have to explain His attitude to anybody. But would you and the entire universe fully believe in God’s justice?

Many want to believe that Jesus’ death on the cross exempts them from God’s judgment. Surely, Jesus paid for all our sins and we don’t need to do anything else in order to earn salvation. Jesus Himself said, “It is finished,” because the ransom for our sins was fully paid. The Bible makes it clear, however, that a judgment is going on at this time and that each of us has a pending case in God’s tribunal. Most Christians live their lives oblivious to what is now taking place in heaven, thinking their case was closed on the day Christ died.

But where is Jesus today? Why is this important to you and to me? He is serving in “the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Heb. 8:2, NKJV). Each time we sin, it is recorded in heaven in God’s sanctuary. And each time we repent and ask for pardon, Jesus intercedes in our behalf and we are declared innocent. Wouldn’t it be easier if God simply used the “delete” key? Why should He record it and then write beside it “guilty,” “innocent,” “guilty,” “innocent”? One day this intercession will cease. Jesus will give the final verdict. And what will be written by your name on that day? If He simply deleted the sins of some and not of others, the expectant universe would think that some children are dearer than others.

**Why is this important to  
you and to me?**

Those who give their lives to Jesus and accept His merits—won on the cross—will be forgiven. God made very clear in the Bible the truth about judgment, and someday all will understand it fully.

Your day can be different if you remember you are living in solemn times. Jesus may be judging your case at this very moment! Nothing that we do, feel, or think escapes God’s eyes. (See Ecclesiastes 12:14.) As you are reminded of this, do you feel that you are being watched? Are you uncomfortable? And as you think of how God is concerned about explaining to you all that is happening and will happen, doesn’t it show you that He cares for you and wishes to help you?

If your Creator died for you and suffered so much only to see you saved, would He today be anxious to record any of your mistakes, or would He earnestly wish that you would repent to offer you pardon? Just think about it.

## From Fear to Hope

### OPINION

Rev. 20:12

Fear. This is the feeling that most of us experience when we hear about God's judgment. I must admit that my heart beats faster each time I think about this subject. My study of the Bible in recent years, however, has helped to dissipate my doubts.

My heart may beat faster now, but it is with hope—the hope that was granted to us when Jesus died on the cross. By doing this, He gave us the chance of passing through a judgment in which we can be absolved of our charges. Had Jesus not died, we would be eternally guilty, and our death would be certain. In order to guarantee that none of His children would be lost, besides granting us the opportunity of facing judgment, God even provided us the best lawyer, Christ Himself.

In spite of that granted grace, we must remember that our Judge is just and will not allow a single detail to be forgotten. Even the most secret acts will be taken into consideration (Eccles. 12:14; Luke 12:2).

**As we understand what the Bible teaches about the judgment, we move from fear to hope.**

Then, you wonder, *How can I be considered righteous before such a perfect God?* The answer can be summarized in a sentence: We are saved by grace, justified by faith, and judged by works.

What do all these things mean in practical terms? First, we must accept the gift Jesus gave us—salvation. This is the only way He can enter our life. By accepting Him as our personal Savior, we will be considered righteous because of our faith in Christ. Then He will begin a gradual work in our hearts, replacing every character imperfection with the virtues demonstrated by the Master when He lived on earth. We will then begin to reflect His holy character. Works are a natural consequence. It's impossible to walk with Jesus without doing what He Himself did: loving our neighbor and ministering to our brethren in need (John 15:1, 2). Thus, we won't fear being judged by our works (Rev. 20:12).

As we understand what the Bible teaches about the judgment, we move from fear to hope. And the best of it all is that our participation in the entire judgment process consists of one single word: Yes. When we say yes to Jesus, we allow Him to act and to take charge of changing whatever is necessary. From the moment Jesus starts living in us, our verdict is assured: We have salvation. The judgment is going on. As you read these words, the Holy Spirit is talking to your heart, inviting you to let Christ come in. The choice is all yours. What answer will you give?

# Absolutely No Condemnation!

## EXPLORATION

Rom. 8:1

## CONCLUDE

Paul says in Romans 8:1 that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Christ has opened a way for believers to stand before His throne (court, judgment) with no condemnation. He has secured our salvation and has credited each professing Christian with His perfect character. We lack nothing in Him. We can stand before Him with our head high knowing that He is our Substitute. Today we are invited to embrace Jesus as our Savior and Lord of our lives. As long as we "remain in Him" He will "remain in us." We'll be safe in His care.

## CONSIDER

- Writing a Thank-You note to Jesus for His goodness. Express to Him what it means for you to be safe in His care.
- Looking up in a concordance the word *condemnation* and do a word study of its usage in the Bible.
- Using photographs from different magazines to create a collage to illustrate what 1 John 4:15–18 means to you personally.
- Interviewing a local attorney about the steps utilized in the process of defending someone.
- Reading, reflecting, and praying on how you feel about the lyrics of the hymn "The Judgment Has Set" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, number 416).
- Watching the film *The Passion of the Christ* with a group of friends and discussing the implications of how Jesus' sacrifice for the salvation of humanity is depicted.

## CONNECT

*The Desire of Ages*, chap. 70.

The short film *The Bullhorn* <[www.nooma.com](http://www.nooma.com)>; the short film *The Least of These* <[www.oldfashionedpictures.com](http://www.oldfashionedpictures.com)>.

# The Forever kingdom



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“ ‘In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever’ ”  
(Dan. 2:44, NKJV).

# The Trail Through Time

## INTRODUCTION

Daniel 2

My husband and I are waiting to surprise our children. The café floor undulates with ancient floorboards, the cakes are generous with chocolate, and the place is a tasteful blend of ancient and contemporary design.

We have set the children a mystery trail. They know they will find us at the end, but they don't know where, and we don't know when. It will depend on how easily they solve the clues. An hour ago we met up, accidentally, so we know they are on the right track. They call us. There is an answer they need to check, part of a code that doesn't make sense, an anagram that is challenging.

Excitement and hunger are rising. Soon the time will be perfect, and we can come out of hiding, hug, laugh, and share the stories of how they have unraveled the mysteries and puzzles. They will also show us the photos they have taken. We've given them an added challenge of taking ten pictures of crosses that aren't crosses, such as the bars in old windows, or the shadow of a rustic signpost.

Soon we are together, enjoying their stories, the interesting details in the clues, the intriguing things uncovered in their search, the cre-

ative places where they found the crosses. We eat lunch together—avocado, feta, and tomato rolled in tortilla wraps infused with garlic and sun-dried tomato. We choose one Belgian truffle each, as a treat.

In the evening I read Daniel 2. It's so familiar. But now I have a different slant on the story: God, our Father, setting us a mystery trail. Symbols and clues, things to look out for that we might otherwise miss, prayer so we can keep in touch when things don't make sense, signs of His presence all around us, for us to hold in our memories. And at the end He waits. We know the place—He knows the time, and we know we are getting close now. We have read the signs, unraveled the mysteries. The route is just how He told us it would be. We trust Him because He has been there and marked the way for us. We are hungry to be with Him, and He is hungry too.

And the treat? Not just a snack, a melt-in-the-mouth moment of pistachio marzipan enrobed in dark velvet chocolate, but something even more eternally delicious.

**Soon we are together,  
enjoying their stories.**



Sunday  
July 9

# Hope for the Hopeless

## LOGOS

Daniel 2

Daniel 2 begins in Nebuchadnezzar's "second year" as king of Babylon, although this second year may have begun a little over six months after becoming king.

The young warrior prince had quelled a rebellion in Egypt, Phoenicia, and Coele-Syria and was still in the west when his father Nabopolassar died in approximately 605 B.C. He rushed home to secure the throne and became king on Elul 1 (sixth month of the Hebrew year) or approximately September 7. It is this period between Elul 1 the end of Adar (Babylonian name for 12th month of the Jewish year) that is described as Nebuchadnezzar's first year, even though it was at most 206 days.

Thus an inexperienced king goes to sleep worrying about the future (Dan. 2:26) and is presented with an amazing metal man in a dream. In the morning, unsure of what the dream means and even more unsure of whom he can trust, Nebuchadnezzar decides to test his advisors—the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers—by asking them to both tell him what his dream was and give its interpretation.

Despite Nebuchadnezzar's repeated requests; offers of gifts, rewards, and great honor (verse 5); and threats to totally obliterate them and their descendants if they are unable to reveal and explain the dream, they are unable even to describe his dream let alone to interpret it. So an

**There is hope for God's  
people in every age!**

angry king sentences them to death.

Amidst the lies and conspiracy (verse 9) to deceive the king, the advisors tell one vital truth that "there is not a man on earth who can do what the king asks!" (verse 10, NIV). Now under a death sentence, they have nothing to lose by telling the truth. Their admission reveals not only that no one can do what the king asks but that no one could reveal the meaning of a dream under such circumstances. It is at this moment of perhaps unintended honesty that they admit that they have no special ability or connection with the supernatural by saying, "No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among men" (verse 11, NIV).

Request, rewards, and threats have failed to produce an understanding of the dream, and there appears little hope for the king, Chaldean, and slave alike.

Consider for a moment the various people who have little or no hope: The Israelites recently captured by Nebuchadnezzar are without hope of a return to



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Jerusalem. The magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and astrologers are under a death sentence proclaimed by the most powerful ruler in the then-known world, and have no hope even for life itself. Nebuchadnezzar—the young king—knowing that his dream is important, can find no one to explain it and, to complicate things further, faces a future without advisors.

If God chooses not to reveal this dream and its meaning, then all since the book of Daniel was written would have little hope of understanding much of God's plan for their futures.

Thankfully, Daniel 2 provides hope for each of these people/groups. Yet between the hopelessness of their situation and the execution of the judgment against them, there is a window of grace that Daniel and his three friends exploit.

Daniel is visionary in his approach to the problem. He devises a plan and draws on the support of his closest friends. Together they call on God, who delivers them. Here lies a principle applicable when situations seem hopeless. Conceive that with God there is a way through the impasse. Believe that the God of grace already has a solution. Then together with a gracious God *achieve the impossible*.

I love the way an ungracious earthly king is inadvertently contrasted with a gracious heavenly King. Perhaps it is here in chapter 2 that the judgment theme developed later in the book is subtly introduced. There is judgment on the royal advisors, on the king, and on the kingdom, but to each is extended a period of grace.

One could describe this chapter either as a passing parade of politicians or a panorama of prophecy. One king follows another, and kingdoms rise and fall in precisely the order foretold by Daniel. But this is more than mere history foretold or a commentary on what will be. When you feel helpless—it is a reason to endure. It is *hope* for the hopeless!

A recurrent theme in this chapter—and, for that matter, elsewhere in the book of Daniel—is expressed both in verses 21 and 44—*God is in control, He is sovereign!* God is sovereign over nations, He is sovereign over kings, and He is sovereign over all individuals. It is He who “‘sets up kings and deposes them’” (verse 21).

The hyper-reality of the dream reinforced by the rock's steady fulfillment of prophecy means this image has metaphorically stood for over 2,600 years. But another rock is coming: Verse 44 is perhaps the highlight of the chapter.

“‘In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever’” (verse 44, NIV).

There is hope for God's people in every age! Kings will come and go, dynasties will rise and fall, human history may dip into its darkest hour—yet God is in control! And His day is coming when He will forever be King, this earth His kingdom, and we His people.

Bring it on! Come, Lord Jesus!

Monday  
July 10

## "Predictions of the Infinite One"

### TESTIMONY

Dan. 2:21, 44

*"He changes the times and the seasons; he removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding" (Dan. 2:21, NKJV).*

*"In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (verse 44, NKJV).*

Daniel 2 has a very powerful message, one that we, as God's people, should not take lightly. This message transcends time, from hundreds of years ago to today. According to Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar's dream was God's revelation of how kingdoms will arise and die one right after the other. "These predictions of the Infinite One, recorded on the prophetic page and traced on the pages of history, were given to demonstrate that God is the ruling power in the affairs of this world. He changes the

times and the seasons, He removes kings and sets up kings, to fulfill His own purpose."<sup>1</sup> God is in control, no matter what man tries to accomplish. All powers upon this earth belong to Him. Even the biggest, most impor-

**Today the same trend  
continues.**

tant kings, queens, and presidents of the earth cannot overrule His authority.

"The image revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, while representing the deterioration of the kingdoms of the earth in power and glory, also fitly represents the deterioration of religion and morality among the people of these kingdoms. As nations forget God, in like proportion they become weak morally."<sup>2</sup> When we forget God in our lives, everything around us deteriorates. The same thing happens to many nations, kings, and politicians. Once our selfish acts take over, we set ourselves up for failure. Each of the kingdoms that were represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream collapsed one by one. Why? They forgot God.

Today the same trend continues. Nations are built. They arise, but once they forget God, they are quickly demolished. But through all these catastrophes and disasters, one group has risen and will never fall. That group is God's chosen people. Kingdoms, nations, leaders under human direction will fall. Those kept under God's direction, however, will never fall, but will rise and continue to rise until they meet God in the heavens and live with Him forever.

1. *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 1, no. 24, "E. G. White Comments on Daniel 2," p. 49.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

# The Empire Strikes Rock!

## EVIDENCE

Dan. 2:7–23, 30–47; Matt. 7:24, 25; 1 Thess. 5:20, 21

Cuisenaire rods are not as exciting as skateboards or even a toy car or train, but as a five-year-old there was nothing I loved to play with more. I loved building huge towers—the taller the better. It didn't take me long to realize that the broader and stronger the base, the higher I could build. It's a bit like a Christmas tree. The star at the top gets the most attention, but it does nothing to hold the tree up or give it strength. A solid base will ensure there are no disasters. Nebuchadnezzar was a "star." He thought his kingdom was indestructible and glorious, but he had the whole thing upside down.

Daniel relayed two reasons to the great king that God was willing to reveal the secrets of this dream: first, to rescue His faithful servants from the king's indignation, and second, to ease the king's mind. What he didn't acknowledge here was that there was a third motivation for God's revelations: a message to all who would live, especially after His Son's sacrifice, that our earthly existence is finite and has been mapped out to its conclusion from the very beginning! Not only does our Almighty God know the future, He ultimately takes control of earthly empires

**We should be amazed, but  
never surprised, at what  
God is and does.**

in order to save those who love and obey Him. At the base of this "tower" of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay is the Rock. As Jesus said, those who build on the Rock will stand—for eternity!

As I read through Daniel 2, I am amazed! I'm amazed that the wise men couldn't even talk for five minutes to buy some time, yet Daniel was able to walk in and out, without bargaining, and gain that time. I'm amazed that though they said to Nebuchadnezzar that no "flesh" could tell him his dream, Daniel did so without taking the credit for a moment. I'm amazed at the impact one humble servant can have on the attitude of a mighty king toward God. We should be amazed, but never surprised, at what God is and does. Needing extra time—God will deliver it! Needing divine power—God will provide it! Needing life-changing humility—God will impart it! When the miraculous works through our brokenness, may we be just as quick to bless our Father with praises as Daniel was before he even visited Nebuchadnezzar and received deliverance.

# Truth's Voice Is Pretty Loud

## HOW-TO

Dan. 2:14

Growing up in a Seventh-day Adventist home, I always had questions about churches that rang bells before the beginning of the mass. If the people knew the time, why did bells have to be rung? It was a call to worship. Not long after, in the church that I attended, I started hearing bells ringing to close the Sabbath School sessions. This small but profound instance has impacted my life until today with messages of truth.

Seventh-day Adventist Christians believe in the Bible as God's true and anointed Word. We have looked at Daniel 2 this week and we have all the reasons to believe in the God of Daniel with the everlasting gospel of truth.

Reading Daniel 2, I have pondered at how the instances in that chapter apply to my day-to-day life—and I trust to yours too. A song comes to mind: "Dare to Be a Daniel, Dare to Stand Alone."

Standing alone is not always easy, especially when faced with opposition. As human beings we desire support and affirmation that we are doing good, but this should not be the expectation of a true follower of Christ. When we face challenging situations like Daniel and his friends, here are certain questions to ponder:

### Standing alone is not always easy.

1. Am I willing to die for the right cause; meaning, to stand up for what is right, my faith in Jesus, even to the point of death?
2. Do I believe in a God who reveals mysteries and truth even when others don't seem to believe so?
3. Do I believe in a God who answers prayer even when the circumstances don't seem right?
4. Do I believe in a God who gives grace to the humble and exalts humility, even in the face of earthly kings who might consider me a nobody?

When we as Seventh-day Adventist Christians believe in the truth as it is stated in the Bible, then when challenging circumstances arise, our God will give us wisdom and tact, just as He did for Daniel, and the world will know what a mighty God we serve. From today, when you hear a church bell ring, know that the Lord is calling you to proclaim His truth wherever you are, and that truth's voice is loud—you won't miss it.

# Daniel's Tell-All Book

## OPINION

Dan. 2:20–23

The prophecy of Daniel 2 is the basis for all the prophecies found in Daniel. It provides a historical overview of the earthly kingdoms from the reign of Babylon to the arrival of the true King, Jesus Christ. Daniel 2 is a fusion of historical, current, and future events—all recorded over 2,500 years ago!

But what is the purpose of this overview? Why does God take the time in Daniel 2 to show Nebuchadnezzar—and us—only a portion of the entire prophecy? Has the passage of time and the fulfillment of prophecy forever turned this chapter into nothing more than a children's story? What does it have to say to us today?

The answer is found in a portion of the chapter that many of us tend to overlook. In verses 20–23, Daniel prays a prayer of thanks to God for revealing the king's dream and its interpretation to him. What he says in this prayer says a lot about what we should learn from reading Daniel 2.

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him” (Dan. 2:20–22, NKJV).

**The purpose of the great controversy is the vindication of God before the entire universe.**

Daniel 2 is all about God. It reveals Him as all-knowing because He gives a summary of earth's history leading to the end of time. He also reveals Himself as all-powerful, tearing down all earthly kingdoms at His coming and establishing an indestructible, infinite kingdom in their place.

Beyond even the attributes of God, Daniel 2 reveals His character. It reveals His infinite patience in dealing with sin, and the incredible order with which He goes about it. God gave Daniel His plans thousands of years ago, and despite the ever-increasing effects of sin He has followed through with them, not willing that any should perish (2 Pet. 3:9).

In learning prophecy and interpreting Scripture, we cannot forget that the purpose of the great controversy is the vindication of God before the entire universe. As we enter the study of the judgment, let's keep the big picture in focus—that our all-knowing, all-powerful, patient, and orderly God is doing everything He can to save us. He promised it in Daniel 2, and He has kept His word.



# Dispensing Daniel's Dauntlessness

## EXPLORATION

Daniel 2

### CONCLUDE

Not only does God lead His faithful people through a prophetic “mystery trail” and await us at the end with a celebration, but His prophecies give hope for many others as well. Eventually the nations who have forgotten God will come to an end, but God’s chosen people will triumph, because Jesus the Rock will keep us safe throughout eternity. As that day approaches, we need to discover the solid foundation of God’s truth that vindicates His character, and we also need to realize how important it is to stand firm for this truth and to speak out about it as time and tact permit.

### CONSIDER

- Designing a movie poster for an action-adventure feature film on the characters and events in Daniel 2. Play off the following elements: danger, chase scenes (astrologers running from Babylonian soldiers), male bonding under pressure, courage, belief in God, etc.
- Writing three gently humorous poems in limerick form about Daniel 2, one each from the point of view of (1) Daniel, (2) his three friends, and (3) Nebuchadnezzar.
- Choreographing a two-minute pantomime to be used for a worship service children’s story that vividly—and sometimes humorously—acts out the events of Daniel 2. This could star five children (or adults, or a mix), with several individuals taking more than one part as necessary.
- Downloading Johnny Cash’s song about Daniel 3 (“The Fourth Man in the Fire”) from an Internet music source, and writing lyrics about Daniel 2 using the same tune. Perform the song in your Sabbath School class or at your next church retreat.
- Writing on a note card the names of people in your life who desperately need Daniel 2’s certainty that God and good will triumph. Keep the card in your Bible and pray daily for these people—and that you’ll get a gentle, tactful chance to share your own hope with them.

### CONNECT

William Shea, *Daniel: A Reader's Guide*; Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*.

# Time to possess the Kingdom



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“ ‘Until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom’ ”  
(Dan. 7:22, NKJV).

# The Saints Triumphant

## INTRODUCTION

Dan. 2:29

One Sabbath during divine worship, at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, where I did my undergraduate studies, Dr. Clyde Cassimy narrated a story about a man who was reading a book.

As he progressed in his reading, he became increasingly upset because the bad guy always defeated the good guy. He decided to flip to the back of the book and read the last paragraphs to know how the battle between these contenders ended. To his delight the book concluded with the good guy ultimately winning. He returned to the page where he had left off and read on. Every time the bad guy defeated the good guy, he smiled to himself and said, "Oh, if only you knew what

**He became increasingly upset because the bad guy always defeated the good guy.**

I know!" Why? Because he knew the end, no amount of apparent defeat of the good guy made him sad. Rejoicing replaced his initial stress in spite of setbacks.

In Daniel 2 and 7 God has clearly shown us the panorama of human history and revealed to us the end of the great controversy, with Jesus

and the saints victorious. Like the man in the story above, we should live through the troubles of this life, in which evil seems to win, with confidence and rejoicing, knowing that "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37, NKJV). Our victory is assured: It was announced in Eden (Gen. 3:15), manifest in Jesus' ministry on earth, and conclusively won on the cross. Jesus Himself said in John 16:33, "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (NKJV).

As we see the signs of Jesus' second coming rapidly fulfilling in our day, we should be "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 12:2, NKJV). "For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11, NKJV). We have no fear of either the pre-Advent judgment or the judgment to come because we have surrendered to Christ and He lives in us. We look forward to judgment as the day when Jesus will take our hands and personally introduce us to our Father in heaven. In the meantime, being the people of the judgment and having the knowledge of the mysteries of God behooves us to work for the salvation of others by lifting Jesus up that He may draw all men unto Him.

# Atiq Yomin: The Ancient of Days

## EVIDENCE

Dan. 7:9, 13, 22

*The Ancient of Days* is "a name given to God by the prophet Daniel" (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22), in which he contrasts His eternal powers with the frail existence of the empires of the world. It is from these descriptions of the Almighty that Christian art derived its general manner of representing the First Person of the Holy Trinity. *Ancient of Days* is expressed in Aramaic by *Atiq Yomin*; in the Greek Septuagint by *palaaios hemeron*; and in the Vulgate by *Antiquus dierum*."<sup>1</sup>

Understanding the meaning of *Atiq Yomin* is paramount to decoding the prophetic meanings of Daniel 7. This name underlines the importance of the presence of the Lord in every aspect of our lives. His being the Ancient of Days denotes that He is the Supreme Authority because He has overseen every act of our lives and even life that extends beyond the laying of the foundation of the earth. This title portrays God as being very active in earth's history.

