

The Pre-Advent Judgment¹



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 9

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Deuteronomy 25:1; 1 Kings 8:32; Psalm 51:1-4; Matthew 22:1-13; Hebrews 9:22-24; Revelation 20:12; Revelation 22:12.

MEMORY VERSE: “Look! I [Jesus] am coming soon! I bring my rewards with me [Jesus]. I will reward each person for what he has done” (Revelation 22:12, NIV).

DANIEL 8 FOCUSES ON THE LITTLE HORN. This week, we will look at the judgment as it is presented in Daniel 7. Both Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 share important truths that we need to understand. Each chapter needs what the other chapter has. Taken together, Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 show us much about the judgment.

It is important to remember that Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 are not just deep theology,² prophecy, or history. Together, they send a message. It is a message of hope and promise. Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 tell us that no matter how bad things are, they will not last forever. The God who showed us the history of the world from Daniel's time until our time and into the future will bring us to a wonderful end. In that end, evil will be punished and God's people will be saved. In our study of charts, graphs, and historical events,³ we need to remember this important point. It is very important, too, that we share these truths with the world. These truths are not just about beasts and little horns. These truths are also the wonderful promise of eternal⁴ life in God's kingdom. This promise is made possible only through Jesus' death for our sake.

¹the pre-Advent judgment—the judgment that will take place before Jesus' second coming. Adventists believe that God's judgment comes in three parts. The first part began in 1844 and is continuing until Jesus' return to the earth. This is the pre-Advent judgment. The pre-Advent judgment is also called the investigative judgment.

²theology—a study of God and religion.

³events—things that happen.

⁴eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

SUNDAY—SEPTEMBER 10**“UNTIL THE ANCIENT OF DAYS CAME” (Daniel 7:22)**

Earlier this quarter, we learned about the importance of the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. We saw, in lesson 5, four kingdoms in a vision. These events are the rise and fall of Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome, and the cleansing of the sanctuary. The first three events were important. The cleansing of the sanctuary was the most important.

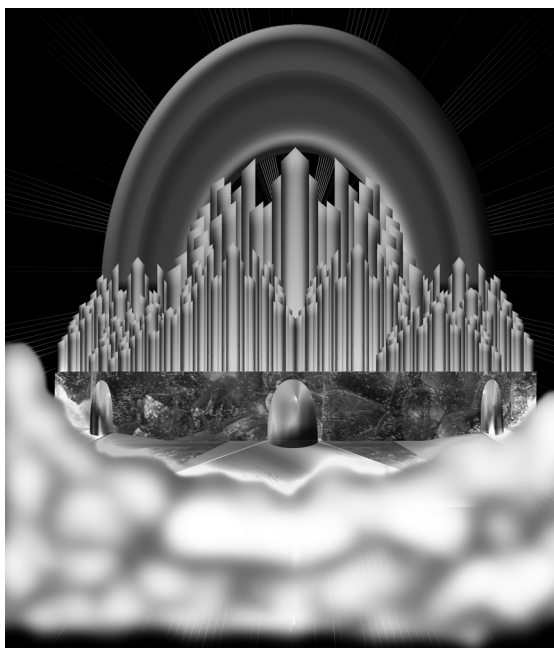
What is this cleansing of the sanctuary, which is so important it was connected to the great kingdoms the Bible uses to show the history of the world?

Daniel 8 does not tell us much about the answer. But, God did not give us just Daniel 8. He gave us a clear comparison⁵ in Daniel 7. So Daniel 7 helps to explain Daniel 8.

We earlier saw the comparison between the judgment in Daniel 7 and the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. What does this judgment (the cleansing of the sanctuary) lead to? What is the result of this judgment? What one special point is shown again and again? Daniel 7:8, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27.

Notice a theme repeated in these

verses: The saints will be given God’s kingdom. It is an everlasting⁶ kingdom that will not go away as did all the kingdoms before it. Again and again, different kingdoms, including the evil little horn, are shown as going away. But God and His saints are shown to be having the final (last) victory. So evil things may last a long time. But in the end, evil will be removed forever because of this judgment/cleansing of the sanctuary. And God’s eternal kingdom will be established.



God’s kingdom will last forever.

So, it is much easier now to understand why the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 closes the vision of these earthly kingdoms.

All the other kingdoms came and

⁵comparison—how things are the same.

⁶everlasting—lasting forever; eternal; without beginning or end.

went, or will be finally destroyed. But the saints will “possess (have)” God’s eternal kingdom (Daniel 7:18). What does this promise mean to you? What is the first thing you want to do when you get to that kingdom?



