

# Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

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## The Big Picture

By Lynnford Beachy

### Editor's Introduction

Since its beginning, Christianity has faced opposition from both within its professed ranks and from without. The Roman Empire, once a great persecuting power, later took up the role: "defender of the faith." Yet, this "defender" corrupted through compromise that which persecution could not spoil. However, God was not caught off guard or sleeping. Throughout the last two centuries, God has guided and directed His people, often calling them away from the established forms of religion to free them from false worship, treacherous doctrine, and spurious salvation. In place of these, God has directed His people to pure worship, true doctrine, and genuine salvation.

The leading of God in the lives of the Waldensian Christians, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and other reformers, cannot be denied by the honest and informed heart. Yet the Waldensians, Luther, Wesley, and others did not carry the truth of the three angels' messages. That prophetic truth's time had not yet come. Around 1844 God raised up a people who were to carry this great prophetic message. Since the beginning of the Advent movement, Satan has sought to prevent this last warning message from going forth to souls in need, especially the truths concerning the heavenly sanctuary.

Early in the movement there was opposition. Some of the more notable opposition came from men such as D. M. Canright, A. F. Ballenger, and J. H. Kellogg. This last generation has seen the challenges from Desmond Ford and Robert Brimsmead. Some even recognize the subtle attacks from those professing to be from within. Notable are the changes brought about by LeRoy Froom via his work in books such as, *Questions on Doctrine*, *Movement of Destiny*, and *The Coming of the Comforter*.

Today the work is not finished and neither are the efforts of Satan. Even some who claim to know the truth about God and His Son have been infected with Satan's lying wonders. In the last two years, some of those who were leading out in the message have decided that that which they once so wonderfully proclaimed as light, is really error. As in the past, one of the major points of conflict is the sanctuary doctrine. The concept of the investigative judgment has again been declared an error. It is asserted that

### Joint Missionary Journeys Planned

Restoration Ministries and Smyrna Gospel Ministries are working together on some very exciting plans for two outreach journeys for this summer and fall.

Lord willing, Brother Lynnford Beachy of Smyrna and Brother Howard Williams of Restoration Ministries will be traveling to Africa in August to share the three angels' messages. They plan to visit the countries of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, and Kenya from



Black areas represent countries of projected visits

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its support is not in the Bible, but only in minds of men and in the writings of Ellen G. White. How do we respond? Not by dealing with persons or personalities. We have, and still do consider those involved in this rejection to be very precious. Our concern is not with people or personalities, but with truth.

While we acknowledge the gift of God's spirit in the life of Ellen G. White, we realize that others do not. Further, we believe that Adventism is based in the Bible and all the gifts are tested by the Bible, including the writings of Ellen G. White. Therefore, we have prepared this study with the Bible alone as the source of truth and authority.

We believe that Brother Lynnford Beachy has done an excellent job in presenting truth and clarifying some of the matters that have been called into question. While Brother Beachy is the author of this study, he has graciously received counsel from David Clayton, myself, and others in drafting this study to be the best it can be. Therefore, this study reflects input from a variety of experiences and presents a clear Biblical position that is uniformly held by many others besides the author. I want to encourage all to give this study careful consideration.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 1:3)

*Allen Stump*

## The Scope of this Study

This month we are going to look at a few concepts that may be new to many of you, but I believe they will be beneficial and enlightening. This article will consider three basic principles. They are:

- Can we be forgiven of future sins before they are committed and repented of?
- Was everything finished at the cross?
- The pre-advent investigative judgment

Please especially notice the section dealing with the pre-advent investigative judgment.

## Can We Be Forgiven of Future Sins Before They Are Committed and Repented of?

The Bible makes it plain that if we confess our sins, God forgives us of sins that we have committed in the past. But does the Bible anywhere indicate that we can be forgiven of sins in the future—sins we have not yet committed? In other words, if I confess all my past sins today, will God also forgive me today for sins that I may commit tomorrow or the next day? Can I ask God to forgive me for a sin that I am about to commit? This certainly sounds strange when we think about it, but it is being taught. Is this what the Bible teaches?

The Old Testament sanctuary service was given as an illustration of how God deals with sin. In the book of Numbers we read, "And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and *it shall be forgiven* him." (Numbers 15:27, 28) In the earthly sanctuary service a person was not forgiven until he confessed his sin and brought a sin offering to the sanctuary. In reference to this God said, "the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and *it shall be forgiven* him." (Leviticus 4:26)

For these faithful believers their sins were only forgiven after they repented of them and manifested their faith in the sacrifice of Christ by

bringing an offering for their sin. Although Christ's sacrifice was "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10), the repentant sinner was required to confess his sin, and manifest his faith in the sacrifice of Christ by bringing a sin offering for each of his subsequent sins. If he sinned one day he was to bring a sin offering and confess his sins. If he sinned the next day he was to repeat the process in order to be forgiven. There was no provision made for the repentant sinner to confess his sins one time and be released from all his future sins. Furthermore, his confessions were for specific sins (Leviticus 5:5) and it would be impossible to be specific in confession for sins that have not yet been committed—unless they had been planned beforehand.

If God were to forgive me today of every sin I might commit in the future, there would be no need for me to confess any sin that I might commit in the future. Yet John wrote, "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) Forgiveness of our sins is conditional on whether we confess them or not. If we confess them, He has promised to forgive them.

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus gave us an example of how to pray. Jesus instructed us to ask the Father to, "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12) We are to ask God to forgive us in the same way that we forgive others. My friends, that is very serious. That means if I do not forgive others then God will not forgive me. This is precisely what Jesus said right after He gave us the Lord's Prayer. He said, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14, 15) This should make us

seriously consider in what way we forgive others.

Jesus said to His twelve disciples, “And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25, 26) Notice that Jesus is speaking to Christians—Christians who have already begun their walk with God. Christ’s words here could not be true if God forgave us of all of our future sins at the time of our first confession of sins, for at any time, even after we have confessed our sins of the past, we could cherish bitterness toward someone and refuse to forgive that person. Jesus said if we do this God will not forgive us of our sins. But if God had already forgiven us of all future sins, how could it be true that He would refrain from forgiving us of our sins?