Daniel's description in verse 9 elicits a scene of supremacy. The appearance and apparel designate authority of the Ancient of Days as the only just Judge. "Daniel saw only a representation of the Deity. To what extent the representation reflected the reality cannot be known. In vision Deity is presented in various forms, the form assumed generally having reference to the teaching objective of the vision."<sup>2</sup>

**This title portrays God as  
being very active in earth's  
history.**

Verse 13 introduces the Son of man to the judgment scene. This particular appearance and the significance of pre-Advent judgment should be distinguished from the final judgment. The King James Version of the Bible clearly states that the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days. "This cannot represent the second coming of Christ to this earth, for Christ comes to 'the Ancient of days.' The coming of Christ to the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary is here represented."<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, online edition copyright © 2003 by K. Knight:  
<<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01463a.htm>>.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 828.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 829, 830.



## LOGOS

### Daniel 7

*"This fourth beast is the fourth world power that will rule the earth. It will be different from all the others. It will devour the whole world, trampling everything in its path" (Dan. 7:23, NLT).*

Have you ever heard the expression "20/20 hindsight"? People agree that when you look back and see what you should have done, it's much easier to make a decision. With prophecy, however, it's a little different, almost as if it were written with 20/20 hindsight in mind! Living in the last days of this earth, we can now look back on prophecies like Daniel 7 and easily see what God predicted thousands of years ago.

Daniel 7 gives us some of the most exciting Scripture ever written. Here God gives us the story of the world, from Babylon until the end of time. Christ named all the kingdoms except the fourth. The gold head (Daniel 2) and the lion were Babylon (Dan. 2:38). The second kingdom, the silver chest and the bear, Christ revealed as Media-Persia in Daniel 5:28–31; 8:20. The third kingdom, the brass thighs and the leopard,

God revealed as Greece in Daniel 11:2. Though the fourth kingdom is not named, Christ gave us enough information so that we would easily identify it with our 20/20 hindsight.

This fourth kingdom, our church believes, God is identifying as Rome.

**In prophetic time we are minutes away from Christ's coming to take us home.**

And there are several reasons that we believe it is.

The fourth kingdom is "terrifying, dreadful, and very strong" (7:7, NLT). It is described as having "huge iron teeth and trampled what was left beneath its feet" (verse 7, NLT). "From the end of the third century [B.C.] onward, Roman policy was aggressive, having no interest in settling disputes through negotiations but rather making demands to other nations that made war unavoidable." Rome made the world an unhappy place to live.

God also tells us in Daniel 2 and 7 that the fourth kingdom breaks up into smaller pieces. This happened to the Roman Empire in the second half of the fourth century. But unlike the three other kingdoms in the prophecy that were replaced by others, the Roman Empire split up into smaller kingdoms. In fact, the Roman Empire split up into ten kingdoms, just like the ten toes in Daniel 2 and the ten horns in Daniel 7. But that isn't enough to make sure that we've got the right kingdom. Christ didn't want us to have any doubts. So He gave us a few more identifying features of the fourth beast and its little-horn power.



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This power would subdue three kings (7:24). In A.D. 538 the papacy suppressed the three former Roman powers of the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. "He will defy the Most High and wear down the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws" (verse 25, NLT). The papacy claims infallibility and the power to forgive sins, and changed the Sabbath to Sunday. God's "holy people . . . will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time" (verse 25, NLT). "The Papacy has . . . persecuted like no other power has ever persecuted. Through crusades and the Inquisition, by the dungeon, the stake, and all manner of fiendish tortures, it destroyed the Dark and Middle ages and the saints of God."<sup>2</sup>

There was also a time limit that Christ gave us: "a time, times, and half a time" (verse 25, NLT). A time, in prophecy, is the same as a year. So we have three and a half times, or three and a half years, a total of 1,260 days. However, we accept that 1,260 days in prophecy stands for 1,260 years (Ezek. 4:6; Num. 14:34). Now we turn to history and discover that the pope toppled three Roman kings in A.D. 538. Then in 1798 Pope Pius VI was taken prisoner by Napoleon's general, and the papacy temporarily was greatly weakened. For those who don't have a calculator: 1798 – 538 = 1,260 years.

What kingdom in history rose up and dominated the world and split into ten different kingdoms, three of which became one power of a "different style" to anything previously seen on the earth? Further, this final power that came from three changed God's laws and treated the purpose of Jesus' atonement for our sins with total contempt by taking on that responsibility itself—and had great power for 1,260 years.

This snapshot of the world, from way before Grandma was a baby till Christ returns, has mostly already taken place. As we look deeper into the lesson this quarter, we will realize that we are living right at the end of time and that our church has unique beliefs on Daniel and Revelation that we need to share. In prophetic time we are minutes away from Christ's coming to take us home to be with Him! But Christ doesn't want us to be yelling out "I'll be ready in a minute!" He wants us ready now, shoes on, packed, and waiting at the door. It's time to go . . . now.

## REACT

1. Search for "Daniel 7" and "Adventist" on the Internet. How would you respond to people who have posted their concerns with accepting our church's view on Daniel 7?
2. How should we share our church's message of Daniel 7 with Catholic friends? How do we show that we are discussing an institution and not individuals?
3. List some reasons that you think Christ chose not to name the fourth power in Daniel 7.

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1. A. E. Austin, ed., *The Cambridge Ancient History* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1989), vol. 8, p. 382.

2. *The Prophetic Book for Lay Workers* (Warburton, Australia: Signs Publishing Company), p. 9.

# Judgment and Salvation

## TESTIMONY

Dan. 7:18; Rev. 3:5

"As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the case of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance."<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, good to know that, "All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life."<sup>2</sup>

**"[Jesus] lifts his wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying, 'I know them by name.' "**

"While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God as transgressors. The great deceiver has sought to lead them into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from his love, and to break his law. Now he points to the record of their lives, to the

defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects."<sup>3</sup>

"Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, he lifts his wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying, 'I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of my hands.' "<sup>4</sup>

1. *The Faith I Live By*, p. 212.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 484, 485.

# Even Living Dogs Have Hope

## HOW-TO

Eccles. 9:4

If it weren't for hope, you couldn't handle the full truth. The full truth is that the fourth beast of Daniel 7 is an iron-toothed behemoth that would make King Kong look tame. The Bible says that the last horn (king) of that beast kingdom "was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them" (verse 21, NKJV). The vision was sickening to Daniel. It grieved his spirit. Imagine a beast so terrible and so pompous that it would make war with the saints and prevail! How would the sinner withstand this?

"'Until the Ancient of Days came'" (verse 22, NKJV). *Until* is a word that is synonymous with hope. "Until" is the fulfillment of hope. When the Ancient of Days shows up, hope is fulfilled for the saints and extinguished for the beast.

However, we are living in the prelude to the final "until." We need the hope and we need it now. We are looking the little horn right in the eye, and he is cursing us, mocking our faith, and disgracing our God. Yet this passage gives us three reasons to hope:

**1. Even living dogs have hope.** The beast will die. He had his reign, his glory, his time, times, and half a time of fame. But he will be utterly destroyed and his body will

be burnt up (verse 11), and the saints will take over and live forever (verse 27). What then? Can a dead lion roar? No! Further proof that even "a living dog is better than a dead lion" (Eccles. 9:4, NKJV).

**2. Grace is in favor of the saints.** So why be a living dog when God is calling you to be a living saint? When Jesus approaches the throne on our behalf (Dan. 7:14), the sinner becomes a saint because all God sees is His beloved Son standing in our place. He pronounces the sentence "guilty" for the beast and "mercy" for those who endured his great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

**3. There is another half of the full truth.** The saints will go marching in. It's one thing simply to survive a good beating. It's quite another thing to be richly rewarded for finishing the race. God will not only take away the kingdom from the fourth beast but will give it to the saints and establish it forever.

So put on hope and walk in the authority that you know is yours when the kingdom is given to you. Deferred hope does make the heart sick—ask Daniel. But wait for the final "until" when the Ancient of Days will be your tree of life.

We are living in the prelude  
to the final "until."

## OPINION

Dan. 8:8-18

Daniel was watching the news, widescreen in a vivid dream, covering not just today but a synopsis of centuries. Evil seemed unstoppable. The exploits of the little horn with the big mouth holds Daniel's attention until God attempts to divert it to the big picture. The Ancient of Days, the throne room, the gathering of multitudes, a court, and we cross back to the little horn again. But wait—the Son of man is led into the presence of the Ancient of Days and is given the kingdom. Then judgment is different forever.

The judgment is not to scare the saints into being good. They, like Daniel, need hope to carry on. The saints are being defeated—or so it seems. War is a strange thing. You rarely get hurt unless you are on the frontlines, fighting for what you believe in. God is giving a glimpse of the big picture to the battle weary, the bruised, and the broken. “Jesus is the human face of God.”<sup>1</sup> Not only is the ultimate victory His, but the hands and voice that sustain us in the battle and plead for us in judgment are His.

**The judgment is not to scare the saints into being good.**

Can this hope “beyond history” sustain us unless we are part of a “hope within history”?<sup>2</sup> If we are living uncontaminated in a holy hide-away, the judgment might hold some

misgivings. He might ask about cups of cold water and visiting prisoners. Sometimes we “enter people’s worlds only enough to change them, not necessarily to love them,”<sup>3</sup> which feels a lot like manipulation.

Living incarnationally is freeing. It is simply being “Abba’s child,”<sup>4</sup> secure in His love, His salvation, living responsively to Him rather than for Him. It means being free to be present, to listen, to love, to be following the Lamb wherever.

God’s incarnational people, out here, sometimes at the bottom of the heap, look up and forward to a day when all things will be set right. Somehow the books, judgment, and the end of evil seem to fade and the focus is on Jesus and they continue to follow Him—forever.

1. Brennan Manning and Jim Hancock, *Posers, Fakes, and Wannabes: Unmasking the Real You* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress Publishing Group, 2003), p. 133.

2. Brian McLaren and Tony Campolo, *Adventures in Missing the Point: How the Culture-Controlled Church Neutered the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003), p. 66.

3. Peter Scazzero and Warren Bird, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003), p. 177.

4. Manning and Hancock, *Posers*, p. 83.

# Living in the Last Days

## EXPLORATION

Daniel 2; 7

## CONCLUDE

We've heard it time and again: We're living in the last days. Not knowing the day or hour, the important part seems to be the "living." We know how the story will end, but it is for us to fill the pages. Do our lives show a confidence in Christ's victory, or do they stray from the story line, having no real connection to the hope we have in the "Ancient of Days"? Perhaps we need to ask ourselves the same question asked after Christ's ascension: "Why stand ye gazing . . . ?" (Acts 1:11, KJV). We have the promise—there is no need to stand around watching for His return. Instead, we should be working to fulfill the commission with which He left us (Matt. 28:18–20).

## CONSIDER

- Writing a newspaper article, an editorial, or a letter-to-the-editor from the point of view of Daniel sharing his vision and its meaning for the people of his day.
- Interviewing an older member of your church to find out how they continue to hope for the soon return of Christ when they have expected it for so long.
- Setting goals for your spiritual life as if you knew Christ would return (a) tomorrow; (b) five years from now; or (c) twenty years from now. Discuss the ways in which the goals change/remains the same, given the different time frames. Which set of goals will you apply to the reality of no one knowing the time of Christ's return?
- Creating a diorama depicting Daniel's vision in chapter 7.
- Charting the elements of Daniel's vision and their interpretation, listing the texts from which you draw the interpretation and giving special attention to the details given for each beast and its meaning.
- Composing a song that encompasses the different elements of Daniel's vision, with the main lesson to be learned serving as the chorus/refrain.

## CONNECT

C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 1, pp. 101–144; William H. Shea, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier: A Practical Guide to Abundant Christian Living in the Book of Daniel 1–7*, pp. 151–184; *Daniel 7–12*, chap. 9; *Selected Studies in Prophetic Interpretation*, chaps. 1; 5.



# Cleansing the Sanctuary



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**"And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed' "**

**(Dan. 8:14, NKJV).**

# Judging the Culprit?

## INTRODUCTION

Dan. 7:26–28

Lights dimmed, voices hushed, eyes dropped, and breathing slowed. It was still. The whispered ruckus down in the lobby amused the five people sitting in the circle hunched over on the floor. Excitedly they expressed the emotions of the day, just as I meandered through the door with the verdict.

The day had been filled with investigations, meddling, and mystery. Thoughts rumbled through my head as I easily pieced the information back into the puzzle. There was still one piece missing: Why? She was a normal girl with a normal family with normal amounts of money. Why would she do this?

My job: resident assistant. My purpose: to help the deans. The problem: theft.

Why I was involved: It was my girl. As the day and the hour had rolled around, the suspect was due to have a visit with the head dean. His verdict was sad. The consequences were dismissal.

Silence oozed out the pores of everyone in the room. They all watched me. I had just tucked her into bed—after all she was one of my girls. I had asked her “Why?”

She had answered, “Why not?”

This was merely one of her many meetings with the administration. She had somehow blown over all of their grace. This was now the last straw, and she was gone. Could I have prevented it? Could I have made a difference? Maybe, but did I? I felt sick—had I failed? Should I have let this one go? That way she wouldn’t face this horrible fate of judgment. No. It was my job, my duty.

**She had answered,  
“Why not?”**

As I continually seek to assemble pieces of the puzzle in my head, I imagine how Daniel must have felt being taken in vision to Susa, one of the ritzy capitals of Babylon. Daniel 7:26–28 going into chapter 8 shows Daniel meditating on the judgment scene. God opens Daniel’s insight so that it will help him to pass on information regarding the final judgment. He is looking at the future of his people and the world, and he has a choice: to tell the world, causing an uproar, or to stay silent. As he sits there palely contemplating all the questions going through his mind, God begins to give him a history lesson revealing the timing of this judgment.

Even today in the study of the Word we stand in eager anticipation to understand what this judgment is all about. Though the judgment may seem harsh and sad, it is imperative.

## Accept No Counterfeits

### LOGOS

#### Daniel 8

In Daniel 8 the prophet is given another preview of the rise and fall of world religious and political powers. Daniel 2 and 7 already trace the kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Daniel 8, beginning with Media-Persia (symbolized by a ram with two horns), mentions a goat with a prominent horn (Greece, under Alexander the Great), then, with the symbol of the four horns, predicts the disintegration of the Greek Empire and the rise of another horn, or power. (Lest there be any doubt, the interpretation of Daniel's dream is provided by the angel Gabriel in Daniel 8:19–25.)

Students of history have no trouble identifying the last horn as a symbol of the Roman Empire. The words, “[it] started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land” (Dan. 8:9, NIV), clearly refers to the amazing extent to which Rome dominated Western civilization.

**The sacrifice of an innocent victim—Jesus—takes away our condemnation.**

Then, from describing the interplay of nations, the focus of Daniel's vision changes to describe a truly cosmic struggle between the “Prince of princes” (verse 25, NIV) and “a master of intrigue” (verse 23, NIV): “[The horn] grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw

some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low. Because of rebellion, the host [of the saints] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground” (verses 10–12, NIV).

Again, history witnessed the rise of papal Rome as a religious and political power. With its doctrines of saints, sacraments, human traditions, and priestly intermediaries, the Roman Church effectively took believers' focus off Christ's ministry in heaven and put it on a purely human institution.

### Salvation in Symbols

The Old Testament sanctuary system consistently pointed forward to Christ's death, resurrection, and ministry as our High Priest in heaven. It pointed out that people are sinful by nature and thus deserve to die. But the sacrifice of an innocent victim—Jesus—takes away our condemnation and gives us salvation.

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Daniel's vision was an indication that the struggle to understand the simple provisions of salvation would extend to the end of time; that salvation by faith versus salvation by works would be one of the great issues in the struggle between Christ and Satan.

The obvious question, "‘How long . . .?’" (verse 13, NIV), regarding the struggle between the horn and the Prince of the host, must have been uppermost in Daniel's mind.

The answer—"‘2,300 evenings and mornings’" (verse 14, NIV)—left Daniel completely baffled. "It was beyond understanding," he confessed (verse 27, NIV).

Yet Daniel 8:13, 14 has been one of the great Adventist texts for more than a century and a half. Decades before Adventists existed as a denomination, a lay Baptist preacher named William Miller (1782–1849) used the commonly accepted practice of interpreting timed prophecies in terms of a prophetic day equaling a literal year (Ezek. 4:6).

Based on his study of this text, Miller assumed that Jesus would return at the end of 2,300 years to cleanse the sanctuary (which he understood to be this world) and set up the literal kingdom of God. Miller was correct in understanding this prophetic time period to extend from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844, but he was incorrect in terms of the event that would take place at the end of that period.

## Where We Are Now

Beginning with the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, Christians began to understand that the church, as an institution, is no substitute for having a personal relationship with Christ as individuals. Believers were encouraged to seek God directly rather than trust in human rites and traditions. After 1844 God raised the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a movement that put the focus back on Christ and His rightful role as Savior and Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary.

The 2300-year prophecy is anchored in Christ—His earthly ministry, His sacrificial death, and His priestly ministry. It is a signpost that traces the career of the horn of Daniel 8 and predicts its demise (verse 25).

Until Christ returns, our struggle will be to exalt the truth that stands against counterfeit Sabbaths and works-based means of salvation. The apostate power of Daniel 8 is not the only one who would usurp Christ's place as King of kings and Lord of lords.

## REACT

What is your earliest memory of the 2300-year prophecy? Was it: (a) crystal clear? (b) a little fuzzy around the edges? or (c) clear as mud? If this is a new concept, how does it help or hinder your understanding of the cosmic struggle between good and evil?



Monday  
July 24

## Too Important to Ignore

### TESTIMONY

Dan. 8:14, 26, 27

For Daniel God's sanctuary was everything. Troubled by the vision and sensing its importance, Daniel fainted and was sick several days. He wanted to understand, but why? Why was the sanctuary so important to Daniel, and is it still important for us today?

"Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds, that they may not dwell upon the very work with which we ought to be best acquainted. The arch-deceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful Mediator. He knows that with him everything depends on his diverting minds from Jesus and His truth.

"Those who would share the benefits of the Saviour's mediation should permit nothing to interfere with their duty to perfect holiness in the fear of God. The precious hours, instead of being given to pleasure, to display, or to gain-seeking, should be devoted to an earnest, prayerful study of the Word of truth. The subject

**"Satan invents unnumbered schemes to occupy our minds."**

of the sanctuary and the investigative Judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the

faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. Every individual has a soul to save or to lose. Each has a case pending at the bar of God. Each must meet the great Judge face to face. How important, then, that every mind contemplate often the solemn scene when the Judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened, when, with Daniel, every individual must stand in his lot, at the end of the days.

"All who have received the light upon these subjects are to bear testimony of the great truths which God has committed to them. The sanctuary in Heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects, and be able to give an answer to every one that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them."\*

\* *The Great Controversy*, p. 488.



# The Unsung Hero

## EVIDENCE

Dan. 8:9–12, 14, 20, 21

Daniel 8 starts in 550 B.C., ten years before the fall of Babylon recorded in Daniel 5, but already this mighty empire's power has begun to erode. A new nation is rising to replace Babylon as world superpower: Media-Persia. The vision opens on Daniel finding himself in the citadel of Susa, destined to become a royal city in Media-Persia.

Normally, in visions dealing with kingdoms, the beasts are fanciful, unclean hybrids. Chapter 8, however, presents us with two ceremonially clean animals used in sanctuary services. Though chapter 8 deals with the rise and fall of the kingdoms of Media-Persia and Greece (Dan. 8:20, 21), it mainly focuses on events connected with Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. With media bombarding us with the events of our world, it is easy not to see the work Christ is doing for us in heaven, pleading for us with His blood covering the multitude of our sins. Like Daniel we must direct our eyes heavenward toward Christ and His ministry for us remembering that regardless of our sins, He is working on our behalf to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

From one of the four winds of the heavens, a "little horn" rises up, to grow in power, spreading toward the south, east, and toward Israel, the Beautiful Land (Dan. 8:9). More than simply a political entity, the horn attains religious power, attack-

ing the sanctuary and stealing from the Prince of the host *hatamid* or "the daily," a term used to denote the priest's daily intercessory activity in the sanctuary.\* The horn steals the duties from the Prince of the host, as intercessor for God's people. Through the ages, only one power has conquered lands and usurped Christ as Mediator and Intercessor: pagan and papal Rome. This has resulted in people forgetting that Christ alone stands as our Mediator and is even now working on our behalf.

Daniel is told that the vision will last 2,300 days. At the end of this time, the sanctuary will be cleansed. During the annual sanctuary cleansing on earth, the people were to rest in God while He worked on their behalf, ridding the sanctuary of sins accumulated during the year. Likewise, people living after the 2,300 days, during the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, should rest in God's grace trusting His ability to rid them, and ultimately the universe, of sin.

**The vision opens on Daniel finding himself in the citadel of Susa.**

\*Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Daniel*, vol. 21 (Washington, D. C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), p. 533.

## "Facing the Judgment"

### HOW-TO

#### Daniel 8

The vision presented to Daniel in chapter 8 begins with a ram (verse 3) and a goat (verse 5), which Gabriel himself interprets as the kings of Media and Persia (verse 20), and the king of Greece (verse 21). How can this possibly apply to us, living centuries after these events?

First, prophecy and history are witnesses that God is involved in human affairs. God has shown again and again that His prophecies and His Word can be trusted. Second, this vision also includes the reference to the 2,300 days (verse 14). This reference to the sanctuary being "cleansed" (NKJV) happened in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844, beginning the "pre-Advent judgment." This vision concerning the 2,300 days should therefore affect our daily life.

What brings the solemnities of the judgment to our own door is that the long prophetic period that was to begin the final work in the heavenly sanctuary ended in 1844. Since then the final work for our salvation has continued, by examining every person's character and remitting the sins of those who are found worthy to have

**Prophecy and history are  
witnesses that God is  
involved in human affairs.**

them remitted.

We will inevitably face the Judge in the heavenly courts. While we might feel uneasy, especially after witnessing unfair judgments in earthly courts, we know that Jesus Himself will preside as Judge. He will also be our Attorney if we establish a steadfast friendship with Him—allowing His character to stand in place of ours.

**1. Take time.** This means more than the casual time we spend with Him. We must intentionally seek a saving friendship with Him, because without Him, we can do nothing (John 15:5).

**2. Stay connected daily.** Spending time with Him during the Sabbath is already expected. We should seek Him not only on the Sabbath but at every moment of our lives.

**3. Study the Bible.** This refers to more than our 15 minutes of lesson study.

**4. Pray.** Nothing can be said enough about prayer. But "if the Saviour of men, the Son of God, felt the need of prayer, how much more should feeble, sinful mortals feel the necessity of fervent, constant prayer."\*

\*Steps to Christ, p. 94.

# The End, or Something Like It

## OPINION

Dan. 8:26

When I was asked to write on Daniel, I at first shied away. I was raised an Adventist, but I would not consider myself a doctrinal junky. Daniel is a book that contains so much meaning and prophecy that at times I am almost scared to read it.

