

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Fourth Quarter 2022: *Life Everlasting: On Death, Dying, and the Future Hope*

#### Lesson 13 “The Judging Process”

#### Read for this week’s study

Matthew 25:31–46; Daniel 7:9–14; 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; 2 Peter 2:4–6; Malachi 4:1; Revelation 21:8.

#### Memory Text

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10, NIV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Final Judgment
- III. The Pre-Advent Judgment
- IV. The Millennial Judgment
- V. The Executive Judgment
- VI. The Second Death
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “During this week we will consider the end-time judgment process with its three main phases: the pre-advent judgment, the millennial judgment, and the executive judgment. The whole process ends with the vindication of the righteous and the second death of the wicked.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is the context of the memory text in ancient Corinth? How does dispensing justice openly, in public, so everyone can see, influence what we read in 2 Corinthians 5:10 (cf. Acts 18:12-17 and the “*bema*”)?
3. What is the primary purpose of judgment? Is it condemnation (John 5:24-29)? Is it vindication (Daniel 7:21)? (Sunday’s lesson) How would the answer be influenced based on where one begins in the Biblical storyline? How different would the outcomes and answers be?
4. How is the doctrine of judgment compatible with the doctrine of predestination (an arbitrary decree from God electing some to be saved and others to be lost)? How does the judgment show that each person is responsible for his or her own destiny?

5. Monday's lesson deals with the pre-advent judgement. However, we cannot talk about the eschatological judgment unless we have first talked about the judgment on the cross (John 12:31-33) and the preaching of the Gospel (John 3:16-19; 5:24; 12:48). What is the significance of these two stages of judgment?
6. While our pioneers talked about *investigative* judgement, contemporary theologians speak rather about pre-advent *demonstrative* judgment. What is significant about this shift? How does our knowledge of a judgment in heaven going on right now impact how we live here on earth? How did it impact historically generations of our believers in the last 100 years? What experiences did many people have? What would be the purpose of this phase of eschatological judgment? How does that portray God's character of love and his desire to save all his children (Daniel 7:21)?
7. Tuesday's lesson discusses the millennial judgment. What is the purpose of judgment during the Millennium (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3; Jude 6; Revelation 20:4–6, 11–13)? In what sense is this also a demonstrative judgment – God not only metes rewards but also needs to explain why he did so? Why is that necessary (Romans 3:4)?
8. Wednesday's lesson considers the judgment after the Millennium which is called "Executive Judgement". What is the purpose of this phase of judgment?
9. "The executive judgment is God's final and irreversible punitive intervention in human history." (Wednesday's lesson) While limited punitive judgements occurred throughout the history, what would be a purpose of punitive judgment when people cannot change sides and their eternal destiny is settled? How does God's judging process reveal a perfect blend of justice and mercy?
10. Thursday lessons discusses the final destruction of Satan, his angels and the wicked. What is the purpose of this phase of the last judgement (Revelation 20:5; 11-15)? Why is this transparency so important (Romans 3:4; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 15:3-4)?
11. The doctrine of judgment is often threatening to those believers who do not understand it. The whole purpose of all phases of judgment is to provide a public record of God's decisions so that he is seen as a just and loving God.
12. Kingdom life is the only life worth living. Live to the fullest, use the opportunities and gifts you have! Do not get discouraged when things do not work out the way you expected, bad things happen to good people. In the fallen world, that's common.  
  
The judgment of people around you is not decisive. One day a heavenly judgment is going to vindicate you. For the sake of the Kingdom, be the best person you can be! One day you will be happy you did!

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The point is that we are being considered by our future neighbors and friends, and they're worried. Wouldn't you be if you were an angel? They're going to let some of us in. They had a war once before, and Satan capitalizes on this. Ellen White says he has an exact knowledge of every sin he's ever tempted us to commit. We sometimes think our sins are rather private, and when they're forgiven nobody knows them anymore. No, they know them. They're headlines throughout the universe. They're not forgotten. It wouldn't be fair to forget our sins and then put David's in the Bible. We preach about David's sins. Nobody's sins are hidden; they're all well-known up there.

And the devil arises and says, "Let me show you that God once more has made a mistake. He says Jones is safe to save." And he lists all the things he's tempted us to do. And Ellen White has a tremendous speech in his mouth. "Look at all the sins that have marked their disloyalty to God. Look at their selfishness", et cetera, et cetera. How he dares make such a speech is almost unbelievable! And then he points to all the records and says, "Look at all the sins they have committed." If you had just heard your life described, and it was put to the vote, would you vote for yourself? I mean would you hang your head and wonder what's going to happen? But then Christ arises, as she describes it, and he does not excuse our sins.