### Once Saved, Always Saved?

If we believe God forgives us of all future sins at the point of conversion, the logical conclusion must be that once a person is saved he will always be saved and cannot lose that salvation no matter what happens. However, the sad history of Saul is an example proving that this is not true. Saul was truly converted. The Bible says that the Lord “gave him another heart,” and he was “turned into another man.” (1 Samuel 10:6, 9) Yet the Bible records that after a life that included rejecting God, “Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it.” (1 Chronicles 10:13)

If God has already forgiven me of all my future sins as well as my past, then it would not matter what life-style I would choose to live. If this

were true, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, would all be acceptable. But Paul said, “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21)

When we come to Christ, He tells us, “sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John 5:14) Jesus says to you and me today, “go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11) John wrote, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” (1 John 2:1) Paul wrote, “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” (1 Corinthians 7:19) These commands would be meaningless to the Christian if all his future wickedness was already forgiven and could not be held against him.

### God’s Forgiveness of All Sins

Some use the following verses as proof of their assertion that future, as well as past, sins are forgiven at the time of initial repentance: “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth *all* thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.” (Psalms 103:2, 3) Some assume that the word “all” in this verse must include future as well as past sins. However, even a casual examination of the word “all” in the Bible will reveal that this is not necessarily the case. For example, notice how “all” is used in reference to the plague of locusts in Egypt: “He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number, And did eat up *all* the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.” (Psalms 105:34, 35) Certainly nobody would assume that the locusts and caterpillars ate, not only all the herbs that existed at that time, but also all the herbs that ever would

exist in the land of Egypt in the future. It would not have been possible at one time for the locusts to eat all the herbs that ever would exist in the future.

God desires to forgive us of all our sins, that is for sure. When we confess our sins God forgives us of all of our sins and we can stand before God as though we had never sinned.

If a man’s future sins were forgiven at the time of his first confession of sins, then there would be no need for Christ to intercede for them. Let us take a few moments to examine some very interesting points that Paul made in his epistles regarding our need for Christ’s intercession.

### Was Everything Finished at the Cross?

Paul wrote concerning Christ that He “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Romans 4:25) This is very interesting. It says that Christ died for our sins and was raised again for our justification. The Greek word that was translated “justification” means to declare righteous or to render innocent. (See *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*.) To be justified is to be pardoned or forgiven of sins in the past. A man who has been justified stands before God as if he had never sinned.

Paul is saying here that Christ died for our sins and He was raised again so that we could be forgiven of our sins. That is very interesting, and it brings up a question: If Christ had died, and was not raised from the dead, could we be forgiven of our sins? If not, why? Why was it necessary for Christ to be raised from the dead in order for us to be forgiven? I understand that Christ’s resurrection was important as an assurance that God will one day resurrect those who are asleep in Christ, but Paul was talking about something more here. Paul said that our forgiveness of sins

is dependent upon Christ's resurrection.

Notice what Paul says in the following verses: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (1 Corinthians 15:12-14) These are strong words that are diametrically opposed to most evangelical thinking concerning the plan of salvation. Paul said that if Christ was not raised from the dead our faith would be in vain—it would be worthless. But Paul doesn't stop here. He goes on, "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1 Corinthians 15:15-17)

Paul said that if Christ was not raised from the dead not only is our faith in vain, but we are yet in our sins. Paul said that if Christ was not raised from the dead there would be no way that we could be forgiven of our sins. Why is this true? Didn't everything happen at the cross? What more needed to happen after the death of Christ?

Let me clarify a point: Christ was the ultimate sacrifice. The sacrifice on Calvary was a complete and perfect sacrifice—Christ, the sinless one, dying for the sinner. The death of Christ is an absolute necessity in the plan of God to redeem mankind. However, the Bible teaches that there is more to the plan of salvation than just the death of Christ. This is not to in any way minimize that death. It is as essential to the plan of salvation as the heart is to the body. However, the heart alone, without support from

other organs, is unable to give the body life.

### **A Work Done After the Death of the Sacrifice**

If, in the earthly sanctuary service, the sinner brought the sacrifice and merely killed it, would that be of any benefit to the sinner? Certainly not! The sin that had been symbolically transferred to the sacrifice by confession had to be transferred, by the priest, to the sanctuary before the sinner could be forgiven. In like manner, we must have the ministration of our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary so that we can be forgiven. We need the ministration of Christ on our behalf as much as we needed the death of Christ for our sins. One without the other would be of no avail. "For there is one God, and *one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5) "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing *he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" (Hebrews 7:25)

His death on the cross was vitally important, for without that He would have nothing to offer on our behalf. Paul wrote, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on 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 pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.*" (Hebrews 8:1-3) At Christ's resurrection He, for the first time, entered upon His work as our High Priest: a minister of the sanctuary in heaven. He could not have been our high priest until after He had something to offer—after His death on the cross.

The earthly high priest was ordained "to offer gifts and

sacrifices." To whom did he offer the gifts and sacrifices? To God! Christ has been ordained as our High Priest, and He must have something to offer—the merits of His perfect and complete sacrifice. Paul wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:7) Paul said that we have forgiveness of sins through His blood. Yet we just read how Paul said that if Christ had only died, then we could not be forgiven of our sins. The only way we could have forgiveness of our sins "*through his blood*" is by Christ offering the merits of his perfect sacrifice—His blood—as our High Priest.

### **The Work of Our High Priest Today**

This all seems new to many people because they have never given much thought regarding the necessity of Christ being our High Priest, "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

Notice what Paul said in the following verse: "Wherefore in all things it *behoved* him [Christ] to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, *to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*" (Hebrews 2:17) This verse sheds much light on this subject. It says that Christ had to become a man before He could be a merciful and faithful High Priest. The Greek word that was translated "behoved" means to be under obligation. (See *Strong's Greek Lexicon*.) Before Christ could be our High Priest He had to become a man and die for our sins so that He would have something to offer as a minister in the heavenly sanctuary.

Notice what Paul said Christ would do after He became our High Priest. He said that Christ had to be a High Priest "*to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*" Christ is our High

Priest today, making reconciliation for our sins. Paul did not say He *made* reconciliation [past tense] for the sins of the people but that He *is making* reconciliation [present tense] for the sins of the people. The Greek term

that was translated “make reconciliation” is in the present tense in Greek. This agrees with Paul’s words in the book of Hebrews where he said Christ “ever liveth to make intercession” for us. (Hebrews 7:25) Praise the Lord that He has not only provided His Son as our perfect sacrifice, but also appointed Him to be our High Priest to minister for us, making reconciliation for our sins today. There is a work going on right now in heaven that we must not overlook.