I recently got engaged, and by the time you are reading this, I hope to be happily married. I think I am not alone in saying this, but I like my life. I am happy with where it is headed; I have a future that is full of hope; I am just starting out. Contrasting to my position is that of my grandparents. As they are nearing the end of their lives, they are looking to the end and their life with Christ. They look to the end times as a fulfillment of their lives. I look to it as a fast approaching cut-off date that is eating up my life. I want to live my life, finish school, spend time with my wife, and have kids. I want to travel, experience fine foods, and meet people. I want to work and pay bills. I want to sit at home and be lazy. I want to do so many things, and when I think about the world ending I am almost sad.

How shortsighted I am and ungrateful of what God has given us. I think it is important to enjoy our friends and family here on earth, but who am I to fear Jesus' coming so that I can mow my yard? The earth's fruits are nothing more than a small speckle of putrescence compared to the wonderment of heaven. The love and connection I feel with my future wife is nothing compared to what we will each experience when we are in the heavenly city with our Creator.

Daniel 8 talks about horns and kingdoms that rise up and attack each other. This text clearly lays out a series of events that are to come. Daniel has this vision, and the angel Gabriel explains the events. The main idea that stands out to me is near the end. In verse 26 Gabriel says, "seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future" (NIV). The "distant future" was distant at one time, but that was then, and we are living in the future. To quote a rather overused cliché, "The future is now." We are living in the last days, and we should find hope in that. Our silly little lives will soon blossom into a full and unrestricted relationship with our Creator.

Don't pine for our current lives but hold on to the hope that we will soon be home.

**Who am I to fear Jesus'  
coming so that I can mow  
my yard?**

## EXPLORATION

Daniel 8

## CONCLUDE

Daniel received a vision of events concerning the “time of the end” (Dan. 8:19, NIV). He found this vision so confusing and disturbing that he lay exhausted and ill for several days. In the early 1800s, William Miller began to study this prophecy fervently and discovered the 2300-day timeline, extending from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844. Later, Seventh-day Adventists came to understand that in 1844 Christ began His role as our Savior and Mediator in the heavenly sanctuary. This means that the judgment process has begun.

## CONSIDER

- Doing some free association with the word *judgment*. Set a timer for five or ten minutes, then write down everything that comes to your mind during that time.
- Creating a collage of religious symbols used throughout history. Ask yourself, “Which symbol means the most to me and why?”
- Role-playing a person being accused of wrongdoing. Several people make accusations, and another person speaks in your defense, but you are not permitted to say anything.
- Reading a history of the rise of the Roman Empire. Note why this power would warrant mention in Bible prophecy.
- Viewing any one of the films based on the writings of John Grisham (e.g., *The Pelican Brief*, *The Client*, *The Partner*, etc.). Analyze how the human legal system described in this film compares and contrasts with God’s legal system.
- Discussing with family members or friends the following question: “What must we do to be saved?” As a group, analyze whether your lives reflect your answers.
- Writing down the mathematical calculations that led William Miller to believe that Jesus would come in 1844. (See <[www.nisbett.com/sanctuary/twenty\\_three\\_hundred\\_day.htm](http://www.nisbett.com/sanctuary/twenty_three_hundred_day.htm)>.)

## CONNECT

*The Great Controversy*, chap. 18.

Everett N. Dick, *William Miller and the Advent Crisis*.

# A Hand-Delivered message



“ ‘We have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments’ ” (Dan. 9:5, NKJV).



# Touched by an Angel

## INTRODUCTION

Dan. 9:20–23; Matt. 16:24–27

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be an angel? You hear of people saved from traumatic accidents by firefighters, or individuals dependent upon nursing care referring to their heroes as angels. Certainly these people have seen the love of Christ in their encounters.

But consider what it means to be an angel, which literally means messenger. Angels are the heavenly FedEx for the universe, delivering God's very words to the farthest reaches of the numerous galaxies. A big deal for us shackled by mortal limitations, but probably not much of a stretch for those who can travel at the speed of thought.

So imagine being given a message so important, so urgent, that God asked you to hand deliver it to earth. That's exactly what the angel Gabriel was asked to do in Daniel 9:21. Not only did he fly on the divine fast lane to directly speak with Daniel, he touched him to ensure the message was properly delivered. The judgment of the world is heavy stuff, and Gabriel wanted to make sure he had Daniel's full attention for what he was about to impart.

**Angels are the heavenly  
FedEx for the universe.**

Which brings up another question: Since judgment is such a weighty issue, and God entrusted it to His top messenger, what does that say about the message of salvation, coming from the very mouth of Jesus? Jesus speaks of both judgment and salvation in Matthew 16:24–26: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (NKJV).

The good news is that what Gabriel took the trouble to touch Daniel with all those years ago with the message of coming judgment is tempered by Jesus Himself in the Gospel of Matthew 16:27: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works” (NKJV).

Good news indeed for those who claim Jesus as their Savior. His works are sufficient to cover all our sins, and we can be confident in hearing on His advent, “‘Well done, good and faithful servant’” (25:21, NKJV)—even if we aren't ever touched by an angel like Daniel was.

# Can You Get a Prayer Through?

## EVIDENCE

Ezra 4-7; Jeremiah 25

Some of you reading this lesson today may still have doubts about the truths of the Bible and Bible prophecy. Many today view the Bible as a book of fables and nice sayings. But as you study its passages you will find earth's history as bookmarks of time revealed throughout its pages and in its prophecies.

As we look at the ninth chapter of Daniel, we find another example of the power of prayer as referenced in Daniel 6. Daniel had a prayer life, not a prayer moment. Everything Daniel did, every movement and every decision he made was preceded by prayer. Daniel prayed morning, noon, and night. He knew how to get a prayer through, and God answered his prayers.

In the opening verses of chapter 9, Daniel, in fervent prayer, following the visions recorded in chapters 7 and 8, states, "I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes" (verse 3, NKJV).

Daniel prayed with extreme vigor. As the world events unfolded before him, he now understood the meaning of the prophecies in Jeremiah. Daniel also correlates prophecy with

**Daniel had a prayer life, not a prayer moment.**

current events such as "the first year of Darius" (verse 1, NKJV). The prophecies of Jeremiah concerning the "number of the years" (verse 2, NKJV), the 70-year prophecy, now makes sense.

Daniel makes a clear confession for the sins of God's chosen people, including himself among the fallen. He specifically names the sins of iniquity, of rebellion, and of forsaking God. After being given the explanation of the visions, his conviction to make confession was strengthened. Realizing the end of the prophecy meant going back home, Daniel understood that King Darius's becoming ruler was the signal of the end of the "desolations of Jerusalem" (verse 2, NKJV).

Ezra 4 places another bookmark in time concerning this rebuilding of God's house in Jerusalem: The work had "ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia" (verse 24, NKJV). Through prayer Daniel anticipates deliverance and salvation. All that God has said will be fulfilled.

"Heaven was bending low to hear the earnest supplication of the prophet. Even before he had finished his plea for pardon and restoration, the mighty Gabriel again appeared to him."\*

\* *Prophets and Kings*, p. 556.

Monday  
July 31

## From Facts to Understanding

### LOGOS

Dan. 9:1–23

*Prophecy. Judgment. Revelation.* All words, as I was growing up, that indicated a Revelation seminar was coming to town. I remember sitting in seats with other attentive members—staring at vivid illustrations of beasts, filling out numerical charts, but mostly wondering how old I was going to be when Jesus would arrive through Orion's belt. Could He wait a couple more years? Just until I got married? Or how about kids?

Now ten years removed from a generation that emphasized prophecy with such vigor, those days seem distant. Many people I knew grew tired of the “fear in Christianity” and lost sight of the love of God. Now we stand at the heart of a movement that has communicated the grace message across the globe. Finally, I believe the church is ready to embrace grace and prophecy together—giving the world a complete picture of our just and loving Savior.

### Commands by God (Psalm 119; Dan. 9:4, 5)

Another fond memory I have growing up was playing Bible Jeopardy—our Sabbath School variation of the popular TV show. A trivia question that used to come up regularly was

**Much of my youth was spent learning facts and not significance.**

“Name the longest chapter of the Bible.” Being the smart kid I was, I used to shout out, “Psalm 119.” It wasn't until I was older that I realized

that much of my youth was spent learning facts and not significance. Surely when writing a book of any kind, some significance would be given to the longest chapter. What was Psalm 119 about?

It is amazing to me that I went 25 years of my life before realizing the longest chapter of the Bible was about David's love for the law of the Lord. Daniel talks about the “'great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant'” (9:4, NKJV). All we must do is love Him and obey His commands. Yet oftentimes we would rather learn facts than put into practice simple love and obedience. This emphasis through the early verses of Daniel 9 still rings true for us today.

### Confession to God (Dan. 9:9–11; 1 John 1:9)

If there's one word that the modern Christian (including myself) hates more than

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the word *command* it is *confession*. We have lulled our ethics to sleep with a blanket of grace that never requires any action of our own. Yet Scripture clearly states, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NKJV). What has happened to our confession as individuals? Where is our “prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes”? (Dan. 9:3, NKJV).

Blaise Pascal, the seventeenth century French philosopher, points out that “the Christian religion teaches men two truths; there is a God whom men can know, and that there is a corruption in their nature which renders them unworthy of Him.”\* How often do we emphasize the first statement, without realizing that nearly every world religion lifts the same banner. Yet our true understanding of the second completes our faith. For though most depend on their intrinsic goodness to effect their salvation, Christians cling to the gift of salvation.

## Understanding of God (Dan. 9:22)

Daniel sometimes leaves us stuck behind a veil of prophetic numbers, candlesticks, and four-headed beasts. It is not the Lord's will to leave us there. When we are clouded with confusion, let us, as Daniel did, continue in prayer and sacrifice. For then our Lord will appear to us also saying, “I have now come forth to give you skill to understand” (Dan. 9:22, NKJV). Then the mysteries of the universe will be unveiled unto us—not only signs and wonders, but the struggles of our soul that trap us in a limited understanding of our Creator.

For as we understand God, we discover that His commands are not meant to limit our freedom but to direct us to live a more joyful life. We realize that confession not only relieves the punishment of our sins but clears the guilt and shame that burdens our days on earth. As we study the truths of prophecy, may we comprehend more than just facts, but also their significance. So when we look to Orion's belt in wonder, we might pray: “Lord, come soon.”

## REACT

1. What are modern methods of teaching others about the end times? How can we as Seventh-day Adventists effectively balance teaching grace and the law?
2. What are the similarities and differences between biblical confession and modern confession? How can we put into practice the principle of “confessing sins one to another”?
3. For what reason is biblical prophecy given in Scripture? How necessary is it for all believers to study these books?

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\* *Pensees*, Blaise Pascal, Harvard Classics, 1909–1914.

## Blessed Brethren of Jesus

### TESTIMONY

Matt. 24:14

The signs of the times give evidence that the judgments of heaven are being poured out, that the day of the Lord is at hand. The daily papers are full of indications of an intense conflict. All these things testify that the Lord's coming is near.

The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, disasters by sea and by land follow one another in quick succession. The signs around us tell of the near approach of the Son of God: " 'They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' " (Matt. 24:30, NKJV).

Every cloud has a silver lining, so the saying goes. When Jesus said that it was necessary for Him to die at the hands of those who hated Him and the disciples grasped that He really meant it, all their hopes and dreams of the future were clouded over.

Yet Jesus comforted them when He promised that this was not the end, for His death would be the means of His success. And then He promised that He would come again to men and women on earth. All the Gospels record details of what He promised, and the disciples were fortified in the

**Every cloud has a silver lining, so the saying goes.**

knowledge that the cloud of despair had a silver lining.

The Lord Jesus did appear to His disciples after rising from the dead. But, pleased as they were, they knew that this was not the second coming that He had meant, for the signs that He had promised had not appeared. At Pentecost they went out renewed and began to build up the Christian church. But still they knew that the visitation of the Holy Spirit was not the Second Coming, because still there were no signs.

So as they worked, the disciples kept their eyes open for them. The Lord had commanded, " 'Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming' " (verse 42, NKJV). In all the preaching of the early Christians, there was the expectation and trust that the Lord would come again. When persecutions broke out, they were interpreted as " 'the tribulation of those days' " (verse 29, NKJV) that the Lord had said must precede the Second Coming. As wars rocked countries from end to end, they were seen again and again as signs of the Second Coming. Yet never did all the signs follow one upon another, nor did Jesus bypass them and come in glory all the same.



# To Be in Tune With Prophecy

## HOW-TO

Ps. 119:18; Dan. 9:23

Most of the prophecy in the book of Daniel, especially the section dealing with timelines, may be difficult to comprehend without some knowledge of history and the insight of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Daniel 7–12 would rightfully count among the difficult portions of the Bible (Heb. 5:12–14; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16). I am persuaded that even the prophet Daniel did not understand some parts of what he wrote, for he was told to “shut up the words, and seal the book until the *time of the end*” (Dan. 12:4, NKJV, emphasis supplied).

However, living in the time prophesied by Daniel, we cannot afford to be ignorant (verse 10). Indeed God does not want us to be ignorant about this important period in our history. That is why Jesus illuminated events that would unfold during the time of the end (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). We must be in tune with the signs of the times lest we be caught unawares (Mark 13:37). How can we be in tune with the signs of the times that appear encrypted? What is the code? Daniel provides us some principles on how to be in tune with prophecy and even deal with messages such as those found in this week’s lesson.

**We must be in tune with  
the signs of the times lest  
we be caught unawares.**

**1. Search the Scriptures.** We can be in tune with the signs of the times only by searching the Scriptures (Dan. 9:2). If we diligently search the Scriptures (John 5:39; Acts 17:11), God will give knowledge (Prov. 2:3–5).

**2. Seek divine illumination.** Daniel “pleaded with him in prayer and petition” (Dan. 9:3, NIV). Difficult texts, and even situations, approached prayerfully, often dissolve when one gives them a look on his or her knees. The Lord promptly answers when you ask, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Ps. 119:18, NIV). We are told, “‘As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given’” (Dan. 23, NIV). Daniel makes it so easy: The fastest way to find an answer is to pray.

**3. Seek after a pure spirit.** Yes, it is true that the pure in spirit will see God (Matt. 5:8). If you confess your sins to God (Dan. 9:4), you will not only establish a relationship with God, but you will indeed see Him using a lens of friendship (John 15:14). It must always be clear in our minds that God reveals His will to us not because of our righteousness but because of His great mercy (Dan. 9:18). We must seek to be purified, made spotless, and refined if we are to understand the issues regarding the time of the end (12:10).

# The Reassurance of the Judgment

## OPINION

Dan. 9:4; Heb. 16:22, 23

Paul speaks, in the book of Hebrews, about the significance of the sanctuary services and the judgment in the lives of the followers of God. The main purpose for the judgment is to blot out the confessed sins of those who accept Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1, NKJV).

The cleansing of the sanctuary demonstrates God's desire to put sin in proper perspective in the lives of Christians—our sins are forgiven and are covered by His blood. His advocacy on our behalf leads us to lives of victory and triumph, and the work of the judgment ensures that His blood covers all those who accept Jesus' sacrifice by faith.

As Seventh-day Adventists we must take the time to understand the importance and the benefits of the judgment. The word *judgment*, itself, may bring fear to our minds, but the advocacy of Jesus Christ on our behalf is one of the most comforting

and reassuring concepts in God's Word. It is fundamental to our belief in God. Because of Jesus' work in the sanctuary, no one has to perish because of sin, but daily He intercedes for us to secure our place in the kingdom.

The concept of the heavenly sanctuary services and the judgment is not just a history lesson. Once we

comprehend its true significance and relevance to our everyday lives, the knowledge will reassure us rather than worry us. The meaning of the prophecies and the sanctuary services points to Jesus and the message of salvation. His desire to save us is the purpose behind it all. Jesus Christ as our Advocate brings joy and peace to our lives. For each individual who desires to be saved, God's free gift of salvation is available. As our High Priest, He atones for our sins through the shedding of His blood. We are covered despite our sinful natures. We can always be victorious and triumphant with God on our side. What greater comfort is there? (Heb. 7:25, 26).

## REACT

1. To what extent does our understanding of the judgment relate to our everyday lives?
2. How will our understanding of the judgment help to dispel the fear surrounding it?

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Janice Prescott, Brampton, Canada

# Prayer Warrior

## EXPLORATION

Dan. 9:20–23

## CONCLUDE

Daniel took prayer very seriously. He understood that true prayer is not just supplication—asking God for things we want. It also includes confession—being open with God about our wrongdoings, allowing Him to change us so that we can be receptive to His truth. When Daniel was honest with God in prayer, a messenger direct from God's throne came to be honest with Daniel.

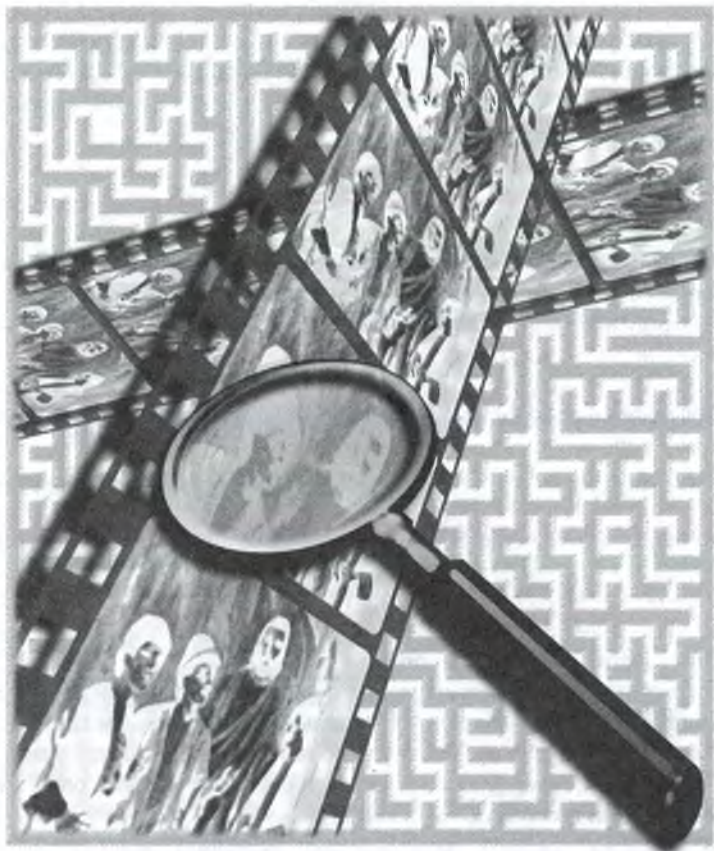
## CONSIDER

- Creating a collage from newspaper and newsmagazine photos of some of the sinful acts you see in the society around you. With the collage before you, pray a prayer of confession like Daniel's, asking God's forgiveness for your part in the wickedness of humanity.
- Composing a prayer modeled on Daniel's in the form of a poem or song.
- Calling or emailing someone you have wronged with an honest confession and an attempt to restore the relationship.
- Walking or running a "prayer mile" in your neighborhood. As you walk, jog, or run through the streets near your home, pray for those who live in the homes and work in the businesses you pass. Intercede with God on their behalf.
- Viewing the film *The Preacher's Wife* (1996). Analyze Reverend Biggs's prayer: "I sure could use some help" and the way in which the film portrays God's response to human concerns.
- Looking at a piece of artwork that depicts the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Meditate on the reality of sin and how it hurts the heart of God, and pray a prayer of confession as you do so.
- Beginning a prayer journal to record those for whom you pray, and the answers you receive.

## CONNECT

Becky Tirabassi, *Wild Things Happen When I Pray*; Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not to Pray*; Anonymous, *The Kneeling Christian*.

# Seventy weeks



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“ ‘Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy’ ” (Dan. 9:24, NKJV).



# Above All Mysteries

## INTRODUCTION

Dan. 7:13

*"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him'" (Dan. 7:13, NKJV).*

Every movie has a plot, a specific narrative in which actors and actresses come and go. Later they would show up, then, clashing with the bad guys. At the ultimate point of hopelessness comes the hero. Now the story has ended.

I am Daniel. At the time when the Jews were living in captivity in Babylon, it seems that the "Promised One" wasn't yet willing to make an appearance. Would He come to this time and place? No.

But I could remember many of my favorite places in our homeland far away. Ah, how nice it was to think about Jerusalem. It was the very heart of our dear homeland, but disobedience to God had brought it down. The devastation was appalling.

Nevertheless, I do my daily duties here faithfully and I wait for the Lord's coming. I heard once that the Babylonian government has attempted to burn alive three of my fellow Jewish captives. They survived, though, a truly miraculous thing, and the king who had ordered their execution suddenly froze with horror when he saw in the fearsome fire a fourth being, looking like the "Son of God." He instantly recognized his heavenly Master. This led to some sweeping changes in the attitude of Babylon's king toward our people and our God.

**He instantly recognized his  
heavenly Master.**

The "Son of God"? Like our grandfather Abraham and all our other ancestors before us through the centuries, we are in constant watch for the Lord's coming. When will it be? We look and wait for the promise. When will it be? It seems at times as if He's just not serious about His promises, as Sarah was when she disbelieved the prophecy that she would—that she still could—have a child of her own.

I think often of the times when, as in my time, people in the future will not take seriously the words of God's promises. They will be mixing myth and prophecy.

I have had many more visions after this: each connected one to another, pointing to that special Someone who is promised to us. He is coming to save His created ones in a fallen world. I am one of them, and I am desperately watching for Him too.



# The Linchpin Prophecy

## LOGOS

Ezra 4:7–16; 7:6, 7, 11–17; Dan. 9:24–27; 10:4

Daniel 9 provides the key to the starting date for the 2,300-day prophecy. It also foretells the coming of Jesus and His sacrifice. The establishment of a beginning date for the 2,300 days is critical to the unique Adventist doctrine of the pre-Advent judgment.

### The Day-for-a-Year Principle (Dan. 9:24–27)

These verses describe a one-time period, 70 sevens or 490 days/years (verse 24). Seventh-day Adventists use the “day-for-a-year” principle with these prophetic time periods (Num. 14:34). The 490 years are broken up into three parts.

First there are 7 sevens or 49 years (verse 25). This is the time it takes to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. The second part of the time period is 62 sevens or 434 years, and this takes us to the coming of the Anointed One. Jesus is the

Anointed One (Acts 10:38; Luke 4:18). The last part is 1 seven—or, 7 years. In the middle of this week, the Anointed One will put an end to sacrifice and be cut off.

**It is helpful to visualize this time period by diagramming it.**

The key question is: What is the historical context for the 490 years,

or when does it begin and end? Verse 25 says that it starts when the decree is issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. When was this? Although there was more than one decree, the decree issued in 457 B.C. best fits the prophecy. Also when the years are added to 457 B.C., they land on significant dates in Christian history, or, in other words, they fit. When 490 years are added to 457 B.C., it brings us to A.D. 34, the year of the stoning of Stephen. The 483 (434 + 49) years end in A.D. 27, the baptism of Jesus. The last seven depicts the sacrifice of Christ half way through the week of A.D. 31. It is helpful to visualize this time period by diagramming it. Make a straight horizontal line and label the time line starting with the decree year, 457 B.C. and ending with A.D. 34, the stoning of Stephen.

