



Good News of the Judgement



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The first angel of Revelation 14 flies with the everlasting gospel (good news), declaring that the hour of God's judgment is come. The Advent people claim to be the expositors of this message. Just as ancient Israel were given the law and had an old covenant concept of it, we have been given the judgment message and have placed it in an old covenant concept.

Recently through one well-known Adventist book prepared and published for the world, it contained a chapter on the judgment which commenced in 1844. This judgment was likened to an earthly court trial where a man is arraigned and charged with the crimes of murder and treason. An advocate is called to plead for the accused. Perhaps he is a good advocate and can get him acquitted. So the judgment message is used to frighten the reader so that he will make haste to place his case in the hands of the Advocate Christ Jesus, who is able to obtain his acquittal. Is not this the way the investigative judgment is usually presented?

We have no hesitation in saying that this concept of the judgment is entirely erroneous. In the first place, it is no good news to anyone. Suppose I informed you that you were to be arraigned before a court and charged with murder and treason. Would that announcement be good news? Even if I could point out a good lawyer who was able to gain your acquittal, would you face the judgment with any sense of relish? You would not! In the second place, he who believes in Jesus Christ shall not come into such a judgment (John 5:24).

One who is justified by faith has already been acquitted and has passed from death unto life. In the third place, the judgment that commenced with the dead in 1844 is a judgment for the people of God.

The Meaning of Judgment According to Psalms

When the believer is judged, this is not to be confused with the judgment of the wicked which takes place after the coming of Jesus. When the man of God is judged, we must not use the illus-

tration of the earthly court wherein one is arraigned to answer for his crimes. The Psalmist shows what judgment means for the saints:

"Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man." Psalm 43:1.

"Save me, O God, by Thy name, and judge me by Thy strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them."

Psalm 54:1-3.

"Stir up Thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O Lord my God, according to Thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me."

Psalm 35:23, 24.

"He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment . . . He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. . . . For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy."

Psalm 72:2, 4, 12, 13.

In these scriptures the man of God actually pleads that God judge him. For the saints, judgment means deliverance, salvation, victory and a breaking of the power of the oppressor.

The Meaning of Judgment According to Daniel

Daniel is the book of judgment. It is in this book that the Advent Movement finds its Biblical basis for the judgment-hour message. Daniel means "God is my judge." The judgment for the saints is especially brought to view in chapters 7 and 8. In order to obtain the full meaning and purpose of the judgment for the saints, we need to consider the circumstances of the Jewish nation when the prophecies were given. God's people had lost their kingdom and their king. They had lost their sanctuary, and they themselves were in captivity. The purpose of Daniel's

prophecies is to tell the story of the restoration. Daniel 2 tells how and when the kingdom would be restored. Daniel 7 shows how the king and the kingdom would be restored. Daniel 8 shows how the sanctuary would be restored and Daniel 10 to 12 shows how the people would be restored from captivity.

In chapter 7 the four empires of Bible prophecy are shown as they hold dominion. Then comes the rule of the papacy. Three times the prophecy says that he prevails against the saints until the judgment. The judgment is for the saints. The state of affairs is reversed by the judgment. Until the judgment the man of sin prevails in the conflict. When the judgment takes place for the saints, they prevail in the conflict and the man of sin is overcome. "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion."

Daniel 7:26.

It has always been God's purpose that man defeat Satan (Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20). Heretofore the man of sin has prevailed. But the judgment for the saints brings a dramatic reversal. Satan will have no power over the sealed saints. They will go forth in the final conflict, conquering and to conquer.

The Meaning of Judgment According to the Day of Atonement

In the ancient tabernacle service we are given a portrayal of the meaning and purpose of the judgment. It must be remembered that the ancient Day of Judgment for Israel was a Day of Atonement for them. When the high priest entered the most holy place, he sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat, thus making the final atonement for Israel. "Atonement" is a great blessing for the people. The record states:

"For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."

Leviticus 16:30.

This ancient ritual prefigured the blotting out of sins and sealing of the saints in their foreheads. Is not the eternal blotting out of sins and sealing

with the seal of the living God a mighty blessing? This is the blessing of the judgment. God seals His people by the baptism of the latter rain. The final atonement, the blotting out of sins, the sealing, the latter rain—whichever expression we choose to use—this is the blessing granted to God's people in the judgment. It clothes them in an armour from their head to their feet.

It makes them an impregnable army. They become God's sword in the final battle, His weapons of war, His goodly horse in the battle, His fit man to lead away the scapegoat. The greatest blessings ever granted the church will be granted when judgment takes place for the living saints.

And as if all the fullness of His sealing grace and blotting out of sins is not enough, it is in the judgment that God grants His people a share in Christ's glory and a seat upon His throne.

(The Great Controversy, p. 484.)

The keys of the universe are handed over to the saints in the judgment. If we must use a puny earthly illustration to illustrate the good news of the judgment, let us liken it to a court which is sitting for poor people who have been dispossessed of rights and titles that are rightfully theirs. All those who appear before this judgment, presenting their valid titles to their lost property (justification is our title), will gain the verdict of the court and will be freely given all that they have lost. So in the judgment which takes place in the most holy place the saints are given back their lost state of holiness, their lost dominion and their lost inheritance.

But before the saints actually enter upon the eternal enjoyment of their inheritance, the stone must smite the image, the man of sin must be dispossessed, they must gain power over the nations, they must enter the city of Babylon as the kings of the east under the leadership of Christ, they must give the man of sin such a wound that he will never recover. Thus they need an armour and a sword with which to smite the enemy in the last great conflict. When the beast issues the challenge,

"Who is able to make war with the beast?" the

saints must have weapons to overthrow this great Goliath who defies the armies of the living God. Read Esther, chapters 4 and 5, and see the illustration of how God's people will enter the inner apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, into the judgment at the time of crisis. It is the judgment that bestows "weapons" upon the saints—weapons for the final conflict, weapons that are not carnal, but the sword of the Word and an impregnable armour of the latter rain.

Let it be known that there is no permanent victory for the church this side of the judgment of the living. There is only one way to finish the work. The judgment must be seen as good news, and entered that the church may receive her weapons for the final conflict. Therefore God's message for now, as never before, is to be sounded forth in the clearest tones:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" Joel 2:15-17.

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19.

A Warning

We must not forget that there are two phases of the judgment in the most holy place—the investigative phase, and the atonement phase (see *The Great Controversy*, p. 480).

The investigation is to search the title to see if the professed people of God, the candidates for the latter rain and seal, have on the wedding garment. Some are found presenting themselves to this judgment who are without their valid title

(Matthew 22:11).

These are cast out and cut off from Israel. They are "gate crashers." The judge informs the court that they have come to the wrong judgment. He defers their judgment for the next session—the judgment of the wicked. Then they will be charged with the murder of the Son of God and treason against the government of heaven.

Let us see that our title to the present judgment is valid.