## The Pre-advent Investigative Judgment

First of all, we need to define some terms as they will be used in this study. The term “pre-advent” simply means: “before the second coming of Christ.” The term “investigative judgment” means: “a judgment scene in which facts related to the lives of mankind are examined in a public manner by all the inhabitants of heaven.” The pre-advent investigative judgment is not a judgment where punishment or rewards are given, but rather where facts are examined and decisions are made regarding whether a person will be saved or lost.

The words “judgment,” “judge,” “judged,” etc. are used in the Bible to indicate any of three phases of judgment. They are:

- 1 **Investigative phase:** where evidence is examined, followed by the giving of the verdict of either “guilty” or “not guilty”
- 2 **Judicial phase:** where the evidence is reviewed and the type and degree of punishment or reward is decided
- 3 **Executive phase:** where the penalty or reward decided in the judicial phase is carried out

In some cases in the Bible the words “judgment,” “judge,” or “judged” signify the investigative phase. (Daniel 7:9, 10) In other cases they signify the judicial phase. (Revelation 20:4; 11:18; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3) And in still other cases they signify the executive phase. (Revelation 20:11, 12) To give a verdict and administer the verdict without first examining the evidence would be unfair. Nicodemus reminded the Jewish leaders of this fact when he asked, “Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?” (John 7:51) Even in earthly governments, justice demands that an investigation of the facts precede a verdict.

## Eternal Judgment

The judgment we should be most concerned about is the judgment that determines our eternal destiny. Paul wrote, “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) Paul makes it clear here that the judgment seat of Christ is not only for administering punishment to the wicked, but also rewards to the righteous.

Paul wrote to his fellow Christians, “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” (Romans 14:10) Paul himself expected to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. But what purpose would there be for Christians to stand before the judgment seat of Christ?

Jesus said, “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (Matthew 12:36) According to Christ Himself, we will have to give an account of every idle word that we speak.

Solomon wrote, “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” (Ecclesiastes 11:9) The things that we do each day are not forgotten, but they are recorded, and will stand as a testimony, either for or against us, in the day of judgment.

Solomon also wrote, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14) So it is clear that every idle word, and every action, whether it is good or bad, will be considered in the judgment. All the facts will be examined. The investigation of the facts will precede the verdict.

The judgment of God will not only be for the wicked, but for the righteous also. The wise man said, “I said in mine heart, *God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.*” (Ecclesiastes 3:17)

Malachi wrote, “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” (Malachi 3:16) There is a book of remembrance written, and here it is expressly said to be written about the righteous. Who do you suppose is recording this information?

In the book of Proverbs we read, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” (Proverbs 15:3) With even a casual study of the term “the eyes of the LORD” you will find that this is referring to the angels. The angels are even recording our thoughts.

Solomon wrote, “Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.” (Ecclesiastes 10:20) The Hebrew word translated “bird” (עוף—*owph*), literally means, “flying creature.” (*Brown, Driver, Briggs’ Hebrew Lexicon*) These are angels who are making a very precise record of our thoughts, words, and actions. (Just to clarify, angels cannot read our mind unless God reveals it to them as He did for certain men in the Bible like Elisha, Peter, our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. (See 1 Kings 8:39; 2 Kings 5:25, 26; Acts 5:3.) [For a more thorough study on this subject, please request the April 1999 issue of *Present Truth* and read the article on page 4 entitled, “The Ministry of the Angels.”]

Now, what is the purpose for these things being recorded in books? Are they recorded in order for God to be able to remember all these things? Certainly not! God already knows perfectly well all things that ever were, and that ever will be. There can only be one purpose for these books to be recorded, and that is for some future examination by someone other than God.

In order for God to be understood to be just in His judgment, there must be a public investigation of the facts before He gives a verdict. Now, it is obvious that any investigation of facts is not for the benefit of God, for at any given time He knows how many hairs are on the head of everyone in the world. He already knows everything there is to know about us. So why would there be an investigation of facts?

As we have already seen, the examination of facts must precede the verdict and the administering of the verdict. We have also seen that everyone will be judged; not only the wicked, but God’s professed people

also. In fact, according to the Bible, the judgment of the professed people of God precedes the judgment of the wicked. “For the time is come that 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 of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1 Peter 4:17, 18)

So judgment, that determines whether a person will be saved or lost, begins with those who profess to be God’s people, which only makes sense, because those who are found worthy will be resurrected 1000 years before the wicked.

### The Judgment of the Wicked

Let us take a few minutes and see what the Bible has to say about the judgment of the wicked. Paul wrote, “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3) Here the Scriptures state that the saints—God’s people—will judge the world, and we will also judge angels. Now what kind of judging will we be doing? Which phase of the judgment will we be involved in?

Remember, there are three phases of the judgment. They are:

- ❶ **Investigative phase:** where evidence is examined, followed by the giving of the verdict of either “guilty” or “not guilty”
- ❷ **Judicial phase:** where the evidence is reviewed and the type and degree of punishment or reward is decided
- ❸ **Executive phase:** where the penalty or reward decided in the judicial phase is carried out

It is clear that we will not be making decisions, or giving verdicts, regarding whether a person will be saved or lost, for that decision will have already been made by God.

Neither will we be administering the penalty, for the Bible plainly states that this will be done by God and His Son. (John 5:22; Revelation 20:9) The only phase of the judgment we could possibly be involved in is the second phase, which deals with the reviewing of facts and the determination of the severity of the penalty.

When will the righteous be investigating the facts relating to the wicked and the fallen angels? It is certain that we are not doing it while we are alive on this earth, and it is also certain that we will not be doing it while we are dead, for “the dead know not any thing.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) The only possible time for this judgment would be after the resurrection of the righteous, and before the wicked are punished. The Bible tells us clearly when this investigation will take place.

God gave John a vision of which he said, “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:4-6)

Here the Bible is talking about the only time period possible where saints could judge the wicked and the fallen angels, and the Bible says, “*judgment was given unto*” the saints. During the 1000 years the saints will be examining the facts relating to the lives of the wicked and

the fallen angels. We also learn from these verses that the wicked dead will not live again until after the 1000 years are over. The destruction of the wicked will not be carried out until after the saints get the opportunity to examine the facts relating to the lives of the wicked and the fallen angels.

But why is it important to God to give the saints this opportunity to examine the records of all those people who will be eternally lost? How will the saints be benefitted by having this opportunity? How will God's kingdom be benefitted by God giving this opportunity to the saints?