In Daniel 8 the 2,300-day prophecy is not understood by Daniel. In chapter 9 he prays for understanding. In Daniel 9:20–23 the angel Gabriel comes to Daniel and tells him he has come to give him understanding concerning the vision. It is based on this passage that the beginning date for the 70 weeks (490 years) and the 2,300 years is assumed to be the same.

Why do you think the Lord relates these two prophecies to each other? At times

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the investigative judgment has been viewed with fear and negative feelings. Could it be that by pairing it with the ministry and sacrifice of Jesus the Lord is telling us that we have nothing to fear?

## **The Decree to Restore and Rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra 4:7–16)**

This passage states clearly that the decree was to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (verse 12). What do you think was so troublesome about Jerusalem and its people (verse 15)? How do you think Ezra won the confidence of the king in view of how the king's aides felt?

## **Ezra's Assignment (Ezra 7:6, 7, 11–17)**

In these verses King Artaxerxes gives the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. He allows Ezra to take the money and people he needs to finish the job of re-establishing the temple and the city of Jerusalem. It is interesting that the wording in verse 12 makes the king sound like a believer. What do you think?

## **REACT**

1. It is easy to get lost in the numbers in this week's lesson. What do you think is the big picture or primary truth of this lesson?
2. Why do you think the Adventist interpretation of Daniel has remained unique to Adventism?
3. How do you think Daniel's Jewish readers understood Daniel 9:27? Do you think they understood that the restored temple would be destroyed again?
4. How does the prophecy of Daniel 9 increase your confidence in the Bible?
5. Specifically, what do you do to cope with the fear of living in a dangerous time like our own?
6. What kind of encouragement could you offer to an unbeliever who is frightened about the terrible violence that seemingly touches everyone in today's culture?
7. What role should humility play in the lives of Christians in their approach to authorities in the time of trouble?
8. Ellen White wrote, "The power exercised by every ruler on the earth is Heaven-imparted."\* How do you see this balancing with our God-given freedom to choose?

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\**Prophets and Kings*, p. 502.

Monday  
August 7

## When a Rainy Day Seems Bright

### TESTIMONY

Dan. 9:25

*"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times'" (Dan. 9:25, NKJV).*

There has never been a time that I wasn't questioned in a taxicab ride. The last time, as I remember, was Holy Week, when people take vacation leaves and head out to various resorts and other places of relaxation and entertainment. I had just gotten into the cab and the driver tried to engage me in conversation.

The driver was a civil engineer, but since there's no building project for him to be involved in at the moment, he has been driving a taxi. Today he's headed his cab toward the city, hoping that somebody would signal for a fare. I was the one who flagged him for a ride. Before we arrived at my place of destination, he asked me what had brought me to the city. I told him that I had just had my company's medical exam.

**He asked me what had brought me to the city.**

As we were driving to my intended destination, he told me that he was unfortunate not to be able to take a vacation during Holy Week. *The same with me*, I thought, though I

hadn't ever really done anything out of the ordinary to observe Holy Week. It had become a good excuse to take a vacation from the office—going to the beach or mountains.

"What happened to Jesus Christ at that time is very important to me because He died for my sins—all of us," I told the cabbie.

"Is Jesus like a man? What does God the Father look like?" the driver asked me. I told him that we are molded after God's likeness.

Life is complicated and dangerous these days. I remembered that it was Valentine's Day when a terrorist detonated a bomb inside a bus.

We're living in a time much like that of Israel from the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem up to the birth of Jesus Christ. Amid the terrible times we live in, even on rainy days, keep Jesus in your heart. It will help you face the fear.

# Our Walls of Protection

## EVIDENCE

Zech. 2:5

The Bible account of the Red Sea split into two walls for the Israelites to cross is a vivid picture. It must have been a memorable sight for those who experienced it. Yet after crossing they rebelled anew. This time it was their desire to be free.

Ezra and Nehemiah shared Moses' experience with troublesome people.

As a cupbearer for the king, Nehemiah was constantly tested in his good intentions for his people. Even worse was the way in which he found himself caught between the king and his own people: "'O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man'" (Neh. 1:11, NKJV).

Upon hearing the sad news about Jerusalem, Nehemiah instantly put his feelings and intentions to the Lord Almighty. After all, who could be a better ally than He?

Ezra, a priest, bore the same heaviness of heart. It is a blessing that King Artaxerxes granted Ezra jurisdiction over the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and that he was concerned that the job be completed quickly. In the seventh year of Artaxerxes's reign, he took personal interest in Ezra's undertaking, granting him "all his request" (Ezra 7:6, NKJV) and loading him with gifts for the house of God.

On the banks of the Ahava, Ezra assembled the band of exiles, probably about five thousand in all, who were prepared to go with him to Jerusalem. They rested for three days and were put into order for their four-month march across the desert. His proceedings at Jerusalem on his arrival there are recorded in the book of Ezra.

Ezra and Nehemiah served God's purpose for their future. God was willing to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, and He is always willing to rebuild His divine wall of protection for us even today.

**Artaxerxes took personal  
interest in Ezra's undertaking.**

## Comparing Two of God's Leaders

### HOW-TO

Mal. 4:4

*"Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments'" (Mal. 4:4, NKJV).*

In the Old Testament, particularly in the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel, God's people shared concerns over the need to rebuild Jerusalem. They had great faith that prophecy must be fulfilled in order for God's will to be fulfilled.

Having great devotion to the law of God through Moses, Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Lord's will and to teach His statutes and judgments. Throughout history, and even today, there has been an unbroken line of men and women who have led God's people. These leaders, of sacred erudition, have devoted their lives to the study of the Holy Scriptures in order that they may be in a condition to interpret them for the instruction and edification of the church.

With such a style of leadership, Ezra seems to have been more like a teacher than a priest. From the writings of Nehemiah, we can see that he was careful to

**Ezra seems to have been  
more like a teacher than a  
priest.**

have the people instructed in the Law of Moses. There is no reason to reject the tradition of the Jews that connects his name with collecting and editing the Old Testament canon, though the final completion of the canon may have been, and

probably was, the work of a later generation. Ezra seems, however, to have put it much into the shape in which it is still found in the Hebrew Bible. Considering that the complete organization of the synagogue dates from this period, it can be seen that the age was emphatically one of biblical study.

Nehemiah exhibited the same dedication as that of Ezra. He resembled Ezra in his fiery zeal, in his active spirit of enterprise, and in the piety of his life. But he was of a more fiery temperament; he had less patience with transgressors. He was a man of action rather than a man of thought, and more inclined to use force than persuasion. His practical sagacity and high courage were demonstrated markedly in the way in which he carried through the rebuilding of the wall and blocked the cunning plans of the "adversaries." The piety of his heart, his deeply religious spirit, and his constant sense of communion with and absolute dependence upon God are strikingly exhibited.



# Off With a Vision

## OPINION

Dan. 8:27

There has been a lot of discussion lately regarding the word *prophecy*. What does the word actually mean to us in the last days?

When Daniel had his series of visions, one of them caused him to faint. Though he was unable to come to a correct interpretation, he continued on with his daily responsibilities.

God's Word, when impressed on someone, gives that individual reasons to search for its meaning. Why, for example, was the prophecy concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem given to Daniel? Why were Ezra and Nehemiah commissioned for the rebuilding of it? And why are we studying it now?

God's Word is His attempt to tell us of things He desires us to know. And that same Word of God is the chief reason that we have come to believe that we are very precious in the sight of Jesus.

"God has entrusted His sacred work to men, and He asks that they shall do it carefully. Regularity in all things is essential. Never be late to an appointment. In no department or office should time be lost in unnecessary conversations. The work of God requires things which it does not receive, because men do not learn from the God of wisdom. They press too many things into their life, postpone until tomorrow that which demands their attention today, and much time is lost in painfully picking up the lost stitches. Men and women can reach a higher degree of usefulness than to carry with them through life an unsettled state of mind. They can improve the defective traits of their character contracted in their younger years."\*

**God's Word is His attempt  
to tell us of things He  
desires us to know.**

Remember John 14:26: "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (NKJV).

Everything is made clear by God through prophecy. All He wants now from us is to share the same wonderful news of salvation and how this plan of salvation took place.

\**Manuscript Releases*, vol. 8, pp. 326, 327.

## "For Such a Time as This"

### EXPLORATION

Ezra 7:11–17; Zech. 2:5

### CONCLUDE

God used an escaped convict from hopeless bondage to lead the way to freedom. He plucked a kid from slavery's chains to store up grain for His people in impending famine. He used an orphaned girl queen to save His people from the shadow of death. He chose a scholar and a cupbearer to return Israel from distant exile and rebuild its crumbled home. Throughout the Bible, God's promises, prophecies, and people bear witness to His authority, even when the situation seems most dismal.

### CONSIDER

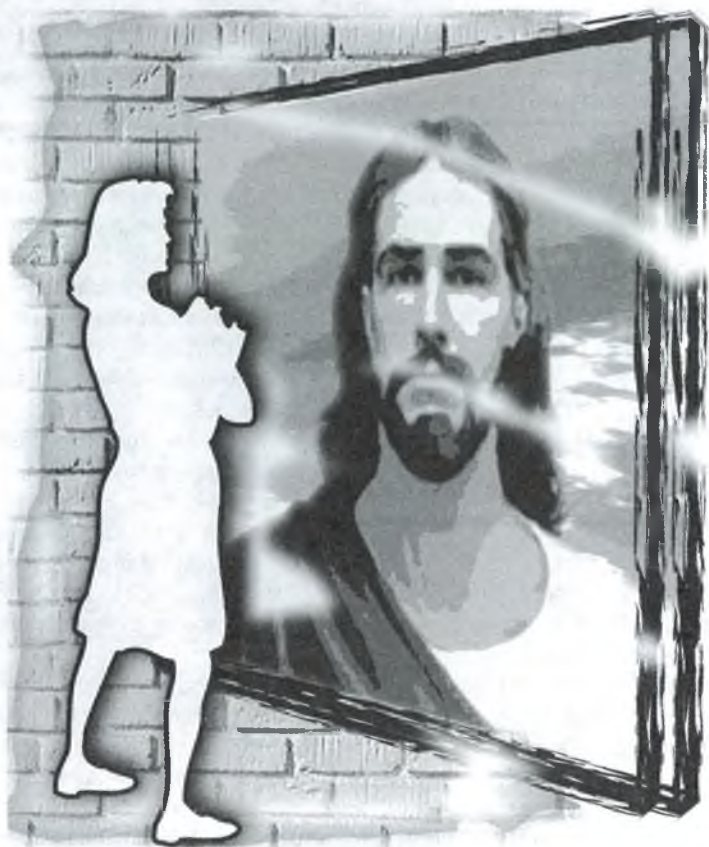
- Collecting and editing some of your own community history. Interview the oldest person in your family or church, and create a written or recorded account of his or her story.
- Reading Zechariah 2:5, in which God says that His people will live in a place without walls. Only the Lord's glory will serve as a boundary for their country. Write a constitution for such a nation without human or geographic borders.
- Counting and organizing into a chart the biblical figures who served in positions of governmental authority (include name, title, country, time period, etc.).
- Finding bios of Adventists who are working in public policy (search Web sites such as <[www.sdalaw.org](http://www.sdalaw.org)>). Should Adventists serve in positions of political authority as Ezra and Nehemiah did?
- Joining a Habitat for Humanity project and building a home for someone in need.
- Finding long-term ways to "rebuild" your own church, school, or work community. Start a small group, send consistent notes of encouragement, commit to tutor a child for a school year, etc.

### CONNECT

Book of Esther.

Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have A Dream" speech; Dennis Brutus, "Prayer," a poem that he wrote while he was imprisoned and exiled from his home for opposing apartheid in South Africa.

# 1844 made Simple



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“Behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split” (Matt. 27:51, NKJV).

# Look at the Mirror!

## INTRODUCTION

Rom. 8:4

*"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1, NKJV).*

A physical therapist told the story of John,\* who had a brain injury after a car accident in 2004. Because of a "wrong" message sent by his brain, John had the inclination to lean to his right. Even though he was around 32 years old, John couldn't stand or walk straight after the accident. The physical therapist at that time used a special exercise with John; he put him in front of a mirror and told him that although he thought he was walking straight—because his brain was sending that message—he could see in the mirror that he was not. After a couple of days repeating this activity with the mirror, John understood what the "middle" was, and whenever he felt he was leaning to the right, he would look at himself in the mirror and find the right posture. In the same way, we, as Christians, on occasion need to look at ourselves in the spiritual mirror: Jesus.

**John couldn't stand or walk straight after the accident.**

When we study the gospel and the judgment, Jesus helps us to understand how He is the central character and foundation of the gospel. Without Him we have no hope in judgment. Jesus Himself provokes the change, the acceptance, and the certainty of His salvation. He is our Advocate (1 John 2:1). When we accept this, the 1844 message is very simple to understand and apply in our lives.

Are we looking at the mirror when we seek hope and salvation? Alternatively, are we pretending to follow our own norms, which are damaged by the accident of sin? We must believe in Jesus as our Advocate and Savior. Moreover, let us accept His sacrifice as the center of the gospel itself. This is the only way that the 1844 doctrine is going to be simple.

Allow Jesus to be the center of your life and beliefs while studying His Word this week.

\*The patient's name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.

# Revive Us Again

## EVIDENCE

1 John 1:9

*"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:8, 9, NKJV).*

We have learned in the Old Testament that God required a blood sacrifice. Most commonly, this sacrifice was a pure, young lamb with no blemishes. The father, as head of the household, would place his hands on the lamb's head and confess the family's sins. So through the innocent blood of the lamb, the sins of the family were forgiven. This sacrifice is so important that God banned the use of sacrificed meat and indicates in Leviticus that those who drink blood are cursed.

But what became of this sacrifice in the New Testament? Jesus became our pure, sacrificial Lamb, bearing our sins to the cross and paying the ultimate price so that we are saved through His blood. In 1 Thessalonians we see that whether we wake or sleep, we have salvation. This is further emphasized "that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, NKJV).

But how does the salvation of man help us to understand the events of 1844? Reading through the book *The Story of Redemption\** by Ellen G. White provides a helpful historical perspective. The early

**All the world must know of  
the redemption plan before  
the final judgment.**

Adventists were led to study God's Word. As they began to study those passages of Scripture that we've covered so far this quarter, they were impressed that all the world must know of the redemption plan before the final judgment. This led many to leave their professions so that God's plan could be shared before it was too late. In fact, because of their belief that the final judgment was near, a tremendous revival occurred. Many individuals were led to return to God's Word and read about not only the judgment but their salvation.

Ellen White writes of the 1840–1844 years as a time when many confessed their sins and accepted Christ's gift of salvation. What could be more important in the face of Christ's imminent return than daily to live 1 John 1:9—"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (NKJV).

\*Chaps. 50–54.



# Timeline to Eternity

## LOGOS

Lev. 7:27; 17:10; Luke 3:1–22; Rom. 5:8; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:24

### Inspiration and Revelation (Daniel 7–9)

Those of us who don't pretend to understand science-fiction movies will admit that these voyages into the future have been known to leave viewers frightened, confused, exhausted, and desperate for an explanation. Considering the content and timeline of Daniel's visions, no wonder he felt just like that! The difference here, comfortingly, is that the One who produced Daniel's visions knew the explanations, was prepared to share them, and holds the very future in His hands.

These visions, and Daniel's record of them, are a wonderful testimony to the process and purpose of inspiration—a clear collaboration of the all-knowing and merciful God and His humble, faithful servant, Daniel. As the angel explains the timeline to eternity to Daniel, we are privileged to hear not only about the future but about what God has done in order for us to join Him there—forever.

### Cut Off for Us (Lev. 7:27; 17:10; Rom. 5:8)

The concept of being “cut off” in Leviticus is within the context of the consequence of the sacrilegious act of eating blood. Why would that have been such a serious misdemeanor? In the light of the sanctuary service symbolism, blood was sacred. It represented Christ's blood that would be shed for sinners. It implies substitution. Christ would bear the punishment instead of us, so that we might experience what He deserves: eternity with God. To disregard the sacredness of blood was to show disregard for God's loving provision for salvation and logically to be excluded—by your own choice—from the people of God.<sup>1</sup>

In the vision of Daniel 8, explained further in Daniel 9, we see precisely when, in time and space, the Savior would take on this punishment: A.D. 31, at the cross.<sup>2</sup> To Daniel, in the explanation of the 70 weeks, the phrase “cut off” did not bring to mind scissors or a razor blade, as it might have for us, but rather his early Jewish education on the meaning of the sanctuary services and the law of God in Leviticus. His heritage stood him in good stead for a full appreciation of what he was being told. His relief was not only in knowing but in understanding with gratefulness that the arrival and ministry of the Messiah was still on schedule.

**In the light of the sanctuary  
service symbolism, blood  
was sacred.**

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## **Our Response to the Revelation (Luke 3:1–22; 1 Pet. 2:24)**

Daniel was reminded of God's plan of salvation in a very specific and dramatic way. He recorded these visions for his people—and those to come. Sadly, by the time the lowly Messiah arrived, people had forgotten or become confused as to the purpose of the event. It took another humble servant in the form of John the Baptist to remind the people of God whom they were expecting and how they should prepare for Him. Right on time, A.D. 27, as Jesus approached the Jordan for baptism, John was preaching that repentance is what we need in order to experience the full effect of God's mercy. Finally, as Jesus hung on the cross, some, and not even all, were convinced that Jesus was the Son of God, dying for their sins.

A little further down the timeline of Daniel 8 and 9, once more, confusion left God's people desperate for answers regarding the cosmic events of 1844. Again, people turned to God for explanations. After much time in study and prayer, they were relieved to discover that the plan of salvation was still on schedule.

How can we ensure that we, in 2006, do not end up complacent and confused about our own salvation and the events still to come? Jesus Himself bore our sins so that we may live righteously. At this present moment on that timeline, despite the difficulties of this life, we have the privilege of dying to sin and living the righteous life. A life focused on repentance, study, prayer, and sharing God's plan of salvation with others will keep us in touch with our Savior and up to date on "current affairs" on the timeline to eternity.

## **The Effect of Jesus Being "Cut Off" (Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10)**

A striking symbol of what happened at the Cross is pictured in our key text for the week. The curtain between the Holy and the Most Holy compartment needed no scissors to tear it. We have direct access to our Intercessor, who, since 1844, has been interceding on behalf of God's people in the investigative judgment.

Christ paid the price on the cross and severed the barrier between fallen humanity and God. Christ provided salvation so we could live with Him forever. Jesus is coming again! God wants to spend eternity with us. Jesus was "cut off," experiencing all that that implies, for the one purpose of joining us together with Him for eternity.

Jesus is in the Most Holy Place now. The plan of salvation is still on schedule. Do we know it? Are we grateful? Have we repented? Have we shared? Are we ready and waiting for the next great and rather final event on the timeline to eternity—with Jesus?

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1. Kenneth Barker, *The NIV Study Bible* [Notes.] (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985), p. 168.

2. William Shea, *Daniel 7-12*, ed. George R. Knight, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Pub. Assn., 1996), p. 68 (graph).

# No Need to Fear the Judgment

## TESTIMONY

1 Thess. 5:9

Adventists got the date right, but the event wrong. Instead of Jesus' coming back in 1844, He entered the Holy of Holies in heaven as our Mediator, to cleanse the sanctuary. What does it mean to cleanse the sanctuary?

"The actual cleansing of the heavenly [sanctuary] is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. But, before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin, and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of his atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation,—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem his people; for when he comes, his reward is with him."<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, what God is doing for us here on earth, the record of His involvement in our lives traced unerringly on the grey matter between our ears, is reflected in the heavenly books of record. He is forgiving *us*, removing our sins by virtue of His own blood, which is duly recorded in heaven.

### What Jesus is cleansing is us.

As our Mediator, He represents our case before the Father and argues against the great accuser of

the brethren, who is Satan. "All who have a sense of their deep soul poverty, who feel that they have nothing good in themselves, may find righteousness and strength by looking unto Jesus. . . . Whatever may have been your past experience, however discouraging your present circumstances, if you will come to Jesus just as you are, weak, helpless, and despairing, our compassionate Saviour will meet you a great way off, and will throw about you His arms of love and His robe of righteousness. . . . He pleads before God in our behalf, saying: I have taken the sinner's place. Look not upon this wayward child, but look on Me. Does Satan plead loudly against our souls, accusing of sin, and claiming us as his prey, the blood of Christ pleads with greater power."<sup>2</sup>

What good news! "If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 421, 422.

2. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 8, 9.

3. *Steps to Christ*, p. 62.

# How to Feel Free From Anger

## HOW-TO

1 Thess. 5:9, 10

No one is exempt from the damaging effects of sin such as anger, which sometimes can come with indignation as a consequence of something thought to be unjust. And Daniel was not the last to feel the impotence of not understanding the vision.

The problem of feeling angry is that it's unnecessary. There are simple ways in which someone can manage a situation without having to enter into indignation. Another problem of allowing anger to come into our souls is that it deflects our thoughts from the real goal, which is the everyday God-human communion.

In this particular case, confusion and indignation could arise because we might worry too much to receive salvation for ourselves, but according to 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10 there is a tremendous hope. Here are a few ways:

**1. Count to ten.** Count at least ten of the promises given to us in the Bible by which you have been blessed.

**2. Occupy your mind with something interesting.** Sometimes doing something else, like *singing*,

can make us forget the bad things we were thinking of minutes before (Prov. 17:22).

**3. Express your feelings in a good manner.** There's a safe connection from here to heaven through our prayers, and expressing our feelings to our dear Father is the best way to release tension (Matt. 7:11). This is because anger and the feeling of impotence diminish, but also because God will always answer our prayers. He won't let us stay in darkness.

**4. Ask for help.** There's nothing we can ask that God, in His infinite love, cannot give us (Matt. 7:7). God has provided us with the Holy Spirit and human messengers who can point us to some helpful information in the Bible in order to understand the plan of salvation made for us since the beginning of the world.

Paul is trying to tell us that Jesus already paid our debt by offering Himself as the Lamb of God. It's not necessary to carry the burden of wrath if Jesus is our salvation. Not only that, whether we are alive or sleeping in the Lord, we are saved by the blood of the Lamb. Isn't that wonderful!

**Daniel was not the last to feel the impotence of not understanding the vision.**

# It's All About Understanding

## OPINION

Amos 3:7

Daniel 9 explains the earlier vision, helping the prophet understand. Prophecy is always about understanding. "The Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7, NKJV).

Sometimes, though, the secret is backward—hidden, unrecognized in a human mind. God called Adam: "Where are you?" To Cain He asked, "Where is your brother?" Didn't God know? Or how might questions have offered opportunity for understanding and admitting reality?

God meets people where they are to bring them to where they need to be. He made a covenant with Israel—"This do, and live"—even though He knew they couldn't keep it. But they didn't know it. What He really wanted, all along, was a heart relationship that resulted in obedience—His law of love and liberty in their souls. But they thought it was all about behavior. So they multiplied rules to make

themselves obey, to protect the law from infringement. They succeeded in creating a lifestyle so burdensome that no one was ever sure of doing it right.

