

“Prepare to Meet Thy God!”



*The Hour of His
Judgment Has Come*

**Who Can Stand?
Study Guide**

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Introduction



The Judgment of the living is a time of special intimacy between God and His people. Jesus draws very near to us as He walks with us through the pages of our lives.

What does Jesus see as He looks at your life's record? He sees the painful experiences you have had—the rejection, abuse and unkindness by others. He sees your tears and sufferings, and even the things you may have forgotten. He sees the wrong choices that you have made. He sees, He knows, and He cares. He wants to free you from the hurts and mistakes. He wants to cleanse you from

Introduction (continued)

everything that Satan has done to you. He assures you that He has always been there for you although you may not have sensed His presence at the time. Throughout your lifetime, He has been guiding and directing every detail of your life. Not even for one moment did He ever lose sight of you and the special blueprint (the plan for your life) He gave you. Will you walk with Him through the pages of your life, let Him wash away all the dross and give you a new, clean heart?

If you cooperate with Him, you will understand and experience the work of Jesus for you in the Most Holy Place. The judgment of the living is now in progress, and He is calling you to a fully-cleansed life of victory in Christ. Will you open your heart to the light streaming from the open door of the second apartment of the sanctuary and accept His invitation to the wedding of the Lamb?

1

What is the description of the judgment scene as depicted by the prophet Daniel? What is its purpose?

“I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:9, 10).

“Thus was presented to the prophet’s vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered ‘according to his works.’ The Ancient of Days is God the Father. ... And holy angels as ministers and witnesses, in number ‘ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,’ attend this great tribunal” (GC 479).

“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. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13, 14).

“The coming of Christ here described is not His Second Coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in Heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator. It is this coming, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, and there appears in the presence of God ... to perform the work of investigative judgment, and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits” (Mar 249).

2

What are the two phases of the investigative judgment?

“It is He [Jesus] who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42).

“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 cases 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. ...

“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” (FLB 212).

Note: The judgment begins with those who have fallen asleep in Jesus and have been resting in the grave awaiting the resurrection day. Then God moves on to the cases of the living.

3

Why have Seventh-day Adventists been afraid of facing the judgment?

1. **Because we have believed that we would never know when the judgment of the living would commence.**

“We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart” (GC 489, 490).

“Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review” (GC 490). Is it possible that we may be able to know when this process has begun for us individually?

2. **Because we have not understood that the judgment of the living is a process which precedes the final pronouncement (Revelation 22:11).**

At one time in our denominational history, it was portrayed that when Jesus came to your name He would judge you and declare you to be saved or lost. Not until the plagues fell would it become apparent whether you were saved or lost. This was a most terrible view of the judgment, yet many of us still remember this interpretation being preached in our pulpits. One can readily see how this view of the judgment could cause it to become a rather unpopular doctrine, for it produced several generations who feared God’s actions in the judgment. As we see now, it is apparent that none other than our enemy could have been responsible for such a distortion of truth.

3. **Because we have believed that the judgment takes away our security of salvation in Christ.**

This is another deception of the enemy that has caused fear among God's people. During the judgment of the living, the Christian is not robbed of his assurance of salvation nor is the efficacy of the cross thereby diminished. Jesus is still our Substitute, our Mediator and Advocate before the Father, and is pleading His blood on our behalf.

As the Holy Spirit reveals wrong thoughts and feelings that need to be cleansed, we are still covered by His grace until we have had all the light we need to understand the issues involved, and are given the opportunity to confess, repent and have these sins blotted out. If a person chooses to be rebellious by refusing to give up his unchristlike thoughts, feelings, inclinations and impulses, this intense struggle can cause some to fall away, as depicted in *Early Writings*, pages 269-271.

When we have fully surrendered our lives to Jesus and are living up to all the light we presently understand, we can be assured of eternal life. (See 1 John 5:13.) We are always judged according to the light that God has caused to shine upon our pathway.

