

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – The Judging Process – 17-23 December 2022

Christ would have us understand the judgment process, when and how all must be judged. Paul testifies, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). In this statement there is no exception, for it is written, “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11). This being the case, it is the strongest reason why we should not judge and condemn one another. Romans 14:10 gives the fact that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ as the reason why we should not judge nor despise a brother. “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). Notice, each one is to give account of himself, and not of somebody else, to God. In standing before the judgment seat of Christ, we are giving account to God, for Christ is the representative of Divinity in the judgment, as well as in all things. “For the Father judges no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:22-23). One reason why we should not judge, is that God is the judge. Another is, that “He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained” (Acts 17:31). The Father Himself judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. But even the Son does not sit in judgment now; for He says, “If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47). Therefore, he who presumes to sit in judgment now, not only usurps the place of God, but gets ahead of Him. There will be a time when judgment will be committed to the saints of the Most High, but it will be only when the saints possess the kingdom (see Daniel 7:22). And those to whom judgment is committed will all be saints (see 1 Corinthians 6:2). None are to judge, except those who are without sin. The man who judges, therefore, declares himself to be without sin. But God is the only one whose testimony in this respect is of any worth; “For not he that commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends” (2 Corinthians 10:18). “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come” (1 Corinthians 4:5).

Sunday: The Final Judgment – How do you understand the final judgment? ‘But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to “magnify the law” and to “make it honorable.” Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God’s law is unchangeable. Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up His life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable. And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe — what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do — that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God.’ {GC 503.1}. ‘In the final execution of the judgment it will be seen that no cause for sin exists. When the Judge of all the earth shall demand of Satan, “Why hast thou rebelled against Me, and robbed Me of the subjects of My kingdom?” the originator of evil can render no excuse. Every mouth will be stopped, and all the hosts of rebellion will be speechless.’ {GC 503.2}.

Monday: The Pre-Advent Judgment – When is Investigative Judgment? ‘In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. “Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?” 1 Peter 4:17.’ {GC 480.1}. ‘The work of the investigative judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be

blotted out “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ.” Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be’ {GC 485.2}.

Tuesday: The Millennial Judgment – How do you understand millennial judgment? We read: ‘During the thousand years between the first and the second resurrection the judgment of the wicked takes place. The apostle Paul points to this judgment as an event that follows the second advent. “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” 1 Corinthians 4:5. Daniel declares that when the Ancient of Days came, “judgment was given to the saints of the Most High.” Daniel 7:22. At this time the righteous reign as kings and priests unto God. John in the Revelation says: “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” “They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4, 6. It is at this time that, as foretold by Paul, “the saints shall judge the world.” 1 Corinthians 6:2. In union with Christ they judge the wicked, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Bible, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. Then the portion which the wicked must suffer is meted out, according to their works; and it is recorded against their names in the book of death.’ {GC 660.4}. ‘Satan also and evil angels are judged by Christ and His people. Says Paul: “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” Verse 3. And Jude declares that “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” Jude 6.’ – EG White {GC 661.1}.

Wednesday: The Executive Judgment – How do you understand the ‘final’ or executive judgement? EG White says: ‘At the close of the thousand years, Christ again returns to the earth. He is accompanied by the host of the redeemed and attended by a retinue of angels. As He descends in terrific majesty He bids the wicked dead arise to receive their doom. They come forth, a mighty host, numberless as the sands of the sea. What a contrast to those who were raised at the first resurrection! The righteous were clothed with immortal youth and beauty. The wicked bear the traces of disease and death.’ {GC 662.1}. ‘Every eye in that vast multitude is turned to behold the glory of the Son of God. With one voice the wicked hosts exclaim: “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!” It is not love to Jesus that inspires this utterance. The force of truth urges the words from unwilling lips. As the wicked went into their graves, so they come forth with the same enmity to Christ and the same spirit of rebellion. They are to have no new probation in which to remedy the defects of their past lives. Nothing would be gained by this. A lifetime of transgression has not softened their hearts. A second probation, were it given them, would be occupied as was the first in evading the requirements of God and exciting rebellion against Him.’ {GC 662.2}.

Thursday: The Second Death – How do you understand the second death? In the book *The Great Controversy*, EG White says: ‘In consequence of Adam's sin, death passed upon the whole human race. All alike go down into the grave. And through the provisions of the plan of salvation, all are to be brought forth from their graves. “There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust;” “for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22. But a distinction is made between the two classes that are brought forth. “All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. They who have been “accounted worthy” of the resurrection of life are “blessed and holy.” “On such the second death hath no power.” Revelation 20:6. But those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression — “the wages of sin.” They suffer punishment varying in duration and intensity, “according to their works,” but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited and of which he has proved himself unworthy. Says an inspired writer: “Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.” And another declares: “They shall be as though they had not been.” Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 16. Covered with infamy, they sink into hopeless, eternal oblivion.’ – Ellen G White {GC 544.2}.