He says, "The devil has told the truth. Jones did everything he's mentioned. In fact, due to the shortness of time, he left out a lot he could have mentioned." And there comes a murmur in the crowd and it's Jones' guardian angel, and he says, "Look, I was there, do you want me to fill in?" And the Lord says, "No, we've heard quite enough. Jones on the record looks simply frightful. But let me tell you; that record is irrelevant, and it's out of date. It describes the kind of person Jones used to be. But Jones has a new heart and a right spirit within him. He was born as I told Nicodemus had to be, of the Spirit. This doesn't describe Jones."

You see, God is not concerned about our sinful past, he's only concerned about the kind of people we are now. And if I were an angel, I wouldn't be concerned with whether or not God had forgiven Idi Amin; I'd want to know if it was safe to live next door to Idi Amin. When the prophet Isaiah meets King Manasseh in the hereafter, and he's innocently carrying a pruning hook or something to prune his vines; the last time he held one in his hands he was sawing poor Isaiah in half in a hollow log. And will God say, "Well, don't worry about him carrying that saw, I forgave him." That wouldn't reassure me at all; I'd want to know if he could be trusted with a sharp saw. And that's why Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Not unless ye be forgiven." No, he said "Not unless you be born again." It's a healing ministry; new hearts, right spirits. David finally got the message and said, "Sacrifices won't do it, I need a new heart, I need a right spirit, I need truth in the inner man." Now he didn't say, "I'll stop offering sacrifices" because Christ hadn't yet come. But he says, "I'm going to start offering them for a different reason now." As Hebrews says, all the sacrifices were a constant reminder of sin, and that sin leads to death. He

says, "I'll go on doing that." But no more were they sacrifices "to propitiate the wrath of God", and things like that.

Well, I see this discussion going on in heaven. What chance do we have? Has God proved his ability to judge the human heart? Job showed that. And many other places. The last generation may show that. No angel can read our hearts; no angel can read our thoughts. If they could, they could have read Lucifer's thoughts and known, they would have known he was a deceiver. They couldn't read what his plan was. Only God can read our innermost thoughts. And so they have to look to God to say, "Is Jones really changed; is he safe to save?" And when Jesus says, "Yes he is", then they say, "Then we'll welcome him at the gates." And so, I think they have very legitimate questions. I mean, they should be afraid that we're coming in. They have to hear Jesus say, "Don't judge the man by the record. Let me tell you, he's not that kind of person anymore; he's been changed." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Atonement and Your Picture of God, recorded May 1993, San Diego, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMAANDP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMAANDP> (Part 2)

Is Jeremiah pleased that finally God's justice and wrath are being demonstrated? Do you remember Jonah? When God did not destroy Nineveh on time, was Jonah pleased? No, he wished they would be, because that would have proved that he was a good prophet. Was Jeremiah pleased that now they were getting what they so richly deserved? No, he was a much better friend of God than Jonah was. Jeremiah weeps because finally all that he had been predicting had come.

How do you think Adventists should feel if finally in the end all the terrible things we have predicted will come? Will we say, "Well, that's good; God is keeping his promise, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,'" and I, in a sense of justice, will be deeply satisfied? Or would you weep? When the wicked die at the end of the millennium, how do you think God will behave? Hosea 11, he'll cry. God is not willing that any should perish. Think of all the verses like that in the Bible. I think Jeremiah knew God very well. Think how they had treated him. Think how he had been abused, and no one would listen. And yet when the trouble came, he wept over them. I think it speaks very well of him. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah and Lamentations, recorded February 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

I have heard servants sometimes charge that friends lack a keen sense of justice. They do not leave room in their understanding of God for just and essential punishment. Their God is simply too weak and kind. “You have a marshmallow God,” I heard one servant say.

The truth is precisely the opposite. Friend-believers have great concern about righteousness, which is the literal meaning of the Greek word often translated “justice.” The English word “justice” comes from the Latin translation of the Greek. (Latin, “justitia”)

Friends admire God’s righteousness and would love to be like him. And to do what is right is, of course, to do what is just. But servants tend to think of justice in terms of retribution and punishment.

