

Savior of the Bible Course

Lesson 21 – The Pre-Advent Judgment

In our last study, we discovered that the sanctuary was God's show and tell of the entire plan of redemption. In the next few studies, which will end these series of Bible lessons, we will consider what the sanctuary truth reveals about the closing events of this earth's history. The purpose of these studies is to strengthen your faith in Christ and prepare you for the final crisis that will transpire prior to the Second Advent and the end of the world.

One of the events that will take place before Christ comes to take believers to heaven is the vindication of the saints against the accusations of the devil. The Bible tells us that Satan is “the accuser of the brethren...which accused them before our God day and night” (Revelation 12:10). In the battle for souls, Satan is determined that none of the believers make it to heaven.

Therefore, before the Second Advent can take place, Christ, our great and faithful High Priest, has to vindicate the saints in the judgment. This is part of the good news of salvation. The Pre-Advent Judgment of the saints is often referred to as the Investigative Judgment, and is what we will examine in this study.

1. What change takes place in our status when we believe in Christ? John 5:24



As we discovered in Lesson 5 (especially Questions 2-9), at the cross the entire human race was executed in Christ, our Substitute. Because of this supreme sacrifice, every sinner who receives Christ by faith passes from death (condemnation) to life (justification). This is what righteousness by faith is all about.

2. Do believers have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Romans 14:10



Daniel is here describing the Pre-Advent Judgment of the believers. While they themselves will not be physically present, they will be represented by their great High Priest and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous One. This is illustrated beautifully in Zechariah 3:1-4. Joshua, who represents the people, was clothed in filthy rags, but Jesus vindicates God's people in Joshua. Jesus tells Joshua that He has removed the iniquity from him and will clothe him with rich robes, which represents His righteousness. That is the vindication of God's people in the Pre-Advent Judgment.

Note that Joshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus. *In Christ* our sins have been removed. We must make this truth ours individually, by faith.

21. In this Pre-Advent Judgment of the saints, who will be vindicated? Daniel 7:22



Praise God, the verdict in the Pre-Advent Judgment will be in favor of the saints! That is why, when we truly understand the love of God and His saving grace, all fear of the judgment will be removed (see 1 John 4:16-18).

22. What will the saints receive once the Pre-Advent Judgment is over? Daniel 7:27



This is the consummation of the ages, the blessed hope of all believers. The Pre-Advent Judgment will be followed by the Second Advent when God will usher in His everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness. Praise God!

My Response to Lesson 21

- The whole purpose of the “Pre-Advent Judgment” is to vindicate believers against the accusations of Satan. This is necessary before Christ can come to take them to heaven. Do you accept this doctrine as part of the plan of salvation?

Response: _____

The Bible clearly teaches that believers are justified by faith apart from any good works they do (see Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5). Yet they are judged and rewarded according to their works (see Matthew 16:27; John 5:28, 29; 2 Corinthians 5:10). How do we reconcile this apparent contradiction? This will be answered in the next few questions.

16. How is God glorified by Christians? Matthew 5:14-16



As Christians, we are to be the light of the world. It is not by our words that we give evidence of this but by our works (see 1 Corinthians 4:20). Jesus said that the world will know us by our fruits or works (see Matthew 7:16-20).

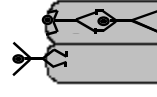
17. What should be peculiar about God's redeemed people? Titus 2:14



18. What did the works of Abraham prove? James 2:22



Abraham's works proved that his faith was genuine. In the same way, works of faith will be used as evidence by Christ to vindicate the believers in the Pre-Advent Judgment.



19. What kind of works will not justify a person before God? Galatians 2:16



We must not confuse works of faith, which are the fruits of the gospel, with works of the law. The phrase “works of the law” always refers to good works or law-keeping in order to earn salvation. In English, we call it legalism. In contrast, “works of faith” are the fruits of the Spirit. While these fruits do not contribute toward our salvation, they do give evidence of it. That is why they will be brought up in the judgment as evidence to prove a believer's justification by faith.