### **Why Are the Saints Involved?**

Think about what it will be like when we are resurrected. It is evident that not all those who think they are serving God will make it into heaven. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:21-23)

If I make it into heaven, and find that my spouse, or my child, or my pastor, is not there, I am going to want to know why. If God destroys someone whom I think should have been in heaven, without allowing me to clearly understand why, then I am going to question God's fairness and righteousness in making that decision. I am going to wonder whether His decision was right or not.

Now there may be some who would say that I would have no right to question God's decision and that I should just trust that He made the right choice and leave it at that. First of all, this is a major decision; one which will involve many tears. Keep

in mind that all tears are not wiped away until after the thousand years are expired. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Revelation 21:4)

Second, God does not only do what is right, He makes it clear to others that what He has done, and is doing, is right.

David said to God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." (Psalms 51:4) God wants to make it absolutely clear to the entire universe that when He makes a judgment it is right. God wants everyone to be able to say, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." (Revelation 16:5) Even the wicked, who will finally be destroyed, will confess that Jesus is Lord. (Philippians 2:10, 11)

So whether or not I am content to remain ignorant regarding why my loved ones may not be in heaven, God is interested in making clear to me why He has not allowed them entrance into heaven. That is the whole purpose for the thousand-year gap between the resurrection of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked. God has set aside this time in order for all of His saints to gain a clear understanding of why He has decided to forbid certain people from entering heaven.

This is absolutely necessary in order to remove forever any doubt regarding the fairness and righteousness of God in dealing with sin. This is the only way that God can ensure that sin will never rise the second time. We read, "What do ye imagine against the LORD? he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time." (Nahum 1:9) All

doubts concerning God's dealings with sin and sinners must be removed in the minds of everyone in the universe in order to keep sin from ever rising again.

### **The Judgment of the Righteous**

With this in mind, let us consider the judgment of the righteous. We have seen that it is necessary, and it is God's plan, to have a public examination of the evidence regarding the lives of the wicked and the fallen angels before He administers the punishment. We have also seen that this investigation of evidence is not for God's enlightenment, but for the enlightenment of the inhabitants of heaven. But what about the righteous? Is there, like with the wicked, any need for an investigation of the evidence regarding their lives before the verdict is publically made known, and the rewards are given?

The Bible makes it clear that at the second coming of Christ, the saints will be rewarded with immortal, glorified bodies and the joys of the Lord. Just prior to the second coming of Christ, the following proclamation will go forth: Jesus will say, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." (Revelation 22:11, 12)

Jesus said that when He comes the second time His reward will be with Him. And again we read, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and

his work before him.” (Isaiah 40:9, 10)

And again, “Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken.” (Isaiah 62:10-12)

When Christ returns the second time, the righteous dead will be resurrected, and the righteous living will be caught up together with them. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

The investigative and the judicial phases of the judgment of the righteous will have already taken place by the time the Lord comes the second time. Every case will have been decided whether for life or death. As we have seen already, God has planned that His people will investigate the facts relating to the lives of the wicked and the fallen angels before He administers the punishment. It is clear that the verdict of whether a person will be saved or lost will have already been given at this point, for all of those who will be saved will have already been given immortality. The saints will not have veto power over God’s decision of who will be saved or not. The thousand years are set aside to remove all question in anyone’s mind regarding God’s fairness and righteousness in

deciding who was forbidden entrance into heaven.

### **Who Will Be Able to Enter Heaven?**

However, there is another question that we have not considered yet. The thousand-year judgment deals with the question of God’s fairness and righteousness in His decision of who He has *forbidden* to enter heaven. It has nothing to do with the question of His fairness and righteousness in His decision of who He *allows* to enter heaven. It could not deal with that question, because all those who will enter heaven will have already done so before the thousand years begin.

Not only that, but the Bible says that the sins of the righteous will not be mentioned unto them again (Ezekiel 33:15, 16), so it would not be possible or necessary for the righteous to be examining the facts relating to the lives of the righteous. Any such examination at this time would be pointless.

However, is there a need before the second coming of Christ for there to be a public examination of the facts relating to the lives of Christians before the verdict and the giving of rewards? First of all, if there is a need for it, the saints themselves could not take part in it the same way they will take part in the investigative judgment of the wicked, because they will either be in the grave or alive on earth awaiting Christ’s second coming. Again, any public investigation of facts could not be for the enlightenment of God, for He already knows all things. The only ones who could be enlightened by a public investigation of the lives of the righteous before the second coming of Christ would be the unfallen inhabitants of the universe.

But would the angels be interested in a public investigation of the facts relating to the lives of the righteous before the second coming? The Bible

indicates that the angels are intensely interested in the events relating to this world. Peter wrote, “Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; *which things the angels desire to look into.*” (1 Peter 1:10-12)

So it is evident that the angels are very interested in the affairs of men. And certainly they have the right to be; one-third of their companions, all of whom had been perfect, noble angels who had never sinned, joined Satan in His rebellion. People like you and me, who have never enjoyed the experience of perfect holiness, could potentially be much more likely to rebel than they were. God’s holy angels have an intense interest in knowing what type of individuals will be their companions for the ages of eternity.

They are also interested in knowing how God is dealing with the sin problem, and whether He is being fair and righteous in His decisions. Not only that, but, as we have seen, God is very interested in making it clear to the angels that what He is doing is right. It was an angel who said, “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.” (Revelation 16:5) God wants to make certain that the angels know that He is right in His decisions, especially in such a major decision as who will become their companions for countless billions of years.



## An Illustration

Let's use an illustration to make this point clear. Suppose you were the president of an exclusive, private club, consisting only of righteous, perfect persons who had never done wrong. Would it be fair or right for you, being the president, to allow others, all of whom had been rapists, murderers, thieves, liars, etc., to join that club without allowing all of the members of that club to examine the evidence of whether or not those persons had changed their lives? Would you not be committing an injustice toward the current members of your club to allow people in, who have very questionable backgrounds, without allowing your current members to have a knowledge of why you are allowing them in?

