

ENDTIME ISSUES NEWSLETTER No. 153

“The Pre-Advent Judgment - Part I”

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A medical doctor was standing next to me in the fellowship hall of an impressive Adventist Church. While we were waiting for the food to be set out for the fellowship lunch, he asked me: “Dr. Bacchiocchi, when do you think our Adventist church will give up the doctrine of the investigative judgment? My two sons who are both medical doctors, have recently left our Adventist Church, because they find this doctrine unbiblical and detrimental to a healthy Christian life. It causes people to constantly worry if they will be ready when their names come up for judgment.”

In the few moments available I reassured the good doctor that I hoped that our church will never consider giving up this distinctive doctrine of a Pre-Advent Judgment, because I find it to be solidly biblical and conducive to a healthy Christian life. It points to the existence of a transcendent moral order and of a Moral Ruler. It reveals that God places a great value on each person as well as on each of our decisions and actions.

The biblical teaching on the Pre-Advent judgment gives a sense of accountability and moral worth to our living. It reassures us that God operates on the principle of love and freedom and that ultimately all the moral universe will be given the opportunity to fully understand and accept the justice and mercy of God. The vindication of God’s justice will result in the vindication of His people.

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The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment

Our current Sabbath School Quarterly on *The Gospel, 1844, and Judgment*, is raising questions in the mind of our Sabbath School Members. Several have encouraged me to share some thoughts that could be helpful in teaching or discussing the Sabbath School Lessons.

My original intent was to post in this newsletter another chapter of *More than a Prophet*, specifically chapter 15, which is entitled “Ellen White’s Theological Growth.” It is an enlightening chapter that helps us understand how Ellen White grew in her understanding of certain Bible truths. This chapter is a fitting sequel to the previous three chapters already posted. The many messages of appreciation received for posting these timely studies, have been heartwarming.

At the last minute I decided to give priority to a study on “The Pre-Advent Judgment,” in view of the current study of this subject in our Sabbath School lessons. Many are asking questions that need to be addressed at a time when an increasing number of Adventists feel uncomfortable with the doctrine of the Pre-Advent Judgment and wish it would pass away. To do justice to this important doctrine, I have prepared a two parts study. The first part is posted in this newsletter and the second part in the following newsletter. After that, the plan is to feature Prof. Bradford’s informative chapter on the theological growth of Ellen White.

Misunderstanding of the Pre-Advent Judgment

The messages received indicate that some Adventists find it difficult to accept the notion of an endtime judgment prior to Christ’s coming, because they feel that there is no need for God to investigate again sins which have been forgiven. Such a reasoning ignores that Scripture teaches that the investigative phase of the final judgment is not intended to supply God with information which He does not already have. After all, God is the Author of the “books” which are used in His final judgment. The heavenly records represent not the acquisition on the part of God of new knowledge, but the revelation of old knowledge to moral intelligences.

One of the most telling evidences that God is not seeking new information through an investigative judgment is the Post-Advent judgment

of the unsaved. This judgment, as we shall see in the next newsletter, is designed to enable redeemed humanity to understand more fully God's justice in not saving the unrighteous. The very fact that the lost have no part in the first resurrection of believers (Rev 20:5) indicates that God has already decided their destiny.

Yet, before their final destruction at the end of the millennium, God offers redeemed humanity the opportunity to examine the record of their lives to understand the justice of His judgment. It is noteworthy that both before rewarding believers with eternal salvation and before punishing unbelievers with eternal destruction, God invites His moral creatures to evaluate the basis of His judgment.

Broad Biblical Basis for Pre-Advent Judgment

Some critics accuse the Adventist church of having built the whole doctrine of the Pre-Advent judgment, primarily on the problematic text of Daniel 8:14 which speaks of the cleansing of sanctuary after 2300 "evenings and mornings." By arguing that the Adventist doctrine of the Pre-Advent judgment is based on a faulty interpretation of Daniel 8:14, critics maintain that our Adventist church has built this unique doctrine on the weak biblical basis of one problematic text. This allegation, as we shall see in this study, is totally false, because there is a broad biblical basis for this doctrine.

Readers interested in a more comprehensive study of the Pre-Advent Judgment, are encouraged to read the two books, *The Fall Festivals* and *The Advent Hope for Human Hopelessness*, where I devote several chapters to this subject. The books can be ordered on line at: http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=bookstore&Category_Code=bookstore or by calling (269) 471-2915.