20. How many will stand before the judgment seat of God? Daniel 7:10



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Since believers have already passed from condemnation to justification, the question is often asked, Why do believers have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Is it because God needs to investigate our cases to see whether we qualify for heaven? Of course not! He who does not forget a sparrow and who has numbered the hairs of our heads (Luke 12:6, 7) also knows who are His (2 Timothy 2:19). Believers stand before the judgment seat of Christ because they are being accused (see the next question).

Since God is just (Romans 3:26), He will not simply bring believers to heaven, while ignoring the accusations of Satan. If He did not clear Satan's accusations against the saints in a pre-advent judgment, God would appear to be arbitrary in justifying some while not justifying others. Because God is just, He reveals the secret thoughts and motives of even the ungodly who believe on Him (Romans 4:5) – not to condemn them, but to clear their names forevermore. This “evidence” will be made available for the saints to review during the millennium (See Lesson 24: Question 16). If God did not do so, Satan would have a legitimate claim against God for not bringing him to heaven, too.

3. Who accuses the believers and how often does he do this? Revelation 12:10

4. Who is on the believers' side in this controversy over the saints? Romans 8:31

What Paul is saying here is that since God is on the believers' side, it does not matter who is against us. As we shall see, all three members of the Godhead are on the side of believers. This is indeed good news!

5. How do we know that God the Father is on the believers' side? Romans 8:32

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus earnestly pleaded with His Father, **“If it is Your will, take this cup away from Me...” (Luke 22:42).** The cup He was referring to was the curse of the law against us (see Galatians 3:13). Although Jesus sweated blood when making this earnest request, the Father's reply was “No!” Because of His great love for mankind, God spared not His Son. Without the cross mankind could not be justified (Romans 8:33).

6. How do we know that Christ is on the side of the believers? Roman 8:34

In Christ, we not only have a perfect Savior but also a High Priest who intercedes for us. He will defend us against all the accusations of Satan, now and in the Pre-Advent Judgment (see 1 John 2:1).

7. What testimony does the Holy Spirit bear to every believer? Romans 8:16

This is clear evidence that even the Holy Spirit is on the side of the believers. Therefore, as Christians we have nothing to fear in the Pre-Advent Judgment because all three persons of the Godhead – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – are on the side of the believers. With such a defense on our side, we can be sure that Satan has no chance in the judgment to win his case against us.

8. According to Peter, with whom does the final judgment begin? 1 Peter 4:17

The term “house of God” refers to believers, all those who by faith have accepted Christ as their personal Savior and whose names are written in the Book of Life. In this judgment, Satan is the accuser and Christ is our advocate.

9. What will be exposed in the judgment of the believers? 1 Corinthians 4:5

We humans judge each other by our outward acts, but God judges us by the desires of the heart. Unfortunately, our acts often contradict the desires of the heart (see Romans 7:15-23). This is part of our Christian struggle.

10. Besides saving us, what were we created in Christ to do? Ephesians 2:10

Not only did Christ save us from death to life, i.e., from condemnation to justification, but also from a life of sin to a life of good works. These works of faith do not save us, but they are the evidence of our salvation. Christ will bring them up in the judgment as a witness of our faith (see Matthew 25:31-36).

11. What is dead if we do not produce good works? James 2:17

Genuine justification by faith always produces good works. However, the believer may not be aware of these good works since they are the fruits of the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 25:37-40).

12. Who profits from the good works of believers? Titus 3:8

Good works do not save us, but they do give evidence to others that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. People judge us by our behavior, and they must see the love of Christ manifested in every believer.

13. What did Christ say is the greatest proof of genuine Christianity? John 13:34, 35

The greatest proof we Christians can give to the world that we are Christ's disciples is our selfless love for one another. According to the Bible, such love is the true keeping of the law (see Galatians 5:13, 14).

14. How is a person justified before God? Romans 3:28

Justification is by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Our law-keeping does not save us, but is the evidence of our salvation. Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15, 1 John 3:24, 5:1-3).

15. How will we be judged in the Pre-Advent Judgment? Ecclesiastes 12:14