Please consider the following point carefully. The Bible indicates that God has given His angels charge over us to keep us safe. (Psalm 91:11, 12) He also has commissioned His angels to take accurate records of our lives. Do you think my personal guardian angel (Matthew 18:10) is aware of my spiritual condition? Does he know whether I am in a saved condition or in a lost condition? Remember, we were created a little lower than the angels. They have very sharp minds, and I am sure they have fantastic memories. I am quite certain that my personal guardian angel knows all the pertinent facts regarding my life. I am also certain that after my death he will have no need for any future investigation of the record of my life to know whether he would want me to be his neighbor for billions of years or not, and to know whether God was just and fair in His decision to take me to heaven or not. I believe I can safely say that He would be completely satisfied with whatever God's decision is, regarding whether I will go to heaven or not, because he knows the facts.

However, what about your life, or a man in China? Does my personal guardian angel know for certain whether he would want to have you, or someone he knows very little about, as a neighbor for billions of years? Could he be 100% satisfied, without any question whatsoever, with God's decision of whether to bring you to heaven or not if he was not allowed to examine the records regarding your life? It is true that he could choose to trust that God's decision is right, and leave it at that, but he would have no way of knowing for sure that God was right without having the opportunity to examine the evidence for himself.

As we have seen earlier, God not only does what is right, He makes it clear to all those involved that what He does is right. This is necessary in order to ensure that sin will not rise up the second time. Even if there are angels who do not see the need for these questions regarding God's character to be clarified, God saw the need, and He is meeting that need. Whether or not the angels would be content to remain ignorant regarding the facts that led up to God's decisions in the judgment, God will not be satisfied until every shadow of doubt regarding His dealings with sin are removed forever. Remember that all of the redeemed of this earth have been rebels against God, while all of God's holy angels in heaven are there because they were faithful to God. God's angels have an interest, and the right, to know why God is allowing people who had been rebellious, to become their companions for eternity. Therefore, God will make it clear to all the current inhabitants of heaven why He has chosen to allow each new resident of heaven to enter into His kingdom. This is imperative in order for God's government to be forever secure from any further questions regarding God's fairness, love, and righteousness.

After sin arose in the heart of Lucifer (the previous name of Satan), God's character was brought into question. Since then, it has been Satan's goal to distort God's character. Lucifer portrayed God as being unjust, unkind, and unfair. He convinced one-third of the angels to join him in his rebellion against God. After Lucifer began making his views about God known, questions regarding God's character arose for the first time. All of these questions must be removed in the minds of the angels, and any new inhabitants of heaven, before God's universe will be secure against sin rising the second time.

## The Biblical Evidence

The Bible gives us plain evidence that there is an investigative judgment of the righteous before the second coming of Christ.

The Bible says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) The judgment takes place after death, but does it take place immediately after death, or is there some time that elapses between the time of death and the judgment? Notice that this verse does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. It just says that at some point after death there will be a judgment. We have read earlier in this study that "judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Peter 4:17) So the professed people of God are going to be judged first, but this could not be so if, upon the point of death, every man is judged, for many wicked people have died before righteous people. So Hebrews 9:27 could not mean that upon the point of death every person goes to judgment.

## The Great White Throne Judgment

The book of Revelation describes two separate judgment scenes where books are said to be opened. The most familiar scene is what is known as "*the great white throne judgment*"

spoken of in Revelation chapter 20. Here it says, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." (Revelation 20:11-13)

This vision pictures the executive phase of the judgment of the dead. These dead are obviously the wicked dead, for the righteous have already been in heaven for 1000 years, and there is no further need for them to be brought into judgment. Furthermore, God has promised to the righteous, "None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him." (Ezekiel 33:16) The righteous will have already been declared righteous and given glorified bodies to live forever.

Prior to this great white throne judgment, it will have already been determined that all the wicked dead will be destroyed, and during the 1000 years the righteous will take part in the judicial phase of their judgment, which determines the severity of their punishment, for there are varying degrees of punishment. Jesus said, "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." (Luke 12:47, 48) The only thing that remains is the executive phase of the judgment where the final wages of sin are received.

The great white throne judgment of Revelation 20 has nothing to do with judging the righteous, for they will have already been judged. Please keep in mind, that although God will judge the righteous and the wicked, they do not have to be present during the first two phases of their own judgment. The righteous will be on this earth, either dead or alive, awaiting Christ's second coming while the first two phases of their judgment take place. The wicked will be on the earth, either dead or alive, awaiting Christ's second coming during the first phase of their judgment, and they will all be dead during the second phase of their judgment, which takes place during the thousand years. So neither the righteous nor the wicked will be present during the first two phases of their judgment. The record of all their deeds will be sufficient to stand as evidence for or against them in their absence, and Christ will stand for His people as their Advocate in the heavenly courts, so there is no need for either group to be present themselves.

### Another Judgment

However, there is another judgment scene depicted in Revelation, which clearly indicates that it deals with the righteous, and also that it takes place before the second coming of Christ. This judgment scene is recorded in Revelation chapters 4-8. Let's notice a few things about this judgment scene:

John wrote, "I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne (Greek: *-thronos*) were four and twenty seats (*thronos*): and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and

they had on their heads crowns of gold." (Revelation 4:2-4).

Notice how John describes this vision. He saw a throne being set up and it was surrounded by 24 thrones. A glorious Being sat down on the central throne. As we can see from the following chapter, God the Father is the One who sat down on this throne.

The books of Daniel and Revelation parallel each other in many cases, and this is an example of where they parallel each other. Daniel saw a vision which he described in almost the same language as did John. He wrote, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." (Daniel 7:9) Unfortunately, the translators of the King James Version poorly translated the Aramaic word *רמיה* (*remah*) in this verse as "cast down." The translators of the Revised Standard Version translated it as "placed," which is more fitting with the context, and agrees with the English translation of the Greek Septuagint, which reads, "I beheld until the thrones were set, and the Ancient of days sat."

So here we see the same scene taking place. Daniel described the one who sat down on the throne as being very glorious to behold. This is undoubtedly God the Father, who is referred to as "the Ancient of days."

In Daniel 7:10 there is another parallel to the scene described in Revelation 4-8. Daniel wrote, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." (Daniel 7:10) Notice the number given here. It is the same number that is given in Revelation 5.

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” (Revelation 5:11) Daniel says that at this time the judgment was set and the books were opened. There is no mention of the wicked dead standing before Him as we have read concerning the great white throne judgment which takes place after the 1000 years.