When we are discussing the doctrine of the judgment of the living, we are not addressing the issue of salvation (justification) which prepares us to be among the resurrected righteous, but rather we are addressing a much deeper experience of purification which is needed in order to live during the time of trouble without an intercessor. We need to recognize that the power of sin is proportionate to the deceptions and lies we are still believing about God, ourselves, and others.

The key point to remember is that whatever is stored in our minds from past decisions and experiences or inherited tendencies to sin, still require the cleansing blood of Jesus to cover us. It is these which must be seen and put away before He ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above.

“Everything that is imperfect in us will have been seen and put away” (3SM 427).

“Those who hold fast their faith unto the end will come forth from the furnace of trial as fine gold seven times purified” (UL 292).

“If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image” (DA 302).

4. Because we may not be personally going through this experience, it is easy to conclude that there is no one else going through this process.

There are many Seventh-day Adventist who have shared with us their experiences where God is bringing to their memory sins of the past. God’s Spirit then connects their present failures with wrong choices and sins committed in the past. These are seen, confessed and covered by the blood of Jesus.

By learning to cooperate with God in this work of self-examination, they are no longer afraid of His work in their lives. In this way, they are prepared for the time when Jesus ceases His intercession in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary when there is no more blood available to cover sin.

4 Why will some believers recognize the time when Jesus comes to their name and others will not know?

Those who recognize their time have heeded the admonition of Jesus penned in Mark and Revelation, “Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is” (Mark 13:33). “Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you” (Revelation 3:3). “Watch therefore ... lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” (Mark 13:35-37).

Note: This text says that if we do not watch, we will not know. But what about those who do watch? Then their hearts will be open to the work Jesus is doing in the Most Holy Place in the sanctuary.

In the book *The Great Controversy*, these texts are quoted in connection with the judgment of the living and the close of probation. Those who are watching and preparing for the time when probation closes, will be enabled to cooperate with Jesus in this work of cleansing. Then they will be among those who have washed their robes of character in the blood of the Lamb. They will be prepared to meet the King of glory because of the efficaciousness of the final atonement.

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. ... Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man’s destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy’s offer to guilty men” (GC 490, 491).

5

What is the condition of the human heart that needs to be cleansed?

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9).

“The work of restoration can never be thorough unless the roots of evil are reached. Again and again the shoots have been clipped, while the root of bitterness has been left to spring up and defile many; but the very depth of the hidden evil must be reached, the moral senses must be judged, and judged again, in the light of the divine presence. The daily life will testify whether or not the work is genuine” (5BC 1152).

Note: This is the reason why the Holy Spirit has to shine upon our hearts and minds, and reveal to us where we are not like Jesus—where we are not in agreement with the principles and the spirit of the law. David speaks about hidden faults in Psalm 19:12 (NASB), “Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults.” In Hebrews 12:15, we are warned of bitter roots that are the cause of so much trouble in our relationships with others. Jesus wants to reveal these to us and then free us from all our errors and faults.

“The tops have been cut down, but the roots have never been eradicated, and they still bear their unholy fruit to poison the judgment, pervert the perceptions, and blind the understanding of those with whom you connect, in regard to the message and the messengers. When, by thorough confession, you destroy the root of bitterness, you will see light in God’s light. Without this thorough work you will never clear your souls” (LS 326).

6

Does Jesus draw near to His people who are seeking Him in this cleansing and purifying process?

“And 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 launderers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness. ... And I will come near you for judgment” (Malachi 3:1-3, 5).

“In this scripture is portrayed a refining, purifying process, to be carried on in the hearts of men by the Lord of hosts. The process is most trying to the soul, but it is only by this means that the dross can be removed. Of necessity we must endure trials; for through these we are brought close to our heavenly Father, in obedience to His will, that

we may render to Him an offering in righteousness. ... The Master sees wherein we need to be purified for His heavenly kingdom. He will not leave us in the furnace until we are wholly consumed. As a refiner and purifier of silver, He is beholding His children, watching the process of purification, until He shall discern His image reflected in us. Although we often feel affliction's flame kindling about us, and at times fear that we shall be utterly consumed, yet the loving-kindness of God is just as great toward us at these times as when we are free in spirit and triumphing in Him. The furnace is to purify and refine, but not to consume and destroy. God in His providence would try us, to purify us as the sons of Levi, that we may offer to Him an offering in righteousness" (4BC 1181, 1182).