MONDAY—SEPTEMBER 11

JUDGMENT AND THE LITTLE HORN (Daniel 7:22)

As Adventists, we understand the cleansing of the sanctuary as a judgment for those who have claimed to be Jesus’ followers (Matthew 22:1-13). We see this in the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary. This was called the Day of Atonement⁷ (Leviticus 16).

⁷atonement—forgiveness and cleansing from sin.

In the earthly sanctuary, the judgment centered around God’s people. So why in both Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 is the judgment/sanctuary cleansing shown to be connected with the little horn? How is the little horn connected with the pre-Advent judgment?

What is the difference in the fate of the little horn and the fate of the “saints of the most high”? Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 26, 27.

The little horn is found guilty and is punished. But the saints are forgiven and pardoned. This is normal for the Hebrew idea of justice and judgment. Judgment involved both the punishment of the guilty and the pardon of the righteous (holy). Both punishment and pardon are in this picture of the pre-Advent judgment.

**Punishment of the guilty
+ Pardon of the righteous**

JUDGMENT

How do Deuteronomy 21:1 and 1 Kings 8:32 show what is seen in Daniel 7 and Daniel 8?

The judgment in Daniel 7 results in the end of the little horn. But that is only because the judgment results in

the Second Coming. The Second Coming brings about the end of the whole world anyway (at least as we know it now). The judgment involved more than just the little horn, a symbol of evil. What we see here are two parts: (1) evil punished and (2) the saints pardoned. It would not seem like justice if it were any other way.

The righteous are pardoned, evil is punished. That is God's promise. How should that promise help you through times when you feel that evil is pardoned and the righteous are punished?

TUESDAY—SEPTEMBER 12

THEODICY, AGAIN (Daniel 7:9, 10)

In the first week of this quarter, we looked at the word *theodicy*. It means that God's name is cleared in the face of evil. *Theodicy* is the idea that we can trust that God is good, righteous (holy), and just (fair) in a world of evil.

We saw that sin and evil began in another part of the universe. We saw, too, that the other worlds are wondering about sin and rebellion on earth. The earth is the only place in the universe where sin and rebellion are happening. We also looked at the fact that other beings (people and angels) in the universe also are interested in learning more about sin and rebellion on earth.

Read Daniel 7: 9, 10. Then answer the following questions:

1. What event is taking place?
2. Where is it taking place?
3. Before whom is it taking place?

Daniel 7:9, 10 show a heavenly judgment scene. This judgment leads to the destruction of the little horn and the setting up of God's kingdom. The judgment is held in front of a large crowd of people and angels. "Ten thousand times ten thousand" is a way of describing a large crowd that cannot be counted. So what we see in Daniel 7:9, 10 is the universe watching God give the judgment that leads to the setting up of His eternal kingdom.

How do Psalm 51:1-4 and Romans 3:4 fit in with the judgment shown in Daniel 7?

God is judging His people in front of the universe. He is doing it in a way that people will say: "You are right when you sentence me. You are fair when you judge me" (Psalm 51:4, NIV).

How open and honest are you in all your judgments? Why might you not be open and honest? What might you need to change about your judgments?

WEDNESDAY—SEPTEMBER 13

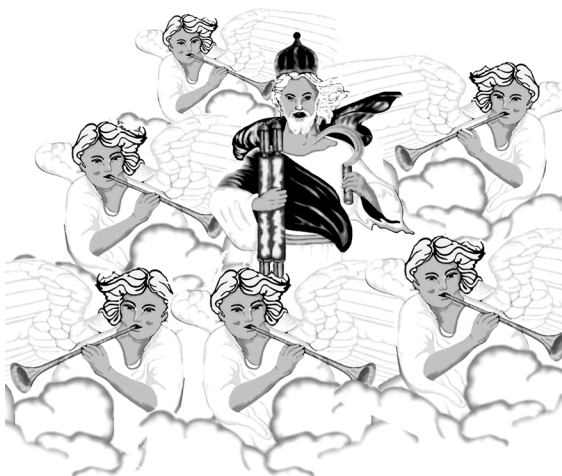
PRE-ADVENT JUDGMENT (Daniel 12:1; Matthew 16:27)

What proof can you find in Daniel 12:1, Matthew 16:27, and Revelation

20:12 that shows why the judgment is before the Second Coming?

At the Second Coming, the saints receive the kingdom and the little horn is destroyed. So there must have been some kind of judgment before the sentence is given. Even dishonest earthly courts do the same! How fair would it be to sentence someone and then have a trial and investigate the facts?