### **The Little Horn**

Right after the Father takes His seat on the throne we read, “I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” (Daniel 7:11, 12)

These verses are somewhat of an interim between verses 10 and 13. Daniel’s attention was drawn away from the Father back to the little horn who was speaking great words against the Most High. Daniel said that he beheld until the beast was slain. The slaying of the beast that Daniel is obviously referring to here is the same slaying that Paul wrote about in his second epistle to the Thessalonians. He wrote, “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8) This takes place at the second coming of Christ.

### **The Son Enters the Scene**

In Daniel 7:13, 14 we learn that after the Father takes His seat on the throne, with thousands of angels standing before Him, then the Son of God comes before Him to receive a kingdom. We read, “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son

of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13, 14)

Some people falsely conclude that these verses refer to the second coming of Christ. However, if we will notice a few things, we will see plainly that this could not be the case. First, the Bible tells us that when Christ comes the second time He will come with “*all the holy angels.*” (Matthew 25:31) If this is true, then Daniel’s vision in chapter 7 verse 13 could not be the second coming of Christ, for Daniel saw Him come to a place where all the angels were already surrounding the Father’s throne.

When He comes before His Father, Christ receives a kingdom. This must take place before He reigns as King. When Christ returns the second time He comes, not as our High Priest, but as “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.” (Revelation 19:16) The second coming of Christ is the time when Christ begins to reign, for the saints live and reign with Him during the thousand years, which begin with the second coming of Christ. (Revelation 20:4) Christ must receive His kingdom before His second coming. (Luke 19:11, 12)

The parallel in Revelation shows that the Son receives power and glory, just as we have seen here in Daniel. The angels around the throne in Revelation 5 say, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” (Revelation 5:12) Christ receives all these things when He

comes before His Father to be coronated King.

Remember also, that the Father takes His seat first, with the vast multitude of angels surrounding Him, then Christ comes, and nothing is mentioned about others coming with Him. Yet, when Christ comes to the great white throne judgment scene *all* His saints are with Him. “To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” (1 Thessalonians 3:13; See also Zechariah 14:5; Jude 1:14)

From the verses we have read we can see that the judgment scene that takes place in Daniel 7, corresponds to the one mentioned in Revelation 4-8, and that it precedes the second coming of Christ. Therefore, it must take place in heaven, rather than upon this earth.

### **The Fifth Seal**

However, there is yet another piece of evidence that will prove this beyond a shadow of a doubt. In Revelation chapter 4, the Father takes His seat upon a throne that has been set up, and the vast multitude of heavenly angels surround the throne. Then in chapter 5, John saw that the Father had a book in His hand (verse 1), and the only One who could open it was Christ. John saw Christ come up to the Father and take the book out of the Father’s hand. (Verse 7) Then Christ began to open the seals on the book. When He opened the fifth seal we find something very interesting.

John wrote, “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every

one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 6:9-11)

John saw souls of righteous people who were crying out for vengeance upon those who had killed them. In verse 11 the souls are said to be resting, or sleeping, which proves that they are not alive. These souls were not living, conscious beings who were literally speaking, but their blood cried out for justice, as the blood of Abel cried out to God for justice. (Genesis 4:10) They are told to rest until their brethren would be killed in like manner. This must be before the second coming of Christ, for after Christ comes, all the righteous dead will have been raised to immortality, and the living saints will have been given immortality. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53) Never again will any of God’s saints be killed. It is abundantly clear that the judgment scene taking place in Revelation 4-8, which corresponds with the one in Daniel 7, has to take place before the second coming of Christ.

Notice also that when Christ opens the fifth seal white robes are given to the dead saints. What are the white robes? In Revelation 19:8 we are told that white linen clothing “is the righteousness of saints.” So here white robes are given to dead people to signify that they have been accounted righteous, or worthy to enter into heaven. The giving of white robes to dead saints must be a result of a judgment in their favor.

### The Context of Daniel 7

Also, as we go back to Daniel 7 and examine the context, we notice that every time the judgment is mentioned it precedes the second coming of Christ. In verses 21, 22 we read, “I beheld, and the same horn made war

with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” Notice the order here. The little horn prevailed against the saints, then the Ancient of days came to take His seat, then judgment was given in favor of the saints, then the saints possessed the kingdom. Remember that the saints begin their reign at the second coming of Christ. (Revelation 20:4)

Going down to verse 25 we read, “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” Here we have the three-and-half-year time period that is used elsewhere in the Bible (Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5) to signify the 1260-year period of papal supremacy during the Dark Ages, when the Papacy made war against the saints. This time period began with the uprooting of the three horns (Heruli, Vandals, and Ostrogoths), the third being accomplished in 538 A.D. This time period ended with Napoleon’s general, Berthier, taking the pope captive in 1798 A.D.

Continuing now in Daniel chapter 7, with verse 26, we read, “But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.” Notice that the judgment sits before the papal dominion is taken away, and before the end.

Then in verse 27 we read, “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” So you can see the order in these verses. First the

Papacy speaks great words against the Most High (verse 25), and prospers until 1798, then the judgment sits, then the papal dominion is taken away, then “the end” comes, then the saints begin to reign with Christ. So we can see clearly that the investigative judgment of the righteous begins after 1798 and before the second coming of Christ.

### The Big Picture

Clearly, there is an investigative judgment for the righteous that takes place before the second coming of Christ. As we have seen earlier, this investigative judgment is imperative in order to ensure that sin will not rise the second time among the unfallen inhabitants of heaven. This will be accomplished by removing all doubt in their minds regarding God’s fairness, justice, and righteousness in His decisions concerning who will be *permitted* to enter heaven. We have also seen that there must be an investigative judgment of the wicked, to ensure that sin will not rise the second time among the redeemed of this earth. This will be accomplished by removing all doubt regarding God’s fairness, justice, and righteousness in His decisions concerning who is *forbidden* to enter heaven.

You see, there is a bigger picture involved. God is extremely interested in the salvation of every person in this world. However, He has a greater purpose in mind as well, and that is the eternal well-being of heaven. He wants to make absolutely sure that sin will not rise the second time. He is not going to do this by removing our freedom of choice to do wrong, but by removing every possibility for anyone ever to question whether He is fair, loving, and righteous. After sin is finally destroyed, never again will God’s integrity be questioned. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for God to allow all of His decisions regarding

who He allows into heaven, and who He chooses to destroy, to be examined and scrutinized by the on-looking universe.