Note: Jesus is not in some distant place far removed from His people when He takes us through this process of the judgment. He does not examine our lives in secret and then make some celestial pronouncement regarding our case, but walks with us step by step in this journey. Let us remember that when the heavenly records are opened and He comes to our name, He reveals to us what is written there. Then He gives us a choice whether or not we will give Him our sins and unchristlikeness, and be cleansed by His blood. Jesus does nothing in His cleansing work in Heaven that does not reflect what He is also doing in purifying our lives here on earth.

7

How do we cooperate with Jesus in this process?

“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

“We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their

souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. ... There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. ... Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (GC 489).

“The Lord does nothing without our cooperation” (2SM 236). Our main emphasis is on the cooperative, participatory work of God’s people with Jesus as High Priest.

“Every follower of Christ should daily examine himself, that he may become perfectly acquainted with his own conduct. There is with nearly all a neglect of self-examination. ... If [Christians] would make the actions of each day a subject of careful thought and deliberate review, with the object to become acquainted with their own habits of life, they would better know themselves. By a close scrutiny of their daily life under all circumstances they would know their own motives, the principles which actuate them. This daily review of our acts, to see whether conscience approves or condemns, is necessary for all who wish to arrive at the perfection of Christian character” (GW 110, 111).

“Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. ... Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father’s commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. *This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble*” (GC 623, emphasis supplied).

“While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God’s people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14” (GC 425).

Note: In the final atonement, Jesus is applying His blood to every area of our lives—wrong behavior, thoughts, feelings, motives, inclinations and impulses. When we are in complete agreement with God on every issue which has caused a separation from Him, then His mediatorial work for us is completed. “Holiness is agreement with God” (5T 743); our sins are blotted out and we are sealed, in preparation for the close of probation. In this way, we will truly vindicate the character of God before the universe and forever silence the false accusations of the adversary.

8

Since the judgment of the living is an actual experience with Jesus when He opens our books in Heaven, what are some possible signs that could indicate that our personal judgment has begun?

1. The Holy Spirit brings up past memories (flashbacks), things that we still need to make right with others and sins we have not confessed.
2. Coping mechanisms that we have heretofore relied upon to manage our lives are no longer effective.
3. God reveals to us that our present failings may be directly connected to wrong decisions that we made in childhood and faulty thought patterns of the past.
4. We begin to experience unexplainable periods of depression, anger, anxiety, fear, etc. and may be tempted to bury our emotions by connecting with the media, relationships, or addictions of various kinds in an effort to cope or escape the pain.
5. We may be facing major crises in the family for which there are no answers or solutions without divine intervention. Our lives may seem turned upside down.

6. God may allow severe trials to afflict us through which He chooses to reveal some uncleansed areas in our lives.
7. We may be going through the process of sinning, confessing and repenting the same sins over and over again, and seeking God for answers to our continued failures. This prepares our hearts and minds to be open for God to reveal to us why we keep failing.
8. If we do not deal with our personal issues in our private time with God, God may allow our sins to become public. This is certainly not God's first option but it may take this humiliation for us to be among the remnant. This may be God's only option whereby He may save us.
9. We may have deep distress of spirit which may manifest itself in physical symptoms.
10. Areas we have previously had victory over become points of failure again.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome. ... Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols. ... Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation” (Mar 43).

Note: He is able to cleanse our depravity and sin to the uttermost. There is nothing that Jesus is unable to cleanse and purify if we allow Him to do so. “Therefore 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” (Hebrews 7:25).

