



## Resources

### SDA Fundamental Belief #24—The Heavenly Sanctuary

Ancient and timeless, a masterpiece of literature, the Holy Bible Jesus' ultimate sacrifice gives us confidence to approach God, knowing we are forgiven. Now Jesus is reviewing our lives before returning, so there's no question that His judgments are made in love. There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that God set up and not man. In it, Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2,300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus and in Him are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent. (Heb. 8:1-5; 4:14-16; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; 1:3; 2:16, 17; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6; Lev. 16; Rev. 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:12.)

there's got to be...

# Something More



Week 7—The Good News About the Judgment  
Small Group Guide

## Special Introduction

This week's small group discussion will take you into the heart of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. Many have rightfully called the doctrine of the Investigative Judgment the one unique Adventist contribution to Christian teaching. It has also been ground zero for some of the most heated theological debates in our church's history.

Please don't let that frighten you as you enter this discussion. When you remember the bigger picture that this doctrine fits within, many questions resolve themselves before they begin. Remind yourselves of these things:

1. The entire Great Controversy is between Christ and Satan. We are collateral damage in Satan's war on God.
2. My status with God is entirely dependent on Him accepting Jesus blood to cover my sins.
3. God reveals what He will do in the future to build faith in Him, not fear.

In this study we began with Jesus offer of a full and abundant life. When Jesus begins recreating that life in us it will affect our Spiritual reality, our physical reality, and our Mental/Emotional reality.

This topic is all about our Spiritual reality and how we see God. Jesus came to tell us that God is for us, not against us. When I can begin to see God as my friend who is fighting for me and desires my allegiance in the larger issues He is working out, I can begin to find a full spiritual life.

With those things in mind, enjoy your discussion together.

While these two concepts are not incompatible, their focus is completely different. Perfectly living out the law inevitably turns one focus toward comparing one's behaviors with the perfect standard and tends to breed either condemnation and shame or spiritual pride and criticism of others. Perfectly living out the fruits of the Spirit turns ones focus toward the work of Christ in one's life and breeds the fruit it promises.

Those who advocate LGT rightly call the church to remember our need to let Christ work his transformation in our lives. His perfect law reveals to us both the heights from which we have fallen and the goal He has in mind for us. But the methods for achieving that standard and the focus of those on that path are radically different than the means LGT describes.

Scripture says, "By their fruits you shall know them." (Matt 7:16-20) The fruit of pursuing LGT has been dissention, a critical spirit, separation from those who disagree with them, and distrust of church leadership. This has taken place in churches across North America and continues at the present time.

While we must respond with Christian love and understanding to those who would advocate LGT, we can be resolute in the following messages:

- LGT is not historic Adventism. It is only a portion of our message and has been distorted by being presented out of balance with other key historic positions of the Adventist church.
- The heart of our message as Seventh-day Adventists is grounded in and should draw all to a relationship with a living Christ. There is no dichotomy between a true understanding of God's law and a passionate love relationship with God. To preach God's love and emphasize His grace is not at odds with His sanctifying work.

and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and *advancing* from strength to strength, from glory to glory.” (SDABC vol. 6, p. 1070) We will perfectly reproduce the character of Christ in our lives through growth in grace and by absolutely relying every day in Christ’s forgiving grace.

*Safety in Heaven:* Although it would be possible for sin to arise again in heaven, this will never happen in actuality. The reason is not found in the unique experience of the last generation of believers but in the work of Christ on the cross. He, through the cross, reconciled the whole cosmos to God in a permanent bond of union (Col. 1:19, 20). Again, White is powerfully clear: “The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan” (ST Dec. 30, 1889) The perfection of creatures is not powerful enough to hold the cosmos together. Praise God for Christ!

### ***Final Thoughts from Pastor Eric***

LGT relies heavily on Ellen White’s statement in Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 69. “When the character of Christ is perfectly produced in His people, He will come to claim them as His own.” A careful reading of her statement and its context reveals that they have misinterpreted what Mrs. White was saying in this passage.