“I find comfort in the thought that some day God will bring retribution on those who have hurt me so much,” I heard a believer say. “Now, I’m not asking for vengeance, you understand. I’m just asking for justice.” {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 109-110. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter8.html>

Someone came between because of the emergency. It’s not ideal. God would like to deal directly with us, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. But because we don’t know God, and we’ve been afraid, God has given us these pictures. He’s given us a picture even of Jesus being our Judge. Doesn’t Jesus deal with this? He says, “You’re all comforted that I’m going to be your Judge. Because you were scared my Father was going to judge you, isn’t that right?” They said, “Oh, we’re so relieved you’re going to be our Judge.” Is that because the Father is not as gracious and forgiving as the Son, that we say we’re glad the Son’s going to be our Judge? So before he went back to heaven, he said, “I’ve got to clear that up, too. Actually, if you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father. You’d receive just as gracious judgment from my Father as from me. But I’d like to take you a step further. I’m not going to judge you anyway.” “Oh, there’ll be something that will judge you. The truth will judge you. The truth about my Father in the Great Controversy. The truth about the kind of person he is and what he wants of his children, and the way he governs the universe. That’s the truth. If you have loved that truth and it has led you to repentance and faith and trust, you will have stood humbly in our presence and said, ‘What must I do to be saved and healed?’ and we will have been able to save and heal you, and all will be well. But if you have turned down this truth about my Father and about me, you will not know us; you will not be our friends; you will not trust us enough to listen; we will not be able to heal you; and you will perish and we will cry.” And that’s the judgment. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Leviticus*, recorded October 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

\*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/5MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/6MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

But “under the demands of law.” That belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, which we discussed in our second conversation. That what has gone wrong is that we have “broken the rules,” and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules. I don’t think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, “satisfying justice.” Whose justice? I have friends who say, “If God does not give Idi Amin several days in the fire, I will not regard Him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross and watch Him die and hear His cry and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into Scripture. I don’t see Him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, “The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence” recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>

Lou: The second question I want to raise follows on from this. In the book of Revelation, it describes God as resurrecting the wicked at the end of the Millennium. Now, why does God do this? They are the wicked. They are lost anyway. Why not just leave them asleep? Isn’t that harsh?

Graham: I imagine the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah arising and looking around and saying, “Here we go again!” It seems cruel and inhuman, doesn’t it, to resurrect them? There has to be a purpose.

By the way, the word “millennium” is another Latin word that you won’t find anywhere in Scripture, like “justification,” or “sanctification.”

Lou: Should I say, “a thousand years”? That’s in the Bible, isn’t it?

Graham: It’s Latin. “Mille” is a thousand, and “annus” is a year. We know the word “annus” as in A.D., *Anno Domini*, the year of the Lord. So “millennium” is a thousand years. And it’s true, at the end of the thousand years between the Second Coming of Christ and the third coming, between the resurrection of the righteous and then the resurrection of the wicked, the rebels are resurrected, to be sure.

Why would God do that? I mean, what suffering! How terrible to see loved ones out there. God would only do this if it would say something of very great importance that would contribute to our understanding and the security of the universe. One thing we'll see, if we should wonder why Uncle Bill is not in the Kingdom. Uncle Bill who said, "If you just prove it to me, I'd come in." And there is Uncle Bill out there. And here's the New Jerusalem. Here's Christ in his human form. Here's all the evidence, and Uncle Bill is not moved one bit. In fact, Revelation goes on to say that Satan moves among these rebels who have been resurrected and he deceives them into marching against the New Jerusalem as if to destroy Christ again. And you say, "God, your diagnosis was right. More time, more evidence would have done no good for Uncle Bill."

Lou: So that resurrection is a part of the essential demonstration.

Graham: It's a confirmation.

Lou: That God is bringing peace.

Graham: When God says, "Uncle Bill was not safe to save," and I look at my bumper sticker and say, "Well, if You've said it, I believe it. That's all there is to it." And God says, "You know better than that by now. I want you to see the evidence. You'll weep when you see it, but Uncle Bill will not respond."

Lou: Speaking of the millennium now, this thousand-year period, what are the saints, the redeemed, those who are saved, what are they doing? That's a long period of time.

Graham: Yes, I like to remember what Peter said, "With the Lord a thousand years is like a day." You could have translated that "a millennium is like a day, and a day is like a millennium." I don't think we need to worry about the time. I think that a thousand years with the Lord will seem like a day. But I think there are important things that have to happen during that time. The angels have had a chance during what we call the Investigative Judgment, though that's not a biblical term—this time when the family meets to consider candidates for the Kingdom, so that our future neighbors and friends may be satisfied that it's safe to admit rebels like us. What about us? We've not seen that. I think during the Millennium those who have been adjudged safe to save will have their opportunity to ask questions, see the evidence, to find out why Mother isn't there. I would find that very sad. Well, I know He would be fair about it, that He would show me the evidence so I would be satisfied.