Worse, in the process of all the rules, they lost sight of what the law

was about. No longer did it speak to them of love. Servitude to manmade rules was far from the liberty God had intended.

So Jesus came to magnify the law and make it honorable. He lived to show us what God is like, modeling the peace and freedom of living in harmony with the way the universe was created to operate—which is the essence of His law written in the heart.

Then He took on Himself our sin, and it killed Him—so we could see the nature of rebellion. Sin always kills. But "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23, NKJV). This truth will make you free because He is "the truth, and the life" (John 14:6, NKJV).

**Jesus lived to show us what  
God is like.**



# Mirror and Sacrifice

## EXPLORATION

Dan. 8:13, 14

## CONCLUDE

Jesus' sinless life provides both a mirror that reveals our own imperfections and also a perfect sacrifice that God accepts on my behalf. This good news of redemption powered a tremendous spiritual revival among believers during the years just prior to 1844. Prophecy brings out the timing (and significance) of Jesus being "cut off" for us—taking the full curse of sin. The prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary pointed not to the Second Coming, as the early Adventists thought, but to the commencement of Jesus' mediation in the heavenly sanctuary. Understanding these prophecies lends urgency to my own relationship with God and also to my outreach to others.

## CONSIDER

- Making an audio recording of an imaginary dialog between Jesus, your lawyer, and Satan, the prosecuting attorney, discussing your fate.
- Creating a collage of images associated with judgment. Superimpose a cross (bad news/good news).
- Listing ten things that you would most want to do today if you knew that Jesus would return tomorrow.
- Reading *Guide* magazine's special issue, *The Sanctuary: Night of No Return: A Guide Special Edition* with a child you know. (See <<http://adventistbookcenter.com>>.)
- Charting the time prophecies of Daniel that have to do with the sanctuary. Place a "You are here" marker at the present time.
- Interviewing several non-Adventist Christians about the prophecies of Daniel. Read Daniel 8:13, 14 with each person and ask, How do you feel when you hear those verses? Do you think that understanding Daniel's prophecies is important for our time?

## CONNECT

Ellen White, *The Story of Redemption*, chaps. 50–54.

Clifford Goldstein, *1844 Made Simple*; Leslie Hardinge, *With Jesus in His Sanctuary: A Walk Through the Tabernacle Along His Way*.

# Day-Year principle



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“When thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year”  
(Ezek. 4:6).

# Clues in the Wrong Places

## INTRODUCTION

Ezek. 4:6

Justin and Heidi drove along enjoying the springlike weather, even though it was still early March. They were joining friends from the young adult Sabbath School class in 14 other cars, and it was a perfect day for the car rally.

"We're looking for an old red barn," Heidi said, "then we turn left."

"How far ahead?"

After checking the odometer and the map she replied, "Should be another two miles."

A couple minutes later they slowed down, not wanting to miss it. On the left, off the road a bit, they spotted something. It was more brown than red but that had to be it. After turning left, Justin asked for the next clue.

"We stay on this road for about three miles, and we turn left at the duck pond."

Justin was careful to watch his speed since they were being timed at each checkpoint. If they got in too early, it was an indication that they were speeding and there would be a penalty. Following all traffic laws was strictly enforced, and they didn't want to take any chances on getting points deducted.

**Three miles passed as they  
looked for the pond.**

Justin kept an eye on his rearview mirror for competitors. Each car had left the starting point five minutes apart. They were making good time, and so far hadn't missed a turn.

Three miles passed as they looked for the pond.

"That has to be it," Heidi said unconvincingly.

"Looks more like a big puddle than a duck pond. Let's keep looking."

After another half mile, Justin agreed with Heidi, doubled back, and turned.

Clue after clue they continued but things didn't quite fit the way they should. Pulling over and looking at the map from the beginning they realized their mistake. The scale at the bottom of the map read one inch = ten miles.

Heidi had thought one inch equaled one mile. They were looking for the clues in the wrong places and trying to make landmarks they found fit the map. A simple mistake put them on the wrong track, and they lost the rally.

Prophecy can have the same results. If we don't understand the proper scale for which the clues are written, we can be looking for historical landmarks in the wrong places or times. Then we are left trying to force our results into God's Word.

# We've Done the Math— Now What?

## LOGOS

Exod. 34:22; Lev. 12:5; Num. 14:34; Deut. 16:10; Ezek. 4:5, 6; Dan. 8:17, 19, 26; 10:2, 3

**The God who created time also controls it (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:5, 6).**

These verses are the primary arguments for the day-year principle. In the case of the Israelites in the desert, God's wrath is so great that He condemns the people to 40 years of wandering in circles, symbolizing the 40 days the spies were in the land of Canaan. Again in Ezekiel, God interchanges years for days, or days for years as a symbol—not asking Ezekiel actually to relive the literal years of Israel and Judah's sins. Applying the interchangeability of years and days to the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9 brings us to 1844 as the beginning of the pre-Advent judgment. But how does our knowledge of this affect our lives? What does it mean to

us living in 2006? Does it in any way reflect on our relationship with God? I believe this knowledge is very important, and it should lead us to three different responses.

**The earthly sanctuary was  
all about worship.**

**"I became so terrified" (Dan. 8:17; 10:2, 3).**

After Daniel had received the prophecies from God, his immediate response was fear. In no instances recorded in his book did Daniel parade around trumpeting his own greatness at having received such prophecies. Rather, he had the opposite reaction. He was driven to his knees in humility. He was overwhelmed at the utter holiness and majesty of God, and greatly aware of humanity's standing in proportion. After receiving the Word of God, he did not party, splurge, or spoil himself (Dan. 10:3).

God has granted our church understanding of the prophecies that He gave Daniel. Why does it seem that so often we parade around, exclaiming that we are great because of what God has shown us? In reality we should have a greater humility and be driven to our knees in awe of the One we worship.

**We come to worship (Exod. 34:22; Deut. 16:10).**

The earthly sanctuary was all about worship. One of the reasons God chose to dwell among His people was so that they would have a place to focus on Him—to come to bring Him honor and glory. All the sacrifices, all the rituals, all the festi-

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vals—all were in place so that the children of Israel could worship their Creator. Notice especially the latter part of Deuteronomy 16:10: “Bring him a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings you have received from him” (NLT). God has bestowed a great blessing on our church and on us as individuals by giving us understanding of these prophecies. Shouldn’t we then in turn be returning a great offering to God? As He has blessed us so abundantly, shouldn’t our response in worship be proportionally greater than that of those around us? The purpose of the heavenly sanctuary will be no different from that of the earthly one: It is a place that one day soon we will be able to come to worship our God. But in the meantime, we should not neglect our duty to honor, praise, and glorify the Almighty in our worship.

### **What we know still doesn’t save us.**

Regardless of when Jesus began His ministry in the Most Holy Place, one thing does not change: The sanctuary is holy ground. The earthly sanctuary had very detailed rules and guidelines in place to ensure that the sacredness of the sanctuary was not lost (e.g., Lev. 12:5). However, this was still an earthly sanctuary—built by sinful hands, ministered in by sinful hearts. The heavenly sanctuary has never been tarnished in this way. Dare we be so brazen as to presume we will be able to waltz in there with our knowledge and worship as trophies in our sinful hands? Having complete knowledge and understanding of prophecy, humble hearts, even if we bring the worship God is worthy of—all this will mean absolutely nothing if we remain defiled in our hearts. Unlike the Israelites we do not have numerous rules and regulations to follow in order to be cleansed. We must—and I repeat, must—have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. We must be under His forgiveness and grace.

### **What now?**

By applying the day-year principle to Daniel’s prophecies and arriving at 1844, we who are living in 2006 should experience an even greater urgency to humble ourselves before God, worship Him, and ensure that we have accepted His forgiveness and grace. If Jesus has been ministering in the Most Holy Place for 162 years, we obviously have much less time until the end than our church forefathers did. We cannot know how many people God has judged and how many still remain, but as each new day passes, we come one step closer to a face-to-face encounter with our Holy God. As a result each of us needs to ask ourselves what humility, worship, and forgiveness mean in our lives. What results or changes has the understanding of the 1844 judgment brought into your life?



## Known Secrets for Today

### TESTIMONY

Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 8:14; Mal. 3:1, 2

With instructions to make our “calling” and “election” sure, it is not surprising that believers will diligently study to identify the period surrounding the event that is likened to a “thief in the night” (2 Pet. 3:10, KJV). Diligent student of the Scriptures William Miller did just that.

“The prophecy which seemed most clearly to reveal the time of the second advent was that of Dan. 8:14: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.’ Following his rule of making Scripture its own interpreter, Miller learned that a day in symbolic prophecy represents a year; (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6) he saw that the period of 2300 prophetic days, or literal years, would extend far beyond the close of the Jewish dispensation, hence it could not refer to the sanctuary of that dispensation. Miller accepted the generally received view, that in the Christian age the earth is the sanctuary, and he there-

fore understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary foretold in Dan. 8:14 represented the purification of the earth by fire at the second coming of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

The day-year understanding was also backed by historical data, since

other aspects of the prophecy of Daniel 7 and 8 had passed. Even after a disappointment in the early months of 1844, “this did not in the least affect the strength of the argument showing that the 2300 days terminated in the year 1844, and that the great event represented by the cleansing of the sanctuary must then take place.”<sup>2</sup>

When the Second Advent did not occur in 1844, the believers continued to place their faith in the certainty of the prophecy and its time interpretation. So where did they go wrong? Anywhere but the prophetic period! “As they could see no error in their reckoning of the prophetic periods, they were led to examine more closely the subject of the sanctuary.”<sup>3</sup>

The message of the sanctuary warns us that Christ judges the earth. Malachi warns that “‘The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, . . . But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire and like launderer’s soap’ ” (Mal. 3:1, 2, NKJV).

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 324.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 411.

# Time to Count

## EVIDENCE

Gen. 1:1–2:3; Daniel 8

Today, whether you know it or not, your life is measured by the vibration of cesium atoms. In 1967 the International System (SI) of units defined the SI unit of time as a second.<sup>1</sup> A second is “the duration of 9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the cesium-133 atom.” Even if this sentence means little to you, your life is influenced by the atomic clock at the NIST facility in Boulder, Colorado. We depend on coordinating time in our modern lives, doing everything from making plane schedules to using GPS locators. Practically speaking, we use the Gregorian calendar and a variety of clocks to keep time.

The calendar is hardly something handed down from Creation. Genesis 1 establishes the day and the week but says little about months and years. There is no obvious way to correlate lunar cycles, days, and years since they don't fit together nicely. Years are 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.96 seconds; years are definitely not divisible into lunar months (average: 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, 3 seconds).<sup>2</sup>

**The calendar is hardly something handed down from Creation.**

Despite this, many cultures, including the Israelites, used lunar months starting in the spring with 12 months of 29 and 30 days per year. This cycle resulted in a short year; thus, the seasons would get out of step. To solve this, another month was added in as rulers or priests saw fit to make things match up again every few years. A regular calendar with a formula for determining when the months started and how many days they had wasn't established in the Hebrew culture until the fourth century C.E. (over five hundred years after Daniel). Today, nearly every government has approved the Gregorian calendar (with leap days every year divisible by four) as the official calendar, but other calendars persist officially and unofficially. Israel uses the Hebrew calendar, some Persian Gulf States use the Muslim calendar, and Asia uses the Chinese calendar.

1. The NIST Reference on Constants, Units, and Uncertainty. <<http://physics.nist.gov/cuu/Units/current.html>> (accessed March 2005).

2. Jacqueline de Bourgoing, *The Calendar: History, Lore, and Legend* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001).

# A Recipe for Happiness

## HOW-TO

Rev. 1:3

We are introduced to the day-year principle very early in the Bible. In Genesis 29:27, Jacob is told to wait for seven days, after which he was told to work for another seven years to marry Rachel. By using this parallelism, we can deduce that much of the embedded Bible prophecy timelines can now be unraveled.

Why should we be interested in knowing all this prophetic stuff?

**Theological Perspective.** Bible prophecies have not been the easiest of topics to study. Bible scholars have spent years researching the Scriptures. The Bible records various instances of how God punished His people. God punishes them for a full year for each of the days they transgressed (Num. 14:34), and in Ezekiel 4:4-6 Israel is rebuked for 390 days, again a year for each day. As we progress to

the books of Daniel and Revelation, we see the pivotal need to understand this principle. In order for a deeper spiritual enrichment, God uses this symbolism just to get us to dig a little deeper than the literal interpretations.

**Reader-Friendly Perspective.**

Many people out there feel that it is a complete waste of time to study prophecies. They believe that we live in the New Testament and hence live only under the grace of God. The reality is that God uses the whole Bible to speak to us.

People are trying to predict the future by reading horoscopes, palm-reading, believing in the "crossing over," and other sinister methods, but we as Bible-believing Christians need to look no further than the Word of God.

In 1844 a group of Millerites, among many others, prepared for the coming of the Lord. Excited about their study of the 2,300-day prophecy, they all gathered in Port Gibson, New York, on the 22nd of October. What started off as a joyful anticipation turned out to be a gloomy and poignant occasion. The final outcome was that the date was accurate, but the event was wrongly interpreted. The mistake the Millerites made was to follow their own interpretations of the Bible. After much prayer and guidance from the Holy Spirit, they returned to their Bible study and discovered true happiness. Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

**We as Bible-believing  
Christians need to look no  
further than the Word of  
God.**

# Convenience or Conviction

## OPINION

Ezek. 4:5, 6; Dan. 8:14; 9:25

*"I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year" (Ezek. 4:5, 6, NKJV).*

The belief held by the majority of Christendom today is that the rapture will remove those who fear God from the earth, followed by a time of tribulation. This period will serve as a second chance for those left behind to rethink their decision to reject God. Then Jesus will return and judge the earth. Clearly, having seen all their friends and neighbors who professed belief in Christ disappear at once, those remaining will be convinced of the fact of God and repent. Who then shall be left to be condemned to the fires of hell, an event clearly described in Scripture for those who reject salvation?

The biblical statement that "now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2, NKJV) is a moot point in the light of this belief. For many the convenience of this belief relieves them from any sense of need to follow

Christ now, for they're certain they may do as they please and await the rapture of the saints to begin to follow God. However, the Bible teaches something quite different.

In Daniel 8:14 we are told that in 2,300 days, prophetic years according to Ezekiel 4:5, 6, the sanctuary would be cleansed. The starting point for that time period, given in Daniel 9:25, which historically refers to 457 B.C., brings us to 1844. The Scriptures reveal that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary means the beginning of judgment on all humankind (Lev. 16:16–22; 23:26–30). If our judgment has started *before* the Tribulation and our eternal fate thus determined, how can we then change our position relating to God during that time?

Clearly, the popular second-chance theory would be impossible within the context of a Holy God judging us prior to the Tribulation period. Our ultimate fate will be determined by who we choose to ally ourselves with *today*. For us to be genuine followers of Christ, our lives must reflect this decision. What will you choose, convenience or conviction?

**The popular second-chance theory would be impossible.**

# Living With God Not for God

## EXPLORATION

Ezek. 4:6

## CONCLUDE

Living with God each day is much harder than simply living *for* God or believing that we'll have to face God in the Judgment Day. For most people the judgment occurs sometime in the future. It is part of the "last-day events" or "future events." It is something distant. Yes, we say that it all started in 1844. Yet it is still distant. Distant from our daily lives, the decisions we make, the priorities we live by, the career we choose. By placing it in the future—either by practice or just believing in it—we miss the opportunities for growth and intimacy with God. It certainly is a sacred time, in a sacred place with a loving God.

## CONSIDER

- Making two columns on a letter-size sheet with the titles "What bothers me" and "What pleases me" about the judgment. Make a list.
- Taking 30 minutes each day to reflect on God's goodness and kindness to you.
- Viewing the Michael W. Smith video *This Is Your Time* and discussing it with a group of friends.
- Finding a photograph in any magazine, newspaper, or book that portrays how God feels about you.
- Making a simple drawing of how you see yourself facing God in the judgment.
- Keeping a diary for one week about how each day went for you as you choose to live *with* God, not *for* God.

## CONNECT

Howard Peth, *Seven Mysteries Solved*, mystery #6.

Ranko Stefanovic, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*; Jon Paulien, *The Deep Things of God: An Insider's Guide to the Book of Revelation*.



# Rome and Antiochus



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**“It came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered”  
(Luke 2:1, NKJV).**

# Warning: Imminent Destruction

## INTRODUCTION

Isa. 55:11; Rom. 13:11

*"It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11, NKJV).*

"You could hear women lamenting, children crying, men shouting. There were some so afraid of death that they prayed for death."—Pliny the Younger, describing the last moments in the destruction of the city of Pompeii and over two thousand of its citizens by a pyroclastic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

Halfway around the world on the French island of Martinique is another great volcano, Mont Pelée. In 1902 Mont Pelée gave many warnings of imminent danger and experienced several minor eruptions for weeks. The citizens of the nearby city of St. Pierre saw the signs on Mont Pelée, yet these didn't register in their minds that quick action was required. Instead, the government decided to calm the public in the city of St. Pierre, mainly motivated by their desire to proceed with the scheduled government elections. Citizens remained unconvinced of any great

danger or of Mont Pelée's potential destructive power. No evacuations were planned for the city of St. Pierre, and political officials encouraged people to make plans to go out and vote on May 8. As a result,

**Citizens remained unconvinced of any great danger.**

28,000 of St. Pierre's citizens remained in the city. As daybreak arrived on May 8, Mont Pelée experienced a pyroclastic eruption that in less than five minutes caused the death of all those in St. Pierre. Hot rocks and toxic gases traveled in excess of 100 miles per hour through St. Pierre and its surroundings.

Like the citizens of St. Pierre, we have been given warnings. Our warnings appear in Scripture on the imminent fulfillment of all prophecies and of the second coming of Christ. Today we find ourselves in that lag time in which the citizens of St. Pierre and Pompeii found themselves, pondering the odds of eminent destruction. The citizens of St. Pierre and those of Pompeii almost certainly lamented their decision to remain in their cities. Similarly we have been advised that all God has shared with us in prophecy will soon come to pass. Let's make the commitment this week to deepen our understanding of Christ's current ministry on our behalf in the pre-Advent judgment that we may have the strength and hope to make the right choices in these last days. "Do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11, NKJV).

# God Settles Down

## EVIDENCE

Exod. 29:45, 46

It happened suddenly during a Midwest MOP [Mothers of Preschoolers] group meeting. For no apparent reason the topic took a turn. Instead of discussing the latest eating, sleeping, or discipline issues, these young mothers found themselves wrestling with questions of deep theological implication: "Was the sanctuary a biblical doctrine, anyway? And what about 1844 and the judgment?" It seemed beyond the scope of a MOP group, yet, maybe it really wasn't. One day, would their young babies ask them the same questions? How would they answer? How would you?

God reveals in Exodus 25:8; 29:45, 46 that His primary motive for the construction of the tabernacle was a deep longing to dwell among His people. As a home communicates a message about the occupants and what they're doing, so God through the sanctuary and its services desired to reveal accurately who He was and what He was doing. Consider how God's heart was broken in Ezekiel 43:8, 9. His people had built walls in the temple between Him and them that were obviously not according to His plan. God ends by reminding them that if they will put away their sins it will allow Him to dwell with them forever.

**God through the sanctuary  
and its services desired to  
reveal accurately who He  
was.**

God explicitly told Moses to follow the pattern given him (Exod. 25:9, 40; 26:30). This Hebrew word *tabnith* can also mean "plan, copy, form, likeness, image, or model." The New Testament in Hebrews 8:5 explains that the earthly tabernacle was a copy of realities in heaven. Therefore, those services explain how God is right now in the process of removing the barrier of sin in the heavenly sanctuary.

So the battle over God's dwelling place wages on today. Where will He be allowed to live forever? God simply couldn't contain His enthusiasm, so He went ahead and revealed what the outcome of that ugly battle would be for all those who chose. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21:3, NKJV).

## REACT

1. How does Hebrews 9:22 demonstrate God's love and forgiveness?
2. Read Hebrews 13:20, 21. Is it possible to be made perfect in another way?

# Christ Our Righteousness

## LOGOS

Isa. 55:11; Matt. 13:10-13; Luke 2:1; 21:20, 21; John 11:48; 16:12; 2 Pet. 1:19

Similar to Martin Luther's earlier insight into righteousness by faith through Christ alone, the message of Christ's second advent that came to Christendom in the mid-nineteenth century was a great worldwide awakening.<sup>1</sup> Following that, those who had believed that Christ was going to come in 1844 gained insight into the pre-Advent judgment, a logical necessity if one believes in two resurrections as described in Revelation (20:5, 6). But could it also be necessary because of other worlds having witnessed our terrible sin condition? (Job 1). No doubt, just as we will investigate the records during the millennium to understand God's judgments, the other worlds need to know that it is safe to let us out of quarantine. Through Jesus' work our names are cleared. The pre-Advent judgment accomplishes both of these necessities.

**The other worlds need to know that it is safe to let us out of quarantine.**

How do this week's Bible texts help us to solidify our understanding of these, or any other, key biblical teachings? Any key biblical teaching should, when properly understood, show the wonderful saving grace of

our Lord. What do these texts tell us about God? We must look to the Bible to understand what God wants us to know. The key texts for this week, like all of the messages in the Bible, point to Christ our righteousness.<sup>2</sup>

In Isaiah 55:11, God says that His Word has power to accomplish what it says. This is significantly different from man's word, which has no power to do what man says.<sup>3</sup> God is saying that, so very unlike us, when He says something will happen, it does. Look at Creation: He spoke and it was done. Look at Matthew 8:8 and John 4:50. It may be just a matter of speaking, or it may be that His spoken word simply reveals His will (see Mark 1:40, 41); but it is undeniable that there is power there to accomplish what God wills.

God's Word is believable, even if we don't see how it can be possible. We can see this historically. God said Christ was to be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). Neither Joseph, nor Mary, nor anyone else, knew how that would be accomplished, but it happened; and not because of Joseph and Mary's planning (Luke 2:1). What the chief priests and the Pharisees predicted would happen (John 11:48), due to Christ's presence and ministry on earth, occurred, even though they didn't leave Him alone. God will use humans, whether or not they see it, to accomplish His purpose.



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But God does not want us to be oblivious to His workings. He wants us to understand what is happening and know what to do (Luke 21:20, 21). Recall that Christ calls us friends because, He said, He has told us what He is doing (John 15:15). The Jewish leaders chose to be closed to seeing His truth. In Matthew 13:10–13, Jesus explains that He spoke in parables because some have their minds open to understand the mysteries of heaven and others do not. Even though they saw and heard, they didn't really see and hear and understand. There was a message and they weren't able to "get it," because they didn't want to open their minds to it and surrender their preconceived ideas. God has more He wants to teach us (John 16:12); but if we don't have open minds and submissive wills, we will miss it. Surrender of our will to God is key to understanding His mysteries and providence.<sup>4</sup> Take Him at His word, open your mind to His possibilities, surrender preconceived ideas, and desire to know more of His truth, and He will lead you on.