LGT draws the connection between this statement and the idea that the Law of God is a transcript of His character. Thus it is perfect keeping of the law that it expected. However, the context of this statement is the fruit of the Spirit. It is these qualities that Ellen White had in mind as the evidence of Christ’s character..



## ***Message Review***

### **I. There is a Judgment (Matthew 12:33-37, Romans 20:12)**

#### **II. The judgment is bigger than you**

- A. The real issue at stake is whether you can trust God or not
- B. Fair Judgment always has three basic elements
  - Investigation
  - Trial
  - Sentencing

#### **III. The judgment has already begun**

- A. We know the Investigator (John 5:22, Romans 8:31-34)
- B. We know the plan
  - 1. The festival of the Day of Atonement pictured a future at – one – ment with God
  - 2. Transferring sin always happened through shedding blood (Romans 5:9)
  - 3. God’s final house cleaning began in 1844 (Daniel 8:14)
- C. My life will be evidence for the prosecution or the defense
- D. If I’m evidence for God, my life record only shows the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 9:12-14)



## Connect Questions

- ☞ Share a memory of a time when you, a friend, or one of your children did something wrong and were afraid of what would happen when an adult found out.



## Dig Questions

- ☞ Jesus clearly taught there would be a judgment on our lives. Read Matthew 25:31-46 and answer the following questions.
  - ⇒ What role did he say our actions would have in determining our eternal destiny?
  - ⇒ What relationship did Jesus see between our deeds and our relationship with Him?
- ☞ If you grew up in a conservative Christian home, share some of the ideas you grew up believing about the judgment. Where did you get those ideas from? How did they make you feel?
- ☞ The focus of the judgment is on God and whether Jesus' sacrifice is sufficient. It is not focused on my sins. What practical difference does clearly understanding this focus make in how you feel about being judged?
- ☞ How does my relationship to the Judge influence my reasons for following God's law?

Jones and E. J. Waggoner. This theology introduced a strong element of legalism in some sectors of the church by claiming that the character of God, maligned by Satan in the cosmic conflict, will be vindicated through the holy and perfect life of obedience of the last generation of believers. This generation will reach a level of character development unequalled in Christian history, copying perfectly in their lives what God did in Christ. Once this happens, the Lord will return. This theology seeks to explain why the Lord has not returned and the nature and purpose of Christian perfection. It is based primarily on a particular reading of the writings of Ellen G. White.

*Christ and the Vindication of God:* In the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White the cosmic vindication of God is the exclusive result of the sacrificial death of Christ. He was the only one who could reveal who God is and therefore vindicate Him in the cosmic conflict (John 1:18). White is also very clear: "By His life and His death, Christ proved that God's justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. *Satan's charges were refuted.* God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love." (DA 762) What Christ accomplished does not need to be supplemented; it is more than enough.

*Christian Perfection:* God's will for His people has always been the same: Victory over the enslaving power of sin in their lives (Rom. 6:11-14; 8:5-8). Christ has always been the model for the Christian life. But true Christian perfection cannot be separated from the eternal efficacy of the cross and our constant reliance on its forgiving power (1 John 2:1, 2). Christian perfection is a constant growth in grace accompanied by a constant reliance on God's forgiving grace. Notice how precise Ellen G. White is on this important theological topic: "As the penitent sinner, *contrite before God*, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf, and *accepts this atonement* as his only hope in this life and the future life, *his sins are pardoned*. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to *conform his will entirely to God's will*,



## More About Last Generation Theology

### Background

Also known as “historic Adventism” this movement grew out of the teachings of prominent theologian and church leader M.L. Andreasen. As early as the late 1930’s he presented what he saw as the logical conclusion of Adventist doctrine. His theology gained sharper focus in 1957 with the publishing of “Questions on Doctrine.” (QOD) He saw the book as a sinister change to Adventist theology. He presented the conclusions of his theology in the last chapter of his book “The Sanctuary Service” which he titled, “The Final Generation. His ministerial credentials were revoked in 1961 but reinstated posthumously in 1962.