More than that, there's another very gripping thing that may need to happen during the Millennium. We will be preparing ourselves to face that awful scene when the wicked are resurrected and die in a fiery moment of destruction. We have to see that someday. Are we ready to see it and not become afraid of God? I think those of us who "grow up," who may be alive to see Christ come, we will have been so settled into the truth that we can see the seven last plagues and not become afraid of God. We might be ready to see this. But think of all the



babes in the truth who have been saved from the foot of Mt. Sinai. Think of the thief on the cross. Think of all the others who have not had time and evidence to become confirmed in this. Everyone must be ready for that awesome day when God may call to us, to everybody who will be inside the New Jerusalem that day, when God says, "Children, you know what's coming next. Do you want to come out to the wall and watch? Or do you want to hide in the basement somewhere? You know I'm about to give My rebellious children up, and untold numbers of them are going to die. And you know why I've waited so long." And so we stand, perhaps, and watch our God, as fire comes down from heaven and the glory of Him who is love will consume all that is out of harmony. And we know, because we are convinced about this, that as the wicked die, God will be crying, "Why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?" He's no more angry with them than He was with His Son as He gave Him up in Gethsemane and on Calvary.

And then when it's all over, God would turn to us and say, "How awful that was. But children, I have one last question to ask you all: Have I made you afraid? Because if I have, I've let it happen too soon, and I would have waited longer." But hopefully we will be so settled into the truth that we will be able to say to God, and maybe get a little closer and say, "It's all right, God. There was no other way." And then there is peace forever, in spite of that awful end. Are we ready to see that and not be made afraid? Because if it makes us afraid, then we'll serve Him from fear, and the obedience of fear produces the character of a rebel, and God still has the seeds of sin in His universe, and He has not won the war.

Lou: We are back where it began.

Graham: We are back at the very beginning. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, "At Peace with our Heavenly Father" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/20MMCAG>*

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

God created the earth to be the abode of holy, happy beings. That purpose will be fulfilled when, renewed by the power of God and freed from sin and sorrow, it shall become the eternal home of the redeemed. {AH 540.3}

In every command and in every promise of the word of God is the power, the very life of God, by which the command may be fulfilled and the promise realized. He who by faith receives the word is receiving the very life and character of God. {COL 38.1}

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of



holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. {MH 417.2}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

Angels do not come to the earth to denounce and to destroy, to rule and to exact homage, but are messengers of mercy to cooperate with the Captain of the Lord's host, to cooperate with the human agents who shall go forth to seek and save the lost sheep. Angels are commanded to encamp round about those who fear and love God. {LHU 207.3}

To give glory to God is to reveal His character in our own, and thus make Him known. And in whatever way we make known the Father or the Son, we glorify God (MS 16, 1890). {7BC 979.4}

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, December 22, 1914 par. 4}

God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law. {PP 338.4}

Every question of truth and error in the long-standing controversy has now been made plain. The results of rebellion, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, have been laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The working out of Satan's rule in contrast with the government of God has been presented to the whole universe. Satan's own works have condemned him. God's wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated. It is seen

that all His dealings in the great controversy have been conducted with respect to the eternal good of His people and the good of all the worlds that He has created. "All Thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord; and Thy saints shall bless Thee." Psalm 145:10. The history of sin will stand to all eternity as a witness that with the existence of God's law is bound up the happiness of all the beings He has created. With all the facts of the great controversy in view, the whole universe, both loyal and rebellious, with one accord declare: "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." {GC 670.3}

In sparing the life of Cain the murderer, God gave the world an example of what would be the result of permitting the sinner to live to continue a course of unbridled iniquity. Through the influence of Cain's teaching and example, multitudes of his descendants were led into sin, until "the wickedness of man was great in the earth" and "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." Genesis 6:5, 11. {GC 543.2}

By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.—DA 764. {TA 295.1}

But the time has now come when the rebellion is to be finally defeated, and the history and character of Satan disclosed. In his last great effort to dethrone Christ, destroy his people, and take possession of the city of God, the arch-deceiver has been fully unmasked. Those who have united with him see the total failure of his cause. Christ's followers and the loyal angels behold the full extent of his machinations against the government of God. He is the object of universal abhorrence. {GC88 669.3}

It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. {5T 120.2}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not desire to be set free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. {SC 34.2}

God destroys no man; but after a time the wicked are given up to the destruction they have wrought for themselves. {YI, November 30, 1893 par. 6}