God's Word has power and is believable, and God wants us to understand what He is doing; but it is by our choice that we limit ourselves. Peter urges us to choose to believe (2 Pet. 1:19) so that, as a light shines in a dark place, we will understand and clearly see God at work, and the day will dawn, or understanding will come, and the morning star will rise in your heart, or Christ will be in you—in all His power and glory. This is Christ our Righteousness.

## **REACT**

1. God has a purpose behind what He is doing. What is it? (Mark 2:17; Luke 19:10).
2. In light of God's power and His purpose, what will you do with Hebrews 4:16 and 1 John 1:9?
3. Surrender of our will is key.<sup>5</sup> In everyday terms, how is this done? (See *Steps to Christ*, page 70.)
4. What does Jesus look forward to after His death, resurrection, and work in heaven?
5. Is the sanctuary in heaven a literal place or just something spiritual?
6. Do you think that someone preaching "judgment" could be regarded as an alarmist? Explain why or why not.
7. How could Adventist beliefs regarding the sanctuary and judgment spark Catholic resentment and hostility?

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1. *The Great Controversy*, chap. 20.

2. Arthur G. Daniells, *Christ Our Righteousness*, facsimile reprint (Denver, Colo.: International Health Institute, 1969), p. 15.

3. A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, *Lessons on Faith* (Angwin, Calif.: Pacific Union College Press, 1977), p. 108.

4. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 360, 361.

5. *Steps to Christ*, p. 47.



## **"Unfinished" Business**

### **TESTIMONY**

Heb. 9:24

As Jesus died on Calvary, He cried, "It is finished," and the veil of the earthly temple was rent in two. This was the evidence that the services of the earthly sanctuary were finished forever, and that God would no more dwell in the earthly temple with them. The blood of Jesus was then shed, which was to be ministered by Himself in the heavenly sanctuary. As the high priests in the earthly sanctuary entered the Most Holy Place once a year to clean the sanctuary, our Savior Jesus Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly, at the end of the 2,300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final atonement for all who could be benefited by His intercession.

"Oh, let us live wholly for the Lord and show by a well-ordered life and godly conversation that we have been with Jesus and are His meek and lowly followers. We must work while the day lasts, for when the dark night of trouble and anguish comes, it will be too late to work for God. Jesus is in His holy temple and will now

**Let us live wholly for  
the Lord.**

accept our sacrifices, our prayers, and our confessions of faults and sins and will pardon all the transgressions of Israel, that they may be blotted out before He leaves the sanctuary. When Jesus leaves the

sanctuary, then they who are holy and righteous will be holy and righteous still; for all their sins will then be blotted out, and they will be sealed with the seal of the living God. But those that are unjust and filthy will be unjust and filthy still; for then there will be no Priest in the sanctuary to offer their sacrifices, their confessions, and their prayers before the Father's throne. Therefore what is done to rescue souls from the coming storm of wrath must be done before Jesus leaves the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary."

"Satan is constantly alluring away from faithfulness and thoroughness in the essential works of preparedness for the great event that will try every man's soul. The work in the heavenly sanctuary is going forward. Jesus is cleansing the sanctuary. The work on earth corresponds with the work in heaven. The heavenly angels are at work constantly to draw man, the living agent, to look to Jesus to contemplate and meditate upon Jesus that he may, in viewing the perfection of Christ, be impressed with the imperfections of His own character. The promised Comforter, Christ . . . declared, 'shall testify of me.' This is the burden of the message for this time."<sup>2</sup>

1. *Early Writings of Ellen G. White*, p. 48.

2. *The Upward Look*, p. 344.

# Tell It Like It Is

## HOW-TO

Heb. 4:12

Thousands of people were standing outside enduring fatigue, heat exhaustion, and hunger. And what about the millions of spectators worldwide? It resembled a massive crowd waiting to see a championship game. As much as I disdained this type of publicity, I too anxiously awaited the announcement of the new pontiff—Pope Benedict XVI. It looked to me as if it were a direct fulfillment of prophecy: “All the world marveled and followed the beast” (Rev. 13:3, NKJV).

The new “holy father,” a name reserved for God Himself (see John 17:11), emerged from that “sacred” apartment, and burst out upon the world with his hands raised as the newly appointed “vicar of Christ”—the liaison between heaven and earth. Jesus will one day burst out upon the world with a retinue of angels. But unlike the masses that waited for Pope Benedict XVI, few will be anticipating His return. We have been in the final years of the investigative judgment. But like the crowd at the Vatican who mistook the color of the smoke, many are not rightly interpreting the signs of the times.

How far are we away from the final verdict? How much do we know about the events that are happening around us? What signs, as Adventists, are we looking for? Are we ready to herald the finishing work of Jesus in the sanctuary?

**Jesus will one day burst out upon the world with a retinue of angels.**

The writer of the book of Hebrews indicates that the earthly tabernacle is a figure of the true (9:11). So then the real pontiff is the Son of God. How do we share that belief with nonbelievers in this contemporary society? Here are some suggestions:

1. Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5).
2. When it comes to judgment, remind people that in most societies ignorance of the law is no excuse. Tell them they need to study the Word of God (John 5:39).
3. Warn them that the Judgment Day is serious. Tell it like it is—but lovingly (Heb. 9:27).
4. Tell them that Christ's heavenly ministry was prophesied long before it happened (Ps. 110:4).
5. Remind them that God's grace is offered to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16).

# Welcome the Judgment

## OPINION

Heb. 7:25

Judgment has been given a bad reputation. More often than not, when you hear someone speak of the judgment, it's with an undertone of doom and gloom. As a child, because of what I'd heard about the judgment, I had a mental picture of God sitting behind a large bench with a scowl on His face shaking His finger at people and handing out punishments. It wasn't until I was older and able to study prophecy concerning the pre-Advent judgment that I was able to see the whole truth about the judgment. Yes, the judgment is a time when punishment is determined, but it is also a time when pardons are given.

On the Day of Atonement the high priest entered the Most Holy Place and sprinkled the blood of the sin offering on the mercy seat to make atonement for the

sins of the congregation. After atonement had been made, the congregation of Israel was sinless before God. We are living in the antitypical day of atonement. Our High Priest, Jesus, is in the Most Holy Place, pleading His blood before the Father, atoning for our sin. As long as we repent and confess our sins,

**The judgment is a good thing and there is no reason to fear it as long as we are in Christ.**

when our name comes before Christ in judgment, we will be covered by the blood of Jesus and pardoned.

"All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of Heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.'"<sup>\*</sup>

The judgment is a good thing and there is no reason to fear it as long as we are in Christ. If we fear the judgment, we will serve God out of fear. If we serve God out of fear, living according to His will becomes a burden to us. If we are burdened by His will, we will stop serving Him. If we stop serving Him, we will be condemned. It is time we stop being scared of the judgment and appreciate it for what it is, an opportunity for Christ to finish His work.

<sup>\*</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

# God's Homecoming

## EXPLORATION

Exod. 29:45, 46; Rev. 21:1–4

## CONCLUDE

Time is short. Let's be vigilantly ready because God desperately wants to live with us forever and wants us to really get to know Him. The Bible demonstrates that He also wants us to understand what He is doing right now. Knowing that the judgment is happening above, not only should we confess our sins and be cleansed from our impurities, but we need to allow the urgency of this message to embolden us to speak it. And as we share the news, we should remember to emphasize that judgment is the time not only when punishment is determined but also when pardon is given.

## CONSIDER

- Giving slips of paper containing a one-question survey to your entire church—everyone junior age through adult. The question: "I don't know the day and hour, but I think it's highly probable that Jesus will return by the end of (circle one): 1 2 3 5 10 50+ years." When you've received the responses, chart and display them along with a paragraph containing your comments and conclusions.
- Drawing a floor plan of your favorite childhood home (your family's "sanctuary"). Color the happiest areas red, any emotionally "chilly" areas blue, and any fear-filled areas yellow.
- Using your favorite style of music (and even a tune you enjoy) to write a song based on Revelation 21:1–4. Have God "singing" in the first person, describing His happiness at finally being able to live among His beloved children. Stay as close to the content and order of the text as possible.
- Writing a three- to five-minute reader's theater presentation using five people—three to play the post-Exodus Israelites, one to play Moses, and one to play God. Moses describes the sanctuary to the people, sharing the news that God wants to live among them. The people respond with doubt, fear, and even distaste. God (unperceived by both Moses and the people) expresses His own emotions. Ask the pastor if you can insert this presentation in place of (or in addition to) special music some Sabbath morning.

## CONNECT

Karen Mains, *The God Hunt: The Delightful Chase and the Wonder of Being Found*; Elizabeth Sherrill, *All the Way to Heaven: A Surprising Faith Journey*.

# The Sanctuary and the little Horn



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“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying:  
We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right  
hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a  
Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which  
the Lord erected, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2, NKJV).



# Counterfeiting: Always Two Sides to a Coin

Sabbath  
September 2

## INTRODUCTION

Dan. 8:11-14

Counterfeiting is a major issue in various businesses of the world today. Companies spend billions of dollars every year trying to put security features on their products so that the buyer will always be able to distinguish between the original and the fake. In essence, the fake is designed to shift the focus of the buyer from the original to that which seems to be, but is not, the real thing. No matter how close a counterfeit may be to the original, the fact always remains that it is still a fake and will never be the real thing. No matter how you slice it, there will always be two sides.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon is not limited to the physical realm. It is there in the spiritual realm at its highest level and is the reason the devil was sent to this earth. Lucifer tried to replace God and was cast out of heaven. He has not relented since then and is still trying today. From Daniel 8, this week's study focuses on the activity of the little horn in relation to God's sanctuary. By attacking the Prince of the host (Christ), the daily, and the place of Christ's sanctuary, the little horn seeks to put itself in their place by shifting focus from them to its own manufactured distortive substitutes.

**Unfortunately, this phenomenon is not limited to the physical realm.**

In my locality we call some fake drugs "replacement killers." Such drugs, loaded with analgesics, mask the symptoms of ailments, leaving a false feeling of well-being until someday the patient may drop dead. So it is with whoever tries to replace God with anything else: They will drop dead without God someday. The devil, the little horn, and their supporting agencies have perfected their plans such that it could be difficult to see the differences between what they are offering and what God has established. As we study this week, we shall see that only those who choose to be vigilant through study of God's Word will not be swayed by this deceptive distortion because God has not left us without clear ways of identifying those differences. His security features are there in His Word (and in this week's study), such that no matter how thin the diameter of the deceptive slice is, we shall always see the two sides of the coin: the God side and the horn side.

## LOGOS

Exod. 27:20; 29:42; Num. 4:7; 28:6; Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24–27; 8:1–5; 9:1–14, 24

In the heart of the busy streets of Covent Garden, London, England, is a health spa called The Sanctuary. This spa, which is exclusively for women, claims not only to rejuvenate the body and mind but also to provide cleansing. So when you leave “the heavenly setting,” you should feel like a “new person.” To experience the benefits fully, however, you need to make regular trips to this exclusive London venue or purchase and regularly use the many “take away” products on offer.

### The Place of His Sanctuary

The sanctuary described in Daniel 8 is the sanctuary of the Lord in heaven. Unlike the earthly sanctuary of the Old Testament and of the modern-day Sanctuary spa, it is a place where Jesus is the High Priest “in His holy temple” (Ps. 11:4, NKJV).

At the beginning of the book of Acts of the Apostles, the writer describes Jesus’ ascension as “a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9, NKJV). Immediately

following, two angels tell the stunned disciples that “‘this same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven’” (Acts 1:11, NKJV).

These angelic beings speak of the end of Jesus’ ministry on earth and of His second coming. It has

been over two thousand years, however, since He returned to heaven. Much has happened since that day, and some may wonder what Jesus has been doing all this time. “When Jesus at his ascension entered by his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon his disciples the blessings of his mediation, the Jews were left in total darkness, to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. . . . The Jews had refused to seek him in the only way whereby he could then be found, through the ministration in the sanctuary in Heaven.”

Jesus Christ is acting as “a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2, NKJV).

To get a better understanding of the heavenly sanctuary, we need to look briefly at the idea of the sanctuary in the Old Testament. After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, God instructed him to “‘make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among

**Much has happened since  
that day and some may  
wonder what Jesus has  
been doing all this time.**

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them' " (Exod. 25:8, NKJV). He followed this up with precise instructions as to its design and relevant rituals.

The place of His sanctuary is where Jesus appears "in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24, NKJV) and sits "down at the right hand of God" (10:12, NKJV).

His main task is that He "makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8:34, NKJV). In addition to this, "His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The Lord tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates" (Ps. 11:4, 5, NKJV). Therefore, Jesus has a dual role, acting as Judge and Defense Lawyer.

## The Daily

One of the main attributes of Jesus as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is His *tamid* (taw meed), which is translated as the words "continuous" or "continual," "perpetual" or "daily." The heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ, like that of the earthly priests, is continual. Aaron, the first high priest, was instructed that the lamp in the temple was "to burn continually " (Exod. 27:20, NKJV) and that there should be a "continual burnt offering" (29:42, KJV) at the door of the tabernacle. This signified consistency and also was symbolic of the unique relationship with God that the Israelites enjoyed.

In Daniel 8, the little horn (identified by Protestants as pagan and papal Rome) seeks to "take away the daily," because Satan "the arch-deceiver hates the great truths that bring to view an atoning sacrifice and an all-powerful Mediator."<sup>2</sup>

It was pagan Rome, under the guidance of Pontius Pilate, who "exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host" (Dan. 8:11, NKJV). Those who condemned and ordered Jesus crucified were all Romans. History records the atrocities committed by both pagan and papal Rome where they destroyed "the mighty, and also the holy people" (verse 24, NKJV).

In addition to this, both entities "took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was brought low" (verse 11, NIV). Pagan Rome did this literally.

Apart from the persecution that has already taken place, Seventh-day Adventists also believe that in accordance with the prophecy in Daniel, there will be another time of trouble brought about by the little horn, a "transgression [that] causes horror" (verse 13, NASB). This is the persecution of the saints. When the sanctuary and the saints have been trampled, it is assumed that the true God, His ministry, His ordinances, and His worship are considered as defunct.

However, the Lord will ultimately triumph in the end. God will march "through the land in indignation" and trample "the nations in anger" (Hab. 3:12, NKJV) and they, along with the arch-deceiver, will realize that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31, NKJV).

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1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 430.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 488.

# The Reality of the Sanctuary

## TESTIMONY

Heb. 8:1-5; 9:1-14, 24

There are some people who question the reality of the sanctuary in heaven. For them there is no physical and real sanctuary. But let us look at the testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy concerning the literalness of the sanctuary in heaven and its significance to our lives today.

Ellen G. White asks, "But has the new covenant no sanctuary?"<sup>1</sup> This question is an answer to the query of the nonexistence of the heavenly sanctuary. Then she continues, "Turning again to the book of Hebrews, the seekers for truth found that

the existence of a second, or new-covenant sanctuary, was implied in the words of Paul already quoted: 'Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.' [Heb. 9:1] And the use of the word 'also' intimates that Paul has before made mention of this sanctuary."<sup>2</sup>

**"Those who were studying the subject found indisputable proof of the existence of a sanctuary in heaven."**

Then Mrs. White concludes, "Here is revealed the sanctuary of the new covenant. The sanctuary of the first covenant was pitched by man, built by Moses; this is pitched by the Lord, not by man."<sup>3</sup>

"As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there 'seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.' Revelation 4:5."<sup>4</sup> "The term 'sanctuary,' as used in the Bible, refers . . . to the 'true tabernacle' in heaven, to which the earthly sanctuary pointed. . . . The 'true tabernacle' in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant."<sup>5</sup>

Mrs. White reiterates, "Thus those who were studying the subject found indisputable proof of the existence of a sanctuary in heaven."<sup>6</sup>

The reality of the heavenly sanctuary points to the reality and surety of Jesus' intercession on our behalf. Indeed, we can boldly come to the throne of grace in heaven for mercy and for the forgiveness of our sins.

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 413.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, p. 414.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 417.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

# Everybody Fixes Something

## EVIDENCE

Heb. 9:28

*"Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Heb. 9:28, NKJV).*

Everybody fixes something. Mothers fix tears, mechanics fix cars, and your local McDonald's restaurant fixes hunger. The list goes on. Your career choice or station in life generally involves fixing or correcting something.

Me? I fix people. Yep, that's right, people. You come to me sick, and I give you things to make you better. You see, I am a pharmacist. Herbal or pharmaceutical, Band-Aids or crutches, I do not discriminate. I just want to make you better.

Now, though this sounds all noble and upright, it has one inherent problem. You.

I am *continually* fixing you. You are the ultimate enemy to what I do. You see, if you have high blood pressure, and I treat it with medicine today, you will wake up with it tomorrow. The graze on your knee from your bicycle accident is bound to be repeated next time you summon the courage to ride. Even that cough will no doubt be back again next time the mercury falls. Your parents did this to me before you, and your children will do this to me long after you have gone.

**It's just not fair.**

It's just not fair. I just wish that there were some way that I could, once and for all, end the need that you have for me. Why can't I just make you all well?

Ah, the frustration!

Seriously, though, it's not that bad, but it does illustrate a good point. The sanctuary is inhabited now. The One who is there has done away with the *continual fixing*, once a year, that occurred prior to His sacrifice.

You see, He *is* God. Whether we are sick or healthy, young or old, He does not discriminate. His once-and-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:28) means that this continual fixing is no longer needed. It is perfect.

The sanctuary, indeed the cross of Christ, has its enemy too.

Perhaps if He were writing this, He might instead say this: "It's just not fair. There is a way. I have, once and for all, ended your affliction. I just can't wait until there is no longer an enemy."



# To Sleep or Not to Sleep

## HOW-TO

Exod. 27:20, 21; Dan. 8:8–11

A sanctuary implies a place apart from the normal routine, a place of safety and, most importantly, a place in which we are in close relationship with God. It often seems that particularly in the Old Testament, God uses very strange symbols in explaining how this relationship works. In Exodus 27:20, God commands the people of Israel to bring the best olive oil for the lamp used in the sanctuary. God wanted the Israelites to put Him first and to give their best to Him.

In Daniel 8:11, 12, the little horn is shown to change the worship services. This means that our worship and our relationship with God can be changed if we allow the power of the little horn in our lives. But how does this happen? Is it more than just a difficult-to-understand theological concept?

A number of years ago, I remember a youth pastor talking about how the devil works to break our relationship with God. The three methods that the pastor men-

tioned were apathy, discouragement, and materialism. The devil is cunning enough to use every possible trick to cause us to lose interest in God.

### Is it more than just a difficult-to-understand theological concept?

Sadly, we now see that many people have chosen not to attend the church services each Sabbath. For many, the Sabbath day as a day of rest is now replaced as a day of sleep! This is not theologically valid and is also disrespectful to Jesus as our High Priest. We then miss out on that special group worship experience that is so important in encouraging and directing our lives back toward God.

So what can you do about this?

Make an active decision to get to church on time each week—many of us would not contemplate arriving late for university/work/school. Yet we don't hesitate to miss out on the worship experiences in church each Sabbath.

Make this decision as part of your Bible study class or your family—discuss your new commitment with them.

In your prayers ask God for help in your decision. The devil will do his best to discourage you and give you many excuses.

Examine how you can live a healthier life (e.g., eating better, more exercise). A healthy body gives more energy and a positive outlook, which then means we want to worship God even more.

# Are You Ready?

## OPINION

2 Pet. 3:10, 12, 14

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are often bombarded with the admonition "we need to get ready." "Jesus is coming; we need to get ready." We've all heard it before and even used it ourselves. Is that what God really wants, for us to get ready? Or does He expect us already to be prepared for His second coming and final judgment? Since we know not the hour of His return, don't you think that God expects us to feel much more than just a need to get ready?

While none of us should downplay the importance of making essential preparations for Jesus' coming, we need to realize that our final judgment will be an individual evaluation before God. So how ready are we? Are we living each day as though it were our last day to be held accountable before God?

One can only wonder what it will be like on that final Judgment Day. Eyes will dart back and forth, anxiously looking to see familiar faces and friends. It will be interesting to see just who will be there. Will Mr. Hanson, the AY leader be there? What about Natalie, the young Adventist girl who ran away from home not too long ago? What about me? After all, I had felt the need to be ready; although I never got around to being ready. Will I be there? Sadly, many of us will be disappointed on that final day. Though our expectations of just who would be there differs from person to person, so, too, does God's judgment differ from that of human judgment.

**One can only wonder what  
it will be like on that final  
Judgment Day.**

God not only wants us to feel the need to get ready, He wants so much for us to taste of the rich rewards of heaven that He has so lovingly prepared for us. He wants us to be ready, each of us. When a loved one leaves home, don't you anxiously await their return? So, too, does God long for us anxiously to await His return. He wants to meet us all ready, waiting to pass the ultimate test of perseverance. Ready and waiting—Oh, how I want for that to be me!

As a student I never worried about the exams I knew I had prepared for; the times when I had cause to worry were the times I knew I hadn't prepared, the times when I just wasn't ready. Like many other classmates, I've uttered the phrase "If only I had more time." Well, our test is a similar one, and it requires each student of God to be prepared for a final test/judgment of preparation. My question again to you is, Do you just have a need to be ready, or are you going to be ready today, starting right now?

# Knowing the True God

## EXPLORATION

Daniel 8

## CONCLUDE

There are so many conquests in the Bible that we become accustomed to the state of warfare and change in power. What comes as a shock in Daniel 8, then, is that an earthly power challenges the authority of *Heaven*—and what's more, apparently is successful in taking away the daily sacrifice and casting down the place of the sanctuary (verse 11). But for those intimately acquainted with the "real thing," no counterfeit can deceive. In the midst of the many challenges to God's true authority in this great controversy, we must seek to know Him all the more and be prepared for His return, remembering that the victory is already won!

## CONSIDER

- Listening to the Crystal Lewis song "People Get Ready . . . Jesus Is Comin'" and discussing your thoughts regarding the theological implications of the lyrics in light of this week's lesson.
- Drawing the earthly sanctuary as laid out in Exodus 25–27; 30. Compare/contrast the earthly sanctuary with the heavenly sanctuary.
- Reflecting on "transgression of desolation" (Dan. 8:13, NKJV) using your Bible and other Bible study tools. Record your understanding of this and its significance.
- Exploring the Internet for Web sites that deal with the sanctuary and its services.
- Making a life-size model of the sanctuary as a class and conducting tours, explaining its current significance. End the tours with a celebration of Jesus' ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.
- Researching Jewish and Christian history in the first century and reporting on the historical events related to the temple.

## CONNECT

Frank B. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Daniel*, chaps. 6–10; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 1, pp. 145–188; William H. Shea, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier: A Practical Guide to Abundant Christian Living in the Book of Daniel 7–12*, chap. 8.

# The Pre-Advent judgment



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“ ‘Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me,  
to give to every one according to his work’ ”  
(Rev. 22:12, NKJV).