Now this brings up another question. All decisions will be made regarding who will be saved, and who will be lost before the second coming of Christ, and the saints could not be involved as witnesses in the investigative judgment of the righteous. Now, if it is necessary for all the angels to investigate the facts relating to the lives of the righteous before they enter heaven, in order to secure God's government against any further rebellion, why is it not necessary for the saints to be present during this investigative judgment?

Again, let's go back to the illustration we used earlier. Suppose you were the president of an exclusive, private club, consisting only of righteous, perfect persons who had never done wrong. Would it be fair or right for you, being the president, to allow others, all of whom had been rapists, murderers, thieves, liars, etc., to join that club without allowing every one of the members of that club to examine the evidence of whether or not those persons had changed their lives?

In this scenario, would it be proper or right to have those potential members (all of whom had been wicked persons) to be present while the current members are reviewing their cases? Certainly not! And there would be no need for them to be present during such an investigation. Besides that, even if they were present, being in the degraded state that sin has left them in, they could not possibly render a complete, just, and fair analysis of the situation. Their main concern after they got in would be why others had been left out, and this question could be clarified after they had gained entrance.

## Public Opinion

God is very particular and very thorough in the way He deals with sin and sinners. God is extremely interested in the opinions of the inhabitants of heaven. He wants to make sure that they know that what He is doing is right.

We can clearly see that it is extremely important, and necessary to the success of God's government throughout the eternal ages in the future, for God to have a public investigative judgment of the righteous before the second coming of Christ, where His decisions can be scrutinized by the angels.


Let's think about it for a moment. Does God carry on His government without taking into consideration the opinions of the angels? Does God expect them to blindly trust that He is right without allowing them to investigate His judgments for themselves? If so, then there is no reason why Satan is still alive today. God could have called the angels together and said something like this, "We all know that Lucifer has decided to question my authority, and I know what will result if I allow him to continue living. I know the end from the beginning, and I know that if I allow him to live any longer he will cause a lot of heartache, bloodshed, pain, and suffering. I know you don't know the future, but I do. Just trust me on this decision. To save us all a lot of problems, I am going to destroy Lucifer right now."

If God was not concerned with making His judgments extremely plain and open for scrutiny, then the best thing for Him to have done would have been to destroy Lucifer when he first rebelled. However, God is concerned with the opinions of His creatures. If He had destroyed Lucifer way back then, all the universe would serve God out of fear instead of out of love. They also would have wondered if what God had told them

would happen in the future was correct. There would always be a question regarding God's government, and sin would likely rise the second time.

## The Greater Purpose

God's greater purpose is to have a universe free from sin, and also free from all possibility for sin arising the second time. If God had not provided the angels with the opportunity to take part as witnesses in the investigative judgment of the righteous, then God might as well have destroyed Lucifer when he first rebelled. In other words, if God was going to allow Lucifer to live all this time, so that his course could be manifested clearly, thus vindicating God's decision to destroy Lucifer, why would He, all of a sudden, do this great injustice to the angels by not allowing them to see clearly why He has chosen to bring certain ones (all of whom had been vile persons) into heaven to be their companions for all eternity. This would still have left questions in the minds of the angels regarding God's government, and would have given an entering wedge for sin to rise the second time.

Thank God that He is concerned with making His judgments extremely plain and open for scrutiny. Thank God that we can look forward to a universe where every inhabitant will be able to say with certainty, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." (Revelation 16:5) 

**He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him. (Proverbs 18:13)**

# Camp Meeting: The Last Call

As announced previously, Smyrna will be hosting a camp meeting this July 17th–21st. The camp meeting will be here in West Virginia and we wish to encourage everyone to plan on attending. A detailed map, with directions on how to get here, was sent out last month. If you did not receive one or need another, please write or call us and we will be glad to send another to you.

The first meeting will be Tuesday evening. Each day will begin with an early morning devotional followed by a morning meeting, a midmorning meeting, afternoon seminars, and an evening meeting.

The Lord has supplied a group of very able speakers for the main meetings. You will not be disappointed!

There will be no cost to those attending, but each family will be responsible for their own meals and all supplies. Tent space is available and we have a limited supply of camping materials for those who do not have, and cannot afford to purchase them at this time. If you are in need, please contact us soon.

Parents will need to be responsible for their children at *all* times. Though this is a camp meeting, modest dress will be expected of all who wish to attend. Items such as short pants, tank-top shirts, and clothing with un-Christlike pictures, symbols, or words are not acceptable.

All are welcome to come and be our guests. However, we ask that all who come behave as guests. This is a camp meeting, not a Bible conference or public forum. The meetings have been planned with much prayer and the direction of the Holy Spirit.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the camp meeting!

“Let all who possibly can, attend these yearly gatherings [camp meetings]. All should feel that God requires this of them. If they do not avail themselves of the privileges which He has provided for them to become strong in Him and in the power of His grace, they will grow weaker and weaker, and have less and less desire to consecrate all to Him. Come, brethren and sisters, to these sacred convocation meetings, to find Jesus. He will come up to the feast; He will be present, and will do for you that which you need most to have done.” (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, p. 600)

*Allen Stump*

# Digital Video Tape Project

Last month we announced that two messages on the “Good News About God” series were scheduled to be released by the first of June. We are sorry that we were not able to meet that deadline. While the study, “The Death of Christ,” was released the first week of June, we are still working on the presentation entitled, “The Father and Son.” We hope to have it ready by camp meeting time.

The message, “The Death of Christ,” deals with the total death of Jesus upon the cross, clearly showing that a Trinitarian understanding of God prevents the full and complete death of the Son of God, subverting the atonement. This tape also has inspirational



**Captured frame from  
“The Death of Christ”**



**Leon Holt and his daughter Verity  
singing “Lamb of God.”**

singing with Leon Holt with his daughter Verity singing the song, “Lamb of God.”

Remember that most of these titles have two versions: one designed for non-Adventists (without Ellen White

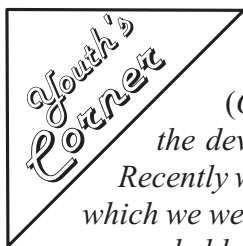
supporting statements or mention of Adventist pioneers), and one especially for Seventh-day Adventists (with Ellen White and pioneer statements). Each video-taped message is available in both NTSC and PAL formats. The messages are also available on audio cassettes.



**An Ellen G. White statement from  
the R&H February 18, 1890**

The suggested donation per video tape is \$7.00 plus actual postage. If you live outside the United States, please indicate if you need NTSC or Pal format. The suggested donation per cassette is \$2.00 plus actual postage. Please keep this project in your prayers that we may accurately and properly represent the wonderful truth about God.