9

Why is it necessary to go through these major life-changing experiences as noted in question 8?

“For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14).

The books in Heaven contain an accurate record of all our behaviors, thoughts, feelings and decisions as chronicled faithfully by the angels. These same experiences are registered in our brain. He now allows us to experience the consequences of our faulty thinking, erroneous feelings, impure motives and wrong behavior that we may understand the cause and effect of our choices of the past and how these impact our present experiences. We are then given the opportunity to confess our sins, be cleansed from these defects and faults and have them blotted out of our character. This work is necessary in order for us to be sealed, in preparation for the close of probation when Jesus ceases His mediation in the heavenly sanctuary.

Note: This process occurs at this time because God no longer covers for the unconfessed and uncleansed areas of our lives that He sees—the character defects that have been hidden from our view. In the past, His grace has covered these imperfections for us. Now, during the time of the judgment of the living, He takes His hand off those areas and gives us the opportunity to see what He sees as recorded in the books of Heaven. Yet He is very gentle as He reveals our sins and defects of character to us. We must remember that this work is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is responsible for bringing up areas of our lives that we still need to address. This work has not been delegated to any human being, for God alone is our Judge.

“As the artist takes on the polished glass a true picture of the human face, so the angels of God daily place upon the books of heaven an exact representation of the character of every human being” (7BC 987).

“The thoughts and feelings combined make up the moral character” (5T 310).

10 What is the condition of God’s people after the judgment of the living has been accomplished?

“When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for His appearing. ‘Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.’ Malachi 3:4. Then the church which our Lord at His coming is to receive to Himself will be a ‘glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.’ Ephesians 5:27” (GC 425).

11 How can we be kept pure and undefiled until the coming of our Lord?

“Now unto Him [who] is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 24, 25, KJV).

“His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and ‘an habitation of God through the Spirit.’ (Ephesians 2:21, 22)” (DA 162).

“If you will only watch, continually watch unto prayer, if you will do everything as if you were in the immediate presence of God, you will be saved from yielding to temptation, and may hope to be kept pure, spotless, and undefiled till the last” (5T 148).

In summary: The judgment of the living is the finishing, culminating work of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. It is the Good News of salvation—the finishing of the gospel. It is Christ’s final work on behalf of and in cooperation with mankind to prepare His people to see Him face to face in all of His glory, and enable them to stand in His presence when He returns at His Second Coming.

Your Commitment to Jesus

Believing that we are now in the time of the judgment of the living, are you willing to allow Him to search your heart to reveal those things in your life not in harmony with His holy character, and ask Him to completely cleanse you in order to be prepared for His soon coming?

Your Response _____

Key to Abbreviations of E. G. White Book Titles

- DA *The Desire of Ages*
- FLB *The Faith I Live By*
- GC *The Great Controversy*
- GW *Gospel Workers*
- LS *Life Sketches*
- Mar *Maranatha*
- UL *Upward Look*
- 4BC *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,
Volume 4*
- 5BC *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,
Volume 5*
- 7BC *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,
Volume 7*
- 2SM *Selected Messages, Book 2*
- 3SM *Selected Messages, Book 3*
- 5T *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5*

“Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free!”

This Study Guide is number five in a series of twelve.

Study Guide 1—“Watchman, What of the Night?”

Study Guide 2—“For Such a Time as This”

Study Guide 3—“My Sheep Hear My Voice”

Study Guide 4—“Then Shall the Sanctuary be Cleansed”

Study Guide 5—“The Hour of His Judgment has Come”

Study Guide 6—“Holy, Harmless [and] Undefined”

Study Guide 7—“That Your Sins May Be Blotted Out”

Study Guide 8—“And the Earth was Illuminated with His Glory”

Study Guide 9—“These Follow the Lamb Wherever He Goes”

Study Guide 10—“He Who is Holy, Let Him be Holy Still”

Study Guide 11—“You Are My Hiding Place”

Study Guide 12—“The Cleansing of Our Soul Temple”

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