# A Driving Lesson

## INTRODUCTION

Rev. 22:12

*“I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay all according to their deeds” (Rev. 22:12, NLT).*

Driving a car is more than steering, accelerating, and braking, or getting from point A to point B. Driving is a complex series of small processes combining hand-eye coordination, forward planning, and careful timing. I sound like an expert, but I am not. By the time you read this I will have had my driver's license for only two years. But I think there's a connection between learning to drive and understanding the complex theology found in Daniel and Revelation.

My driving instructor, Susanne, was an excellent teacher. “Always keep your eyes on the move,” she told me, “see the whole picture.” Susanne explained that it was almost impossible to predict what another driver or pedestrian might do—changes in traffic often happen in a matter of seconds. Safe driving means regularly checking mirrors, monitoring speed, listening to the engine, watching my distance from the car in front, checking

blind spots, heeding signs, and yet not allowing any one of these things to take my attention completely. A driver has a lot to worry about, but

**Don't sweat the small stuff.**

Susanne assured me that if I remembered her adage to “see the whole picture,” I would reach my destination safely.

I've noticed that there are some people who find driving more stressful than others. They swerve in and out of traffic, make obscene gestures, tailgate, or honk their horn. Sometimes I find myself becoming frustrated with them—often wishing they would be brought to justice for their irresponsible actions. In these situations, Dr. Richard Carlson, author of *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff . . . And It's All Small Stuff*, advises us to “let it go” and to “have compassion for the person.”

We have been studying theology, prophecy, and history—all of which are equally important but together give us a road map in reaching our eternal destination with God in heaven. As you continue your journey through Daniel and Revelation, try not to become overwhelmed by the details. In other words, don't sweat the small stuff. Heed my instructor's advice to “see the whole picture.” Focusing too much on the details or on one aspect of prophecy might mean missing the real message of this week's lesson.



# The Pre-Advent Judgment

## EVIDENCE

1 Kings 8:31, 32; Dan. 7:9–14

Following the return of the ark of the covenant to Israel, Solomon prays publicly: “If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath, and he comes and takes an oath before Thine altar in this house, then hear Thou in heaven and act and judge Thy servants, condemning the wicked by bringing his way on his own head and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness” (1 Kings 8:31, 32, NASB).

In Daniel 7:9–14 a heavenly courtroom scene is presented with some astonishing characteristics including a fiery throne with wheels of burning fire and a river of fire flowing in front of it. A flowing river of fire may seem a strange feature for a courtroom; however, Carl H. Kraeling points out that “in Persian eschatology the mountains which are made of metal melt at the end of the world, and the molten metal pours over the earth like a river. All men pass into this river of molten metal and in doing so are either purified or destroyed.” In essence then, this river of fire may be another way for Daniel to emphasize the fact that this is a judgment scene from which there can be no hiding.

A key theme in these texts concerning judgment then is the idea that appearances may be deceiving. In 1 Kings, Solomon prays that both the guilty and the righteous will receive their just reward—in a visible way—so that those around will be able to see the results of both sin and righteous behavior. In the heavenly courtroom, both the image of the river of fire, and the better-known image of the books being opened, emphasize that actions, thoughts, and behaviors cannot be hidden from God. A person's character will be seen for what it is: either sinful, or sinless through Christ's sacrifice.

What then should be the result of our realization of the existence of a heavenly judgment? William H. Shea writes: “With the gospel comes a call to holy living. Christians cannot, therefore, continue in complacent living, because all are accountable before God.”<sup>2</sup>

**A key theme concerning judgment is the idea that appearances may be deceiving.**

1. Carl H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist* (New York: Charles Scribner Pub., 1951), p. 117.

2. William H. Shea, “Theological Importance of the Investigative Judgment” (pp. 323–332). In Frank B. Holbrook, editor, *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1986), p. 331.

# Grace and Judgment: Can They Coexist?

## LOGOS

Deut. 25:1; 1 Kings 8:32; Ps. 51:1–4; Matt. 22:1–13; Heb. 9:22–24; Rev. 20:12; 22:12

If “grace finds beauty in everything,”<sup>1</sup> then I must see God’s judgment as a positive thing. Yet to be honest, the concept of God judging me scares me. This leaves me with a few possibilities:

1. *To deny that there is a judgment.* We do this to protect ourselves from being frightened by the concept. The easiest way to discredit something is to deny its existence. But to do this ignores a lot of Scripture (Job 19:29; Ps. 9:7; 94:15; Ezek. 38:22; Matt. 11:24; 12:36; Rom. 2:1; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Pet. 4:17).

2. *To try and be perfect so that you come out on the right side of the judgment.* This option many try (including me) only to throw up our hands in total frustration because we can’t do it. “Scripture leaves no doubt about it: ‘There’s nobody living right, not even one, nobody who knows the score, nobody alert for God. They’ve all taken the wrong turn; they’ve all wandered down blind alleys. No one’s living right; I can’t find a single one’” (Rom. 3:10–12, *The Message*).

3. *To see the judgment as a positive thing.* That is part of the process through which God can ultimately get rid of sin fairly. (See Revelation 15:1–8.) We have made the mistake of focusing on God judging us. The

**“Grace makes beauty out of ugly things.”**

Bible clearly teaches that it is God and His handling of the sin problem that is under dissection. Revelation 12:7 states that the hour of His judgment has come. Notice it is *not* the hour of His judging that has come. Too often we make the judgment about us when it is ultimately about God. We are character witnesses for what God’s grace can and does do, given the problem of sin.

Another key to having a positive view of the judgment is to see it through the eyes of grace. David sees God’s judgment as positive (Ps. 51:1–14) for this reason. He sees it as part of the process through which God can deal with sin. He actually invites judgment and craves it for this reason. C. S. Lewis writes, “For what alarms us in the Christian picture is the infinite purity of the standard against which our actions are judged. But then we know that none of us will even come up to that standard. We are all in the same boat. We must all pin our hopes on the mercy of God and the work of Christ, not on our own goodness.”<sup>2</sup> Thankfully Jesus has paid the price for our sin by dying for us on the cross. Because it was His blood that was shed, He now holds the right to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from it.

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Perhaps the best news about the judgment is who the Judge actually is. John 5:22, 27 says that God has given Jesus the right and the ability to carry out the process of judgment. Furthermore, if I am with Jesus, then I do not come under condemnation (proclaimed as guilty) in the judgment. "It's urgent that you listen carefully to this: Anyone here who believes what I am saying right now and aligns himself with the Father, who has in fact put me in charge, has at this very moment the real, lasting life and is no longer condemned to be an outsider. This person has taken a giant step from the world of the dead to the world of the living" (John 5:24, *The Message*). Frederick Buechner writes, "The judge will be Christ. In other words, the one who judges us most finally will be the one who loves us most fully. . . . The worst sentence Love can pass is that we behold the suffering which love has endured for our sake, and that is also our acquittal. The justice and mercy of the judge are ultimately one."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus saved us by dying on the cross, and further, He saves us from being found guilty in the judgment if we remain in a relationship with Him. That is really what grace is all about. No wonder: "What once was hurt, what once was friction, what left a mark, no longer stings, because Grace makes beauty out of ugly things."<sup>4</sup>

## REACT

1. If we are saved by grace, why do some people make a big deal out of what we do?
2. Is it easy to be a Christian? Explain your answer.
3. How do you view the concept of judgment? How will this alter your relationship with God and other people?
4. Most of us live in a world that is very different from the culture in which the Old Testament was written—we are without a priesthood, sacrificial system, and sanctuary building. What images might an author use to teach the same lesson in your culture today?

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1. U2, "Grace," *All You Can't Leave Behind*, 2000 Universal Records.

2. C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (London: Wyman and Sons, 1958), p. 13.

3. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 58.

4. U2.

## **“Do Not Be Disheartened”**

### **TESTIMONY**

Acts 3:19, 20

“God’s messengers in the great cities are not to become discouraged over the wickedness, the injustice, the depravity, which they are called upon to face while endeavoring to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. The Lord would cheer every such worker with the same message that He gave to the apostle Paul in wicked Corinth: ‘Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city’ (Acts 18:9, 10). Let those engaged in soul-saving ministry remember that while there are many who will not heed the counsel of God in His word, the whole world will not turn from light and truth, from the invitations of a patient, forbearing Saviour. In every city, filled though it may be with violence and crime, there are many who with proper teaching may learn to become followers of Jesus. Thousands may thus be reached with saving truth and be led to receive Christ as a personal Saviour.

“God’s message for the inhabitants of the earth today is, ‘Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh’ (Matt 24:44). The conditions prevailing in society and especially in the great cities of the nations proclaim in thunder tones that the hour of God’s judgment is come and that the end of all

**“The Lord would cheer  
every such worker with the  
same message.”**

things earthly is at hand. We are standing on the threshold of the crisis of the ages. In quick succession the judgments of God will follow one another—fire, and flood, and earthquake, with war and bloodshed. We are not to be surprised at this time by events both great and decisive; for the angel of mercy cannot remain much longer to shelter the impenitent.”<sup>1</sup>

“The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies that were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. Here are ‘the times of refreshing’ to which the apostle Peter looked forward when he said: ‘Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: and he shall send Jesus’ (Acts 3:19, 20).”<sup>2</sup>

1. *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 277, 278.

2. *The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612.

# How to Wear Designer Threads

Wednesday  
September 13

## HOW-TO

Matt. 22:1-13

When I got married, I didn't want to wear a homemade dress; I wanted to wear a designer gown. I even had the designer in mind—Marianna Hardwick—whose styles have a touch of class and elegance about them. Unfortunately, the prices matched the high style, and I thought I'd never get to wear the dress of my dreams.

One day I came across a bridal store that was having a huge sale. I found a Marianna Hardwick gown that was perfect, and the best part was that it was half price! No one else had seen me in it, not my mum, sister, or bridesmaids. But I knew what I wanted and took advantage of the sale on the spot.

Weddings are public ceremonies full of ritual and symbolism. In telling the story of a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son, Jesus played on this. Rich families in that culture not only sent a wedding invitation to guests, but also sent a special robe for them to wear to the wedding. Many invited guests gave excuses as to why they could not attend, and one who did show up was not wearing the wedding gear provided by the host.

Imagine how you would feel if it were your wedding. Wouldn't you think those guests were rude, ungrateful, and ungracious? The reality is, it would be their loss for missing out on sharing that experience with you.

Imagine how you would  
feel if it were your wedding.

What can we do to share the experience of the wedding banquet in heaven?

**1. Get our priorities right.** We might think being part of a special or elite group is enough to get us into the kingdom of heaven. But there were people on the king's "special" guest list who, when the invitation arrived in their mailbox, were preoccupied with things like the daily grind, making money, building big houses, or stirring up trouble for the king's messengers. Unless having a personal relationship with the King is a daily priority, we can easily be distracted by less important things.

**2. Be gracious in accepting grace.** As if the invitation to join in the celebrations is not enough, we're also offered special clothes to wear. The clothing is free. All we have to do is accept it and choose to wear it. Rather than turning up at the wedding in an outfit we have slaved over creating ourselves, we can simply wear a garment created for us by *The Designer*. And the best part is that it was full price, yet fully paid for!



# Hope Like a Gleaming Taper's Light

## OPINION

Rev. 22:12

What do you hope for? Good grades? A good job upon graduation?

When my father passed away from cancer when I was 17, the only thing I could hope for was that I did not have to leave school to help support the family. Then, a few months later, I fell in love with the same Jesus that my father loved. Hope suddenly took on a whole new meaning for me. Every time I remembered I had lost my father, what stopped me from plunging into despair was the hope that I would see him again someday.

What stops me from getting depressed from the suffering and pain in this world and in my life is the hope that God will take all of it away one day. Hope was no longer thinking *I wish*. Hope was now about being patient and at peace—with the full knowledge that God will make things right soon.

As Seventh-day Adventist Christians, we often find ourselves drowning in the intricacies of theology: What is the significance of 1844? What does the bear with three ribs in its mouth represent? What is the difference between the pre-Advent judgment and the final judgment?

**There is nothing wrong with not knowing the answers.**

There is nothing wrong with knowing these answers. In fact, it is a wonderful privilege to be in a church that is able to understand and explain them. It may not create a relationship we have with God, but it certainly enhances it. A seminar on Daniel and Revelation was what convinced me that the God that my father often talked about was real. Understanding our theology, prophecies, and history drew me even closer to Him.

However, there is also nothing wrong with not knowing the answers. Understanding the pre-Advent judgment is not about trying to score full marks during the "Pearly Gates Entrance Exams." When we realize the truth about the prophecies of Daniel, when we understand the reason behind the pre-Advent judgment, we will be filled with the knowledge and assurance that God will return and put things right.

Questions such as "Where is the justice in this world?" will be no more. Understanding the pre-Advent judgment is about giving us the ability to cling to the hope that God will come back soon, and bring His reward with Him—that of eternal life.

# What's Your Reward?

## EXPLORATION

Dan. 9:1–19; Rev. 22:12

## CONCLUDE

The books of Daniel and Revelation tell us that a judgment has begun. Those people judged righteous will receive a heavenly reward, but those judged sinful will be burned up by fire. Most of us recognize that we are sinful, so the judgment naturally makes us uncomfortable. Yet the fact that Jesus is our Judge and also our Advocate (defense attorney) should give us assurance—and make us want to live for Him and long for His coming.

## CONSIDER

- Sitting in on a public court session, such as traffic court. Observe the arguments and strategies people use to defend themselves, as well as the reactions of the judge.
- Looking through a family photo album and reflecting on people who have shown grace to you.
- Interviewing parents with this question: What is the most effective way your children have of escaping punishment?
- Making a list of reasons God should take you to heaven when He comes and another list of reasons He shouldn't. Consider the lists, and then read 1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Colossians 3:1–14.
- Building a fire in a campfire pit or fireplace. Think about the positive aspects of fire.
- Singing "Amazing Grace," thinking about how dramatically God's grace has changed your life and future.
- Creating a sign to put on your mirror or refrigerator that says, "His grace is sufficient for me."

## CONNECT

*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 896, 989, 990; C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 1, pp. 194–197.

# The Gospel and Judgment



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“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1, NKJV).

# The Good News

## INTRODUCTION

Rev. 7:9, 10

Canvassing is interestingly full of experiences. I really love it. One time in Benin, I was passing through a lane and out from a cubicle from a nearby building came a shout. The person was dressed in an army uniform. He shouted at me furiously in French. I kept on moving toward him slowly, thinking that he had something to tell me. I didn't understand him. He stopped shouting.

A man on a motorbike entering the yard shouted at me in French. I responded, "I don't understand French." He then spoke English, "No civilian is allowed to walk through this lane." Little did I know that I was walking through an army's precinct. I was frightened. The only thing I could do was to walk back into another street.

Why do human beings tremble when we find ourselves in trouble? The military officer simply wanted to keep me away from danger.

This is not God's intention about the judgment. He doesn't intend to keep us under pressure and fear. Absolutely not! The gospel of the judgment is not a threat. Rather it is good news. It reveals God's love and care for our fallen planet throughout generations. One day He will destroy sin and all wickedness and restore righteousness and eternal life.

**This is not God's intention  
about the judgment.**

This is exactly what John saw ahead of time. He saw our victory over the judgment trial. He saw Christ's ability to save His own. John records that "I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever'" (Rev. 7:9-12, NKJV).

There is no fear for tomorrow because you are among the multitude. To us who knew our God, the gospel of the judgment is indeed good news. Our God is good all the time.

# No Vain Conversation

## LOGOS

Leviticus 16; Rom. 8:1, 34; Heb. 6:20; 7:25; 9:24; 1 Pet. 1:2, 18, 19

Seldom have I seen a sadder picture of human futility. Not just because it was an image from a recent funeral. And not just because the world press so prominently featured the photograph of three ostensibly Protestant American presidents bowing before the lifeless body of a Roman Catholic pontiff—a sad enough compromise of history. But sad because in death is revealed the all-too-human reality of the claims of a church system that upholds tradition to a fault. All the golden vestment and trappings of power cannot disguise the mortal futility of thinking that our spiritual security can be found in humanity.

The apostle Peter was a fisherman humbled by his denial of Christ in a crisis, not a man to put on airs or claim much beyond the Lord's forgiveness. I think he would be horrified to think that anyone might call him Peter I. He knew the basis of our redemption. We can have no faith in a "dress-up" Christianity that looks to human trappings rather than spiritual realities. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things," he wrote, "like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18, NKJV).

**One national magazine called him "a prophet and a priest" for our time.**

Vain conversation has to encompass all the human inventions of ecclesiastical privilege. It cuts to the heart of the issue of whether anything human beings can do can merit salvation. What authority can human leaders exercise that is not available to all in the person and work of Jesus Christ? Peter was candid to the Source: "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (verse 19, NKJV).

A big part of the tradition of man has been to set up a priestly system that came to claim power over the spiritual standing and eternal destiny of human beings. That is against the direct language of the Bible. Paul spoke of the hope we all have in a Jesus "within the veil" (Heb. 6:19, KJV). It was a reference to the high priest of Old Testament times going into the part of the temple that represented—indeed was—the very presence of God. "Where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (verse 20, NKJV). Protestants should know, as Peter and Paul here remind us, that in these latter days the only High Priest is Jesus. He fulfilled the ceremonies of the ancient priestly ritual in Himself and His redeeming acts. Now the ceremonies of



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priesthood can come only under the “vain conversation” of “tradition.”

On the passing of Pope John Paul II, one national magazine called him “a prophet and a priest” for our time. No doubt they were partly led to this hyperbole by the apparent piety of the man rather than the rather haughty claims of the office. God shall judge the heart of the man Karol Wojtyla, but the Bible is clear that the claims of the papal office are overreaching to say the least—even blasphemous, pushed to the extent that popes have from time to time. Salvation, merit, cannot be dispensed, withheld, or redefined by any human being or human office. Paul is clear on the absolute efficacy of what Jesus did for us: “He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (7:25, NKJV).

Engraved on the end of the pope's coffin was a capital M for Mary—his hope for intercession. Unfortunately Mary, like Karol, is dead and resting in the grave. Only One is “ever-living” (Rom. 1:23, NLT) and able to make a saving intercession for us all: Jesus Christ.

Some years ago I visited Rome, and while overwhelmed by the architectural magnificence of St. Peter's Basilica, I was troubled by its ghoulish reminders of mortality. Tucked away in various alcoves are the mummified bodies of an array of priests, popes, and other long-dead pretenders. When I heard that this latest pope was to be interred in the crypt under the cathedral, it almost seemed a human charity to put him away from such a prospect.

Paul reminds us that for Christians the hope is in an empty tomb. “Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb. 9:24, NKJV).

It is more than a little sad that two centuries after Jesus came and died for our sins and removed the condemnation that was over all humankind, the largest claimant to the Christian continuum, the present Pope Benedict XVI, should have been Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, otherwise known as the Holy Inquisition. What the office intends to do now we do not know beyond its insistence on doctrinal conformity within Catholicism. What is a reality, though, is the sad record through the centuries to compel men to the dictates of the church—and the Inquisition played a sometimes violent and bloody role in that sad history of compulsion. How unfortunate that men, even men of “faith,” have so often failed to realize that Jesus meant it for all of us when He told the woman taken in sin that “‘Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more’” (John 8:11, NKJV).

## **REACT**

1. How do we sometimes confuse the “legality” of what God did for us and the “practicality” of how He expects us to respond?
2. How can we warn a sinful world without resorting to a “hellfire and damnation” message?
3. How can we warn a sinful world without alienating devout Catholics?

## TESTIMONY

Leviticus 16; Rom. 8:1

There is truth—that nebulous twisting of enough fabrication to look like it is real—and then there is *truth*. Humans like misunderstanding Scripture because it feeds our sense of power. Perhaps that is why God sends prophets: to clarify what we choose to misunderstand.

When we choose to look beyond our selfish selves, we recognize the extreme lengths God takes to ensure that we are reunited with Him. Christ took, upon Himself, the responsibility of our sins. He then chose to stand in our place, to atone individually for us, allowing us opportunity to reach beyond sin and connect with God. The signs are all there!

"These types were fulfilled, not only as to the event, but as to the time. On the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, the very day and month on which, for fifteen long centuries, the Passover lamb had been slain, Christ, having eaten the Passover with his disciples, instituted that feast which was to commemorate his

own death as 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.'

### Humans like misunderstanding Scripture.

"In like manner, the types which relate to the second advent must be fulfilled at the time pointed out in the symbolic service. Under the Mosaic

system, the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the great day of atonement, occurred on the tenth day of the seventh Jewish month, [Lev. 16:29–34] when the high priest, having made an atonement for all Israel, and thus removed their sins from the sanctuary, came forth and blessed the people. So it was believed that Christ, our great High Priest, would appear to purify the earth by the destruction of sin and sinners, and to bless his waiting people with immortality. The tenth day of the seventh month, the great day of atonement, the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which in the year 1844 fell upon the 22d of October, was regarded as the time of the Lord's coming. This was in harmony with the proofs already presented that the 2300 days would terminate in the autumn, and the conclusion seemed irresistible."\*

God chooses to live, and deal, with humans by His created time; each event at a particular time with enough announcement for all to know it is going to happen. The Day of Atonement and 1844 is no different for those who are seeking truth.

\**The Great Controversy*, p. 399.

# Parakletos

## EVIDENCE

2 Cor. 8:7

"It had been predicted that Jesus would be betrayed by one of His close followers (John 17:12; Acts 1:16, 17, 20). Even though Judas, at the start, was chosen on an equal basis along with the other 11, in time he began to give signs of the direction he was taking (John 6:70). Finally, he rejected Jesus' teaching and began to think that by offering bread to Judas, Jesus was extending one last gesture of grace and of friendship to his wayward disciple. If so, Judas took the bread but did not repent of the deed he planned to do. From that moment on, Judas submitted himself to the destructive influence of Satan."<sup>1</sup>

Grace has always come to us in diversified ways. But rarely do we take hold of it. The love of God is His grace toward humankind. Judas didn't reject Christ's teachings and grace only, but he rejected the Savior and the Lawyer of the supreme heavenly court.

"Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Counselor (John 14:26) or the Comforter (KJV). Actually in John 14:16 Jesus called Him another Counselor, meaning another Counselor in addition to Himself.

**Jesus is the Friend who  
loves in all seasons.**

The underlying Greek word is *parakletos*, *paraklete*, meaning 'a person who is called to someone's aid.' In 1 John 2:1, Jesus is called our Advocate, a person called on to help someone who is facing a courtroom trial. The underlying Greek word is again *parakletos*, "*paraklete*." Jesus is our *paraklete*, the special person whom we are invited to call on for help whenever we need it."<sup>2</sup>

We have a Friend better than any best friend we have on Earth. Jesus is the Friend who loves in all seasons. Even in the heavenly courtroom He is our Defender and Spokesman. Friends have disappointed us. Our siblings have even cheated us. We, too, as friends have deceived our dear ones many times. However, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore (Heb. 13:8).

Jesus has ever been a faithful Master (Rev. 2:1). He is reconciling us unto God. He desires that we escape the terrible wrath of God (Rom. 1:18). He is the right Man in the heavenly courtroom (Heb. 5:15). There is no need to fear the trial of the judgment because we have a qualified, eloquent, and able Man to fight our case for us. Unlike Judas, let us abide in the presence of Christ and enjoy His grace to vindicate us in the judgment.