Jesus returns saying: "I [Jesus] bring my rewards with me. I will reward each person for what he has done" (Revelation 22:12, NIV). We all are to be judged by our works (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; 1 Corinthians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:12). So it is clear that there must be a judgment before the Second Coming. Adventists call this judgment a pre-Advent, or investigative (examining) judgment. No judgment would be given without some kind of investigation (examination for proof).



After the judgment, Jesus will return.

Read carefully, again, the judgment scene in Daniel 7. Putting aside any of the numbers and dates, why is this so clearly a pre-Advent judgment? What proof do you find in the verses that suggest an investigation (Read Psalm 56:8; Psalm 69:28; Daniel 12:1; Revelation 13:8; Revelation 20:12)?

THURSDAY—SEPTEMBER 14

THE HEAVENS MADE PURE (Hebrews 9:22-24)

Read Hebrews 9:22-24. Then answer the following questions:

1. What two sanctuaries are being talked about here?
2. What comparison is being made between the sanctuaries? What is the author of Hebrews saying about what must happen to both sanctuaries?

Hebrews 9:22-24 has puzzled non-Adventist thinkers because it speaks about the heavenly sanctuary itself needing to be cleansed. "One might think that the earthly sanctuary was cleansed because the heavenly sanctuary also was to be cleansed." —Adapted from Craig Koester, *Hebrews*, Anchor Bible Series (New York: Doubleday, 2001), p. 427.

The Greek word in Hebrews 9:23 for "purified (made clean)" or "cleansed," comes from the same Greek word used in an old Greek translation of Daniel 8:14. So those

Greeks who, before Jesus' time, translated the Old Testament understood the Hebrew word in Daniel 8:14 to mean that the sanctuary was to be cleansed. Years later, the author of Hebrews had the same idea. But the frame of thought was difficult: Just as the earthly sanctuary was cleansed, so must the heavenly sanctuary be cleansed. The whole point of the earthly cleansing was to point to the greater cleansing, the real cleansing in the heavenly sanctuary.

Think about the time frame of the prophecy in Daniel 8:14. Why must this cleansing of the sanctuary be the same cleansing as described in Hebrews 9:22-24?

The Day of Atonement was when the sanctuary was cleansed. In Jewish thought, this was also the great day of judgment. It was the time when people had their last chance to repent⁸ before facing judgment. On the Day of Atonement, Jews still sometimes say this blessing to one another: "May you be sealed in the book of life forever."

Why is Jesus' righteousness (holiness) covering you by faith your only hope that in the day of judgment you will be sealed in the book of life forever?



Our only hope is Jesus' righteousness.

FRIDAY—SEPTEMBER 15

ADDITIONAL STUDY: In Jewish thought, what happens on the Day of Atonement when the sanctuary is cleansed? Compare⁹ the quotes below with Daniel 7 and with how Ellen White describes the pre-Advent judgment in *The Great Controversy [War]*, chapters 23 and 24.

"God is seated on His throne to judge the world. At the same time the

⁸repent—to say you are sorry for your sins and that with the Holy Spirit's help, you want to stop sinning.

⁹compare—show how things are the same.

Judge, Pleader, and Expert opens the Book of Records. It is read, every man's signature (name) being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded. A still, small voice is heard. Angels shudder (tremble) saying, this is the day of judgment. . . . On the Day of Atonement, it is sealed who shall live and who shall die." —Adapted from the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, "the Day of Atonement."

Some prayers given on the Day of Atonement read like this: "Justify me in the judgment. . . . O silence the accuser¹⁰ and suffer (permit) the advocate¹¹ to take his place. . . . In consequence¹² of their (God's people) pleading, declare, I (God) have pardoned. . . . O blot out (remove) the transgression (sin) of the people that have been saved. . . . He (God), the Ancient of Days, sits as Judge. . . . In the book of life may we be sealed by Thee (God)." —Adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Think about all that God has done for us through Jesus. But, to make sure that all the universe sees His justice and fairness in dealing with sin, God lets Himself be judged on how He judges. What does that tell us about God's character? Why is He so worthy of our praise and worship?
2. If you believe that people go to heaven or hell when they die, why is a pre-Advent judgment not necessary? What does this teach us about how many of our beliefs are connected with one another?
3. Do you know people who have difficulty in accepting our understanding of the pre-Advent judgment? As a class, have a house meeting where you can fellowship and share some of the things you have been learning with these people.

¹⁰accuser—someone who blames another person for doing something wrong. Here the accuser is Satan. Satan accuses God's people of sinning (Zechariah 3:1-5).

¹¹advocate—someone who supports another person. Jesus is our Advocate. He supports us against Satan's accusing us of sin.

¹²consequence—as a result.