*Allen Stump*



## Readings from Our High Calling



*(Our family has been reading from the devotional book, Our High Calling. Recently we read the two following sections which we were really blessed by. I believe that young and old alike will be blessed by these gems of truth.*  
Allen Stump)

### The Bridge Love Built

*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* 1 John 4:10.

God's love for the world was not manifest because He sent His Son, but because He loved the world He sent His Son into the world that divinity clothed with humanity might touch humanity, while divinity lays hold of divinity. Though sin had produced a gulf between man and his God, a divine benevolence provided a plan to bridge that gulf. And what material did He use? A part of Himself. The brightness of the Father's glory came to a world all seared and marred with the curse, and in His own divine character, in His own divine body, bridged the gulf... The windows of heaven were opened and the showers of heavenly grace in healing streams came to our benighted world.

Had God given us less we could not have been saved. But He gave to our world so abundantly that it could not be said that He could love us more. Then how foolish is the position taken that there is to be a second probation after the first is exhausted. God has exhausted His benevolence ... in pouring out all heaven to man in one great gift. Only in comprehending the value of this offering can we comprehend infinity. O the breadth and height and depth of the love of God! Who of finite beings can comprehend it?

God claims the whole of the affections of man, the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind, the whole strength. He lays claim to all that there is of man, because He has poured out the whole treasure of heaven by giving us His all at once, reserving nothing greater that heaven can do ...

When I commence writing on this subject, I go on and on, and try to get beyond the outer edge, but I fail. When we shall reach the mansions above, Jesus will Himself lead the white-robed ones, made white in the blood of the Lamb, to the Father. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne

shall dwell among them." Rev. 7:15.  
(Ellen G. White—*Our High Calling*, p. 12)

### The One Vast Gift of God

*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*  
2 Cor. 2:15.

Those who receive Christ by faith will be looked upon by Heaven as precious pearls for which the merchantman has paid an infinite price, and the human agents who find Christ will realize that they have found a heavenly treasure. They will be anxious to sell all that they have in order to buy the field which contains this treasure. As they contemplate the love of God, as the plan of salvation opens to their view, as the mystery of Christ's condescension becomes plainer to them, as they see the sacrifice that He made for them, they count nothing too dear to give up for His sake. The more they dwell upon the wonderful love of God, the vaster becomes its proportion, and the brightness of the glory of God becomes too glorious for mortal vision.

The Lord God of heaven collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to purchase the pearl of lost humanity. The Father gave all His divine resources into the hands of Christ in order that the richest blessings of heaven might be poured out upon a fallen race. God could not express greater love than He has expressed in giving the Son of His bosom to this world. This gift was given to man to convince him that God had left nothing undone that He could do, that there is nothing held in reserve, but that all heaven has been poured out in one vast gift. The present and eternal happiness of man consists in receiving God's love, and in keeping God's commandments.

Christ is our redeemer. He is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. He is the fountain in which we may be washed and cleansed from all impurity. He is the costly sacrifice that has been given for the reconciliation of man. The universe of heaven, the worlds unfallen, the fallen world, and the confederacy of evil cannot say that God could do more for the salvation of man than He has done. Never can His gift be surpassed, never can He display a richer depth of love. Calvary represents His crowning work. . . . The Lord would have His followers enraptured with God through the knowledge of His paternal character. (Ellen G. White—*Our High Calling*, p. 13)

# God's Word—God's Way

Recently I received a call from Elder Willis Smith of the Three Angels' Prison Ministry requesting some help with a computer problem he was experiencing. Elder Smith accidentally deleted his mailing list to his publication: *God's Word—God's Way*. Sadly, there was no back-up file or hard copy. While Elder Smith has been able to reproduce some of his addresses, he has lost many, many names and addresses. If you have received *God's Word—God's Way* in the past, and have not received your May issue yet, write to Elder Smith and remind him kindly. His address is:

The Three Angels' Prison Ministry  
P. O. Box 94054  
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

You may call Elder Smith at (216) 271-9045. His e-mail address is [Willissmith@juno.com](mailto:Willissmith@juno.com)

If you have not received *God's Word—God's Way* before, Brother Willis will be glad to send you the paper. There is no cost to the receiver.

Each issue contains valuable information and inspirational materials. One of my favorite sections is "Notable Quotes." Here Elder Smith uses quotes that relate to Bible verses. Here are a few quotes from the latest issue:

Death is not a period, but a comma in the story of life. John 11:25, 26a

To know the will of God is the greatest knowledge, to find the will of God is the greatest discovery, and

to do the will of God is the greatest achievement. John 12:26

People with tact have less to retract. Proverbs 15:28

If the grass looks greener on the other side, you can be sure the water bill is higher. Hebrews 13:5

Love sees through a telescope, not a microscope. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do. James 2:18b

A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both. Proverbs 14:34

*Allen Stump*

## *Missionary Journey – Continued from page one.*

mid-August to mid-September. Because of the vast size of Africa and the limited amount of time available, plans are also being made for some brethren from Uganda, Rwanda, and possibly Nigeria, Ghana, and Mozambique to visit with Lynnford and Howard while they are in Africa.

Some of the meetings will be with Adventist brethren, to more fully train them in the message as well as to provide encouragement and to evaluate the needs of this large field. Camp meetings have also been planned in Africa to coincide with their visit.

In October, Brother David Clayton of Restoration Ministries, and possibly Brother Allen Stump of Smyrna, will be traveling to Australia to encourage and share with the brethren "down under." The tentative schedule is to be in the Brisbane area the first weekend of October, Cooranbong the second weekend, Ballarat (near Melbourne) the third weekend, and Tasmania the fourth weekend. Brethren in points between these areas will be visited during the week.



We want to meet as many of the brethren in Australia as possible. So, if you live "down under" and have not heard of the meetings or been contacted yet, please either let us know or you may contact Michael Lawrence in Ballarat. His phone number is 03-5341-7576. His e-mail is [Lawrence@giant.net.au](mailto:Lawrence@giant.net.au).

Please keep these plans in your prayer. As God has opened doors we greatly desire to go through them. Especially remember our son Hans in your prayers that his health will allow my absence for a month. God is mighty and I am expecting by faith for Him to work all things out for His glory and honor. We hope to give you more details next month.

*Allen Stump*

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