Since Andreasen, a number of pastors and theologians have continued to advance Last Generation Theology. Robert Pierson (president of the GC from 1966-1979), Herbert Douglass (1970’s), Dennis Priebe (1980’s), Larry Kirkpatrick (1990’s). Each of these men have been influential in advancing these ideas through print and preaching.

There is plenty of information and discussion online regarding this movement within Adventism, but I felt it important to give you a “Cliff’s Notes” overview of the theological issues and a simple response. To do that, I’ve reprinted an excellent online response by Angel Rodriquez, director of the Biblical Research Institute on the subject titled “Theology of the Last Generation.”

### Article by Angel Rodriquez

The theology of the last generation was developed and popularized in the Adventist Church by M. L. Andreasen (*The Sanctuary Service* [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1937; revised 1947]). Andreasen was building on insights from A. T.



## Dig Questions cont.

- ∞ The Bible teaches that the earthly sanctuary is a pattern of a heavenly sanctuary and that it presents God’s entire plan of redemption in symbolic form. Share together some of the symbols in the sanctuary and the meanings they point to (Don’t forget to include the six festivals of the Jewish year).
  
- ∞ Within Adventism today there are those that teach that before Jesus returns there must be a final generation that is sinless (keeping God’s law perfectly). How is this idea impacted by what we have learned about Jesus, sin, the atonement and the judgment? (See special section at the end of this study guide for background information)
  
- ∞ When someone’s primary concern is keeping God’s law, what will they tend to focus on and pay attention to in their own lives and the lives of others?
  
- ∞ When someone’s focus is on accepting Christ’s perfect life as fulfillment of the law, what will they tend to focus on and pay attention to in their own lives and the lives of others?



## **Dig Questions cont.**

- ⇒ Some have suggested that Hiram Edson’s vision in a cornfield of Christ entering the Most Holy Place was nothing more than a convenient way to avoid having to admit that William Miller’s interpretation of Daniel 8 and 9 was wrong. Discuss other instances where God used miraculous visions to help his people through a crisis.
  - ⇒ Daniel and his friends are about to be executed – Daniel 2
  - ⇒ Saul’s (Paul’s) vision on the road to Damascus – Acts 9:1-16
  - ⇒ Peter’s vision of the sheet – Acts 10:9-23
- ⇒ Clearly William Miller was wrong about what would happen in 1844 and God didn’t correct him. Discuss other times when God allowed a mistaken idea to persist without correcting them?
  - ⇒ Eve names her firstborn “Cain” (Cain means “gotten” and scholars and Ellen White (DA p. 31) see this as a reference to the promised Deliverer) - Gen 4:1
  - ⇒ Jacob takes two wives (polygamy) – Genesis 29:26-30
  - ⇒ Naaman taking dirt back to his own country to worship God (idea that gods controlled territorial regions) – 2 Kings 5:17-19



## **Reflect Questions**

- ⇒ Even though “great disappointments” can be incredibly painful, what things do we learn only by going through them?
- ⇒ What holds us back from fully believing that we can stand confident before God in the judgment? How does having confidence in the judgment effect my motivation for doing the right thing?



## **On Your Own**

- ⇒ Read Daniel 8 and 9 in detail for yourself. How much of our doctrine about 1844 can you explain to someone else? What questions do you have? What information and further study do you need to present a simple Bible study if a friend asked you what this meant?
- ⇒ Other Evangelical Christians see the little horn of Daniel 8 as a symbol of a Greek King named Antiochus Epiphanes who put down a Jewish revolt in 2nd Century BC. In the process he sacrificed a pig on the alter and desecrated the temple. Read Daniel 8 and look at the qualities of this little horn. What qualities might support that interpretation and what qualities point to a different interpretation?