1. *Quest Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House), p. 1547.

2. C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares*, vol. 2.

## HOW-TO

Heb. 9:27

"Death ends all sorrow." Is this statement true?

The Bible refers to the judgment more than a thousand times. This shows its importance in the Christian life. Humankind goes through a progression: birth, life, and death. Paul says that "it is appointed for men to die once" (Heb. 9:27, NKJV).

The question then comes, "After death, what next?" "After I have lived my life of total enjoyment of sinful treasures; after the people I have cheated; after the houses I have built; after all my achievements; what happens when I die?" The answer comes immediately and clearly: the judgment.

This judgment will determine which type of resurrection one is going to go through—resurrection unto life or resurrection unto death. After death, we will be part of the first resurrection or the second death. The first death will touch everyone because of sin. It is after death, or "sleep," that we are rewarded according as we have lived our lives.

**It is not by our righteousness but by God's grace that we are accounted righteous.**

The judgment books will be opened. The book of life has names of committed Christians. A record is also kept of unconfessed and unforsaken sins. These records will consequently determine our place. How can Christians be part of the first

resurrection and not the second resurrection?

**1. Remain in the faith.** "We who are alive and remain shall be caught up" (1 Thess. 4:17, NKJV) to meet Christ. He that endures to the end shall be saved. God delights in seasoned Christians, those who endure to the end, those who will bear the cross with Christ to Calvary. Let us keep burning the flame of the Christian faith, for surely we shall be resurrected with Christ to the eternal kingdom.

**2. Trust in God's power.** We should bear in mind that it is not by our righteousness but by God's grace and mercy that we are accounted righteous before God. Therefore, we must have a total reliance on "Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24, NKJV).

Knowing these concepts of judgment after death should raise our spirits high as Christians and make us conscious of this question: "After death, what?" Indeed death does end all for one group but is not able to touch another group. In which group are you?

# God Cares

## OPINION

Heb. 4:14

*"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Heb. 4:14, NKJV).*

My experience with God has been wonderful. At first I didn't understand how God could allow the innocent to suffer. I wept and prayed desperately to God, thinking He had forsaken me. After I had wept, I sat down quietly to think about how to solve the problem of suffering. I realized that there was nothing I could do to find a solution. It was then that I heard a soft voice saying to me, "My grace is sufficient for you." Since then this small voice has been my Guide, and all my problems are now in the hands of God. And I no longer fear the judgment because God cares for me.

Following the Great Disappointment of 1844, the members of the Adventist movement were bitterly smitten to the core. Some thought they had been deceived. Others lost faith in the second advent of Christ. I can imagine some wondering how they could start afresh, since they had sold and given everything away. Can you imagine William Miller's agony while he revisited the Bible to know the how and why of the issue?

**Some thought they had  
been deceived.**

God cares for us. He has ever expressed His love and mercy for

us. In the Garden of Eden He kept on calling Adam to come to Him. He was with Noah amid that terrible global crisis. He covered the Israelites with the shadow of His wings through the Red Sea. In the fiery furnace and the lions' den, He was there. In Stephen's crisis, He was there. In the trials of the early Christians, He strengthened them. And after the midnight cry, He reaffirmed His love and grace to His people. Heaven was opened to Hiram Edson, and He saw Christ earnestly working for the salvation of souls. He is making redemption for His beloved people who are waiting for His second appearance.

Our God has beautiful plans for us. In spite of the troubles of this world, the gospel of the judgment presents a wonderful picture of our loving Lord. Provision is in progress for our redemption.

Let us patiently endure the trials of the day and the night. Beyond the midnight there is morning. Something beautiful and wonderful is coming for us. All the suffering we are going through is but temporary. Unto all those who read this, God has done it for me and He will do it for you also.



## EXPLORATION

Heb. 6:19, 20

## CONCLUDE

In the Christian interpretation of the Jewish sacrificial system, Jesus Christ becomes both the Sacrificial Lamb and the Priest who makes a sacrifice to God on behalf of the people. Jesus is our Perfect Sacrifice, our Judge, and our only Mediator. We need no priests, no saints—no one but Jesus to stand before the Father on our behalf. If we place our trust in His sacrifice, we can approach God with confidence.

## CONSIDER

- Taking a child to a farm or petting zoo where you can see sheep and lambs. Reflect on how it must have felt to offer an innocent animal for sacrifice. What does this tell us about the seriousness of sin and God's ability to forgive?
- Painting a picture that represents how you see Jesus interceding with God for us.
- Talking to a Roman Catholic friend about how they understand the role of the priest, the saints, or the virgin Mary as intercessors. Reflect on how this differs from the Protestant view of Jesus as our only Intercessor. Can your Catholic friend's insights enrich your understanding of what "intercession" means?
- Writing an imaginative dialogue in which Jesus stands before the Father in judgment interceding on your behalf, with Satan in the role of accuser. What can Jesus say to win your acquittal?
- Singing or playing a hymn or gospel song about Jesus' atonement, such as "Power in the Blood" or "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power," or "There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood." Reflect on why the image of Jesus' blood is so powerful for Christians.
- Researching on the Internet the role of blood in the healthy mammalian life.
- Composing a prayer of thanks to Jesus for His work as our High Priest.

## CONNECT

*The Great Controversy*, chaps. 23; 24.

# The meaning of the Judgment Today



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“ ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (Rev. 14:7, NKJV).

# Cross-Eyed Christians

## INTRODUCTION

Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:14–18

Some friends and I were at dinner when our conversation turned to matters of the church, the education system, and the need to remain relevant and current in today's society while maintaining our faith and values. The minister among us said one of the things we need to do is to become "cross-eyed" Christians, and he went on to explain that Seventh-day Adventist Christians should keep their eyes focused on the kingdom of God while they live and work for the saving of souls on this earth.

As I thought about the matter of being cross-eyed, I realize that the general layman's view of individuals who are cross-eyed is that they need an ophthalmologist to determine the problem and to correct their sight. They seem to need help in discernment. Do we have a similar problem? Are we seeing through a glass darkly (Paul) and need God's help by studying the Holy Scriptures? During this quarter have we understood more fully humanity's rebellion and the part played by Satan

both in heaven and on earth? Do we understand God's law, the plan of salvation, and the great controversy? Do we, too, need corrective lenses—the eye salve of God's grace, to allow us to see through spiritual eyes?

### Are we seeing through a glass darkly?

The first angel's message of Revelation 14:7 speaks to God's judgment and the need for men to fear and worship Him. This fear is *a reverential* worship, not a state of being afraid. As we await the Second Coming, we should in retrospect look at the 1844 judgment and see the events leading to Christ's death for us on the cross of Calvary. Do we appreciate the sacrifice paid for us by our loving Lord? Do we understand Christ's intercessory ministry for us and His longing to have us home with Him in glory?

Shouldn't we all therefore be cross-eyed—looking at the cross with the eye of faith, and the Christ of the cross as He hung between heaven and earth? Let us understand Christ's sacrifice for our sins so that we can by believing become changed and escape the judgment prepared for the wicked.

As we look back at the Great Disappointment and the revelation that the church received, we should see more clearly the meaning of the earthly sanctuary and the corresponding heavenly sanctuary and the meaning of the judgment that began in 1844. Let us explore some more the gospel of Jesus Christ, His salvation for all of us sinners, the meaning of the judgment, and its relevance to us in this twenty-first century.

# The Pre-Advent Judgment

## EVIDENCE

Dan. 7:9, 10; 8:14

Jesus the Messiah shows up in the book of Daniel (7–9) within the context of the pre-Advent judgment. The prophecy of Daniel 7 covers the same historical period as Daniel 2. The former outlines the course of history from Babylon (7:4), through the Medo-Persian Empire (a bear, verse 5), Greece (a leopard, verse 6), and Rome (a dreadful beast, verse 7).

The judgment is introduced in Daniel 7:9, 10. The pre-Advent judgment in Daniel 8 carries forward and enlarges upon the vision of Daniel 7. It complements chapters 2 and 7, and Daniel 8 carries the prophetic timetable, the 2,300 evening(s), morning(s), and the “seventy weeks.” Daniel saw a ram and a goat. Jacques Doukhan asks the question, “Why this sudden retreat from the fantastic to the familiar, from the bizarre beasts representing pagan kingdoms to two ordinary animals classified as clean by Levitical laws?”<sup>1</sup> The fact is that their association becomes significant in the context of the greatest Jewish yearly festival, *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:5).

*Yom Kippur* had as its traditional sacrifice the dual offering of a ram and a goat. But Daniel looked beyond the Medo-Persian and Greek kingdoms to the Atonement.

Daniel 8:14 says: “Unto 2300 days then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” The Hebrew for “cleansed” is *sadaq*, which means “to be just” or “to be righteous.” Translators suggest other meanings, such as “be put right,” “be righted,” “be vindicated,” etc.<sup>2</sup> Based on the year-day principle, a symbolic day in prophecy represents a literal year in historic time. The seventy weeks (490 years) of Daniel 9:24 are divided into three parts:  $7 + 62 + 1 = 70$  (verses 25–27).

When the decree of Artaxerxes was given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem in 457 B. C., 69 weeks (483 years) extend to the baptism of Jesus in A.D. 27. The last prophetic week began in A.D. 27, and extended to the rejection of the Jews as God’s covenant people. The 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminated in 1844.

So what? The judgment is good news to the people of God.

**“Why this sudden retreat  
from the fantastic to the  
familiar?”**

1. Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 2000), p. 25.

2. *An Exhaustive Ellen White Commentary on Daniel*, (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assoc., 1980), vol. 1, p. 257.



# Reflections on the Judgment

## LOGOS

Job 1:7–11; Ps. 73:1–17; Matt. 5:16; John 14:2; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor. 4:5, 9; Eph. 2:8–10; 3:10; 1 Thess. 4:14–18; Rev. 22:12

### Harbingers of the Judgment (Rev. 22:12)

Over two thousand years ago, while on the island of Patmos, John recorded a solemn promise from Jesus: “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Rev. 22:12, NKJV). The Greek adverb *tachu*, which can be translated “quickly,” “swiftly,” “without delay,” and “soon,” occurs six times in the book of Revelation.

These references discuss warnings of judgment (2:16; 11:14) and the immediacy of Jesus’ return (3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). Since the pre-Advent judgment began in 1844, it is evident that the period of Christ’s “quickly” has arrived; once again in history, divine time has intersected human time. We are living in the interlude of the start of the judgment and the second advent of our Lord. Christ will return when

His judgment is finished. His message is clear: “I’m bringing my payroll with me. I’ll pay all people in full for their life’s work” (22:12, *The Message*).

**Making a living and surviving can be stressful.**

When Christians assess the state of the world, many believe that something extraordinary and cataclysmic is just ahead. The frequency and intensity of both natural and human-caused disasters are harbingers that the day of the Lord is upon us. Many of the signs foretold by Jesus (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) and Paul (1 Timothy 3) are announced and discussed around the world in print and television news headlines 24 hours a day. Paul says, “Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Rom. 13:11, NKJV).

### Preparation for the Judgment (Ps. 73:1–17)

Despite the harbingers that the pre-Advent judgment is drawing to a close and that the coming of Christ is near, many things are happening in the world that can distract us from Christ. Asaph, the minister of music in the temple during the days of Solomon, confessed at a point in his life that he almost lost his way: “As for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped” (Ps. 73:2, NKJV).

He was envious, jealous, and covetous when he observed the “prosperity of the wicked” (verse 3, NKJV). At the height of Asaph’s disillusionment with God, he



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declared that his conversion was a waste of time. There was no benefit to being a Christian: "I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence" (verse 13, NKJV).

Making a living and surviving can be stressful. Oftentimes, social, financial, and physical problems serve to stymie our spiritual formation and growth. Asaph did not yield to the temptations he faced; he continued his walk with God despite his doubts, and so should we. One day he went to church and received answers to his questions: "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end" (verse 17, NKJV). The wicked seem to prosper and the righteous suffer, but this will not always be the case. God has the last word and it is evident in the sanctuary: "Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?" (77:13, NKJV).

During these judgment-hour days, Christians must stay close to God and continue to practice the Christian disciplines of prayer, fasting, daily devotion, witnessing, and weekly fellowship with the members of the household of faith—the church. There we can receive strength to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:12, NKJV), especially as we "see the Day [of judgment] approaching" (Heb. 10:25, NKJV).

### **Expectation of Victory in the Judgment (Job 1:7–11; Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:8–10)**

When God hammers down His gavel at the conclusion of the judgment, Satan desires to see every member of the human race receive a verdict of condemnation. The book of Job chronicles his devious deeds against a man God held in high esteem: " 'He is the finest man in all the earth—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and will have nothing to do with evil' " (Job 1:8, NLT). The devil spared no effort to break Job's spirit by killing his family, destroying his property, and afflicting his body with a painful disease. God's grace strengthened him. Job's steadfastness and faith during the period of the trial are exemplary in the saga of salvation history. At the end of the ordeal, God honored him with a favorable decision and returned to him double what he had lost (42:10).

Like Job, our victory in the judgment is guaranteed. God through Christ has made every advantage available to us in order for us to succeed. "Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish!" (Eph. 2:8, *The Message*). This is wonderful news.

Today God desires us to expose the light of grace that Jesus purchased at the Cross with His own blood. He invites us to " 'let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven' " (Matt. 5:16, NKJV). In this way we are also helping others to get to know Jesus Christ and also receive assurance of victory in the judgment.

## What Will He Find?

### TESTIMONY

1 Cor. 4:5

"Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies, and there appears in the presence of God, to engage in the last acts of his ministration in behalf of man,—to perform the work of the investigative Judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits."

" 'A book of remembrance' is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of 'them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.' . . . In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. . . . The secret purposes and motives appear in unerring register; for God 'will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.' 1 Corinthians 4:5."<sup>2</sup>

**"Their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life."**

"Every man's work passes in review before God, and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of Heaven is entered, with terrible exactness, every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and

every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel."<sup>3</sup>

"All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of Heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life."<sup>4</sup>

1. *The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 481.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 482.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 483.

# Preparing to Meet Jesus

## HOW-TO

Heb. 4:14-16; 9:27; 1 John 4:16-19; Rev. 14:7

Adam and Eve were created in God's own image, and given a garden to care for while God cared for them. We know the story of the Fall and the promise, "I will put enmity between you and the woman" (Gen. 3:15, NKJV). Have you ever wondered how to prepare for the judgment and Christ's return?

**1. Learn God's will for your life.** His plan is that "whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:15, NKJV). What is it that needs to be done in order to obtain eternal life? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31, NKJV). This is a promise Christ is willing to fulfill in all our lives if we will let Him.

**2. Make time to pray.** Being in constant communion with God has its rewards. Prayer keeps you in touch with your Maker and offers hope not only for this life but for the life beyond. Make a list of the concerns or persons you want to pray about, and name each item as you call upon God to answer your prayer. Use a list or a calendar or some object to help you as you take your petitions to the Lord. Set aside specific times during the day when you open your heart to God as you would to your closest friend, and wait for God to answer you (Ps. 37:7).

**3. Study the Bible prophecies.** We must all be "doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22, NKJV), including the prophecies as outlined in the Scriptures. We're not to be like the people of Noah's time. God used Noah to warn the people of the antediluvian world, and He can use you if you will allow Him to help those around you prepare for the judgment and His second coming. In speaking about the Second Coming and the judgment, the psalmist states: "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people" (Ps. 50:3, 4, NKJV).

**4. Strive to win souls for the kingdom.** Let us remind people that God so loved the world that He gave His Son (John 3:16) and that God longs for the day when He will come to claim us and take us back home to heaven where we belong. He says He has gone to prepare many mansions to receive us (John 14:1-3). He is looking forward to coming back to take us home.

Have you ever wondered  
how to prepare for the  
judgment and Christ's  
return?

# Judgment! Says Who?

## OPINION

2 Cor. 5:10

The gospel—the good news; 1844—a date in history that theologians have delved into, and Adventists—those who look for the Second Coming—have by study and revelation realized that a judgment began in heaven. Judgment—a judicial decision after presentation of evidence, in which the Magistrate (Christ) will pronounce a legal decision for or against the accused.

The gospel of Jesus Christ brings to our consciousness both law and grace. The law is our schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24). It teaches us right from wrong. The law is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). And it reminds us that when we are free from sin we become “slaves of righteousness” (6:18, NKJV).

The sanctuary as portrayed in the Old Testament was a type of the heavenly sanctuary in which Christ ministers (Heb. 8:5; 1, 2). Our High Priest began His work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary after the end of the 2,300 days (Dan.

8:14). At the close of Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary, He will, like the earthly priest, come out of the temple and “will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Heb. 9:28, NKJV).

### Cynicism has become part of our way of life.

Cynicism has become part of our way of life, and we equate the earthly judicial system with the heavenly. We have become accustomed to the courthouse scenes as they are played out on television as serials, or of high-profile cases with well-known personalities. Judgment in our earthly courts in some cases is seen as a farce. We sneer at the reports and declare: “Judgment! Says who?”

God’s judgment is just. He doesn’t have to rely on third-party evidence to make a decision. The Bible says we shall all “appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10, NKJV), and we are reminded that “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me” (Rev. 22:12, NKJV). We have been told that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23, NKJV), and we have been given the opportunity to choose.

Jesus didn’t tell us when He plans to return. Jesus says that the “day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only” (Matt. 24:36, NKJV), but He has given us warning signs—wars and rumors of wars (verse 7), tsunamis, earthquakes. We must commit ourselves to God because we don’t know when it will be our time to face the judgment.

# "We, the Jury, Find the Defendant . . ."

## EXPLORATION

Ps. 73:17; Dan. 7:9; 1 Cor. 4:5

## CONCLUDE

Gathering evidence for a trial, particularly one in which the death penalty may be involved, can take months or years. Lives are interrupted or put on hold. Outsiders speculate. Families worry. Resources are drained. For those who know where they stand—for those with top-notch attorneys and truth on their side, the trial and the verdict will be a relief. Months of agonized waiting will be over, accusers will be silenced, and new lives will begin. It is no wonder, then, that the Bible ends with the promise that the judgment will come soon.

## CONSIDER

- Visiting a courthouse or watching some of a trial on television. How would proceedings change if the defendant were the son or daughter of the judge? How would it change your view of the judgment if you knew your mother or father were in charge of the decision?
- Writing and performing a short play that puts God and/or Job on trial. The only available witnesses and testimony are those found in the book of Job.
- Drawing/painting/sculpting a visual representation of Daniel 7:9, 10. Note the differences between the final pieces, and find a place to display them at your church or in your community.
- Using statistics from the Internet or history books to create a timeline noting major wars, natural disasters, catastrophes, etc. Think about these questions: Is history cyclical? Do we live in unique times?
- Reading and thinking about Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's quotation: "If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we would find in each person's life, sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility."

## CONNECT

*Reversed Thunder: The Revelation of John and the Praying Imagination* by Eugene Peterson.

*The Trial of God*, a play by Elie Wiesel.

"Waiting for the Barbarians," by Constantine Cavafy <<http://users.hol.gr/~barbanis/cavafy/barbarians.html>>



## Next Quarter's Lessons

# Genesis: Creation and Redemption

If you have not received a copy of *CQ* for fourth quarter 2006, here is a summary of the first two lessons:

### Lesson 1: Foundations

**Logos:** Matt. 19:3–8; Luke 17:26–30; Acts 7:1–15; Rom. 1:17; 4:3; 5:14; Heb. 11:1–22

**Memory Text:** “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps. 11:3).

We all build upon foundations. In the most literal sense, we build our lives upon the rocks beneath our feet; but in another, we build our lives around the principles that govern us. Atheists, religious fanatics, skeptics, scientists—everyone governs their lives by fundamental principles, whether they acknowledge those principles or not.

As Christians, our principles are found in and through the person of Jesus Christ, the One in whom “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

### Lesson 2: “In the Beginning . . .”

**Logos:** Genesis 1

**Memory Text:** “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:6, 9).

On the topic of human origins, a famous scientist wrote: “We’re here because one odd group of fishes had a peculiar fin anatomy that could transform into legs for terrestrial creatures.”

The Bible, of course—particularly the first two chapters of Genesis—gives a completely different account of our origins: We’re here only because a loving, benevolent Creator-God purposely created life on earth in a process that took six literal contiguous 24-hour days.

It is pretty obvious that modern evolutionary theory stands in blatant opposition to the biblical account of Creation. If one is correct, the other has to be wrong. Even more so, the Bible offers no wiggle room for theistic evolution or any theories that seek to intergrade a long evolutionary process with the work of God in creating life on earth, especially human life.

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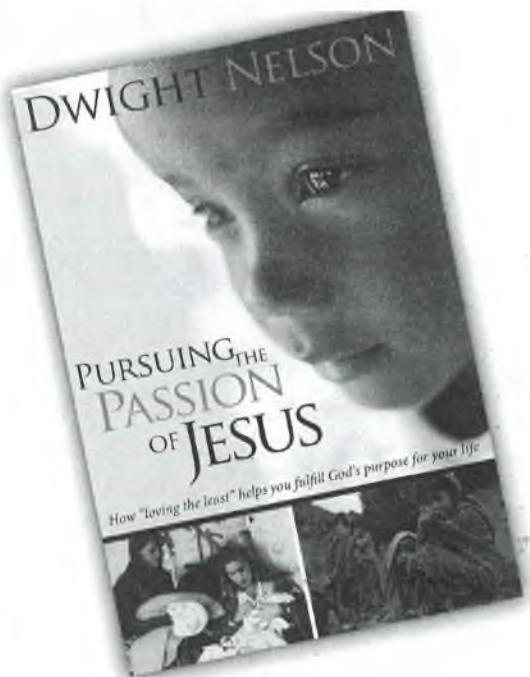
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# MISSION PROFILE



## Linden Millist

Linden Millist spent ten years in Papua New Guinea, where his father was a pastor and a pilot. Linden loved to hang around the hangar and fly with his dad to isolated areas of Papua New Guinea. When his family returned to Australia, Linden earned his pilot's license and studied aircraft engineering.

His future looked bright as he started working with an aircraft engineering firm. Then a telephone call changed everything. Would he be willing to leave a lucrative job and return to Papua New Guinea to be the chief engineer for Adventist Aviation Services, to maintain the aging aircraft that carried pastors and lay workers to otherwise inaccessible areas of this mountainous island nation?

Then Linden's parents received a similar call asking his father to return to Papua New Guinea as chief pilot.

Linden's first job was to rebuild Adventist Aviation's only aircraft, an aging single-engine Cessna. The need was urgent; lives were at risk, and churches were unserved while the plane was grounded.

**Part of this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering** will help provide a new, more reliable aircraft for Papua New Guinea. Read more about the needs and the passion of the Adventist Aviation Service in Papua New Guinea in this quarter's *Mission* or online at [www.adventistmission.org](http://www.adventistmission.org).



## South Pacific Division

*Where legally possible, offerings will go to this division; otherwise special arrangement will be made with the General Conference for distribution of funds based on the laws of the countries where these offerings are collected.*



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