Focus on the REALITY of the Pre-Advent Judgment

The focus of this study is not on THE DATE, but on THE FACT of the Pre-Advent Judgment. I commend the efforts of our Adventist scholars to compellingly show the significant links between Daniel 8 and

9. The links help to prove that both the seventy weeks and the 2300 days prophecies, start from the same decree to restore and build Jerusalem in 457 B. C. (Dan 9:26). The arguments presented by Adventist scholars are very convincing and make our Adventist interpretation of Daniel 8:14, very credible.

Personally I prefer to focus on the REALITY, rather than the DATE of the Pre-Advent Judgment, for two simple reasons:

1) Generally, Bible prophecies POINT toward the fulfillment of important events without PINPOINTING the exact time. The function of the prophecies is to encourage constant preparation and watchfulness, not calculation, prognostication, or procrastination. If the intention of Bible prophecies was to enable believers to know the exact moment when major events will occur, then the dates would have been given in a precise, incontrovertible way. But this has never been the function of prophecy.

A fitting example is the Messianic prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27. It is remarkable that neither Jesus nor any New Testament writer appealed to this prophecy (Dan 9:24-27) to prove the messianic claims of Christ. This is all the more surprising in view of the frequent appeals to Old Testament prophecies to prove Christ's messiahship. If the time-element of Daniel's prophecy had been clearly understood, it would have been cited, especially by Matthew who quotes Old Testament prophecies extensively to prove the messiahship of Jesus.

The lack of any reference to Daniel's prophecy can hardly be explained as unawareness of its existence, because we are told that many calculated on the basis of Daniel 9:24-27, the actual time of the coming of the Messiah. To stop prevailing time-speculations rabbis placed a curse on anyone trying to calculate the time of the coming of the Messiah out of Daniel's prophecy.

Presumably the Gospel writers were aware of the various messianic dates which had been derived from Daniel's prophecy, but they refrained from submitting an alternative date. A reason could be that they did not

fully comprehend how Daniel's sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks were actually fulfilled by Christ's life, death, and resurrection. An important principle to remember is that generally prophecies are not fully understood before their actual fulfillment (Dan 9:1-21).

2) A second reason I prefer to focus on the REALITY, rather than the DATE of the Pre-Advent Judgment, is the problem posed by the duration of the judgment process. If, as we Adventists believe, the Pre-Advent judgment began on 1844, then we need to explain why it has been going on for over 150 years. The duration of the judgment will become even more difficult to explain, if the present age should last another 100 years or more.

Human court cases can last for months or years, because of the need to gather and present all the evidences. But the heavenly court has a perfect record of every human being who ever lived. This means that the evaluating process of God's judgments by heavenly beings should not take a very long time.

In the light of these considerations, it may be wiser to focus more on the REALITY, MEANING, AND FUNCTION of the Pre-Advent judgment, rather than on the DATE itself. The date is important and it can be legitimately defended, as done by the current the Sabbath School Lessons. But, ultimately what counts is not knowing the beginning date of the Pre-Advent judgment, but understanding the existential implications of the time of judgment for our lives today (Rev 14:7). The question is: "What sort of persons ought we to be in lives of holiness and godliness" (2 Pet 3:11), while living in the endtime judgment that will soon usher in the glorious coming of our Lord? It is to this question that this Bible study is largely devoted.

UPDATE ON *MORE THAN A PROPHET*

The decision to publish Prof. Graeme Bradford's book *More than a Prophet* was taken with some apprehension. The reason is that Adventists around the world are divided in their view of Ellen White. Some "ultra-conservative" Adventists wish to glorify Ellen White as a Madonna who received all her messages as faxes from heaven. Other "ultra-critical"

Adventists wish to discredit her ministry and messages altogether and do not even want her writings to be mentioned in a sermon. In some European countries Ellen White has become a *persona non grata*. Her writings are never mentioned from the pulpit.

The truth is that our Adventist church would not be here today, had it not been for the prophetic guidance of Ellen White. She played a leading role in shaping our message and mission. For example, we noted in the newsletter no. 150 the role of Ellen White in leading our church to accept the Doctrine of the Trinity. She gave to our church the vision of a global mission, Christian education, medical ministry, healthful living, publishing work, etc.

I came to appreciate more fully the contribution of Ellen White to our Adventist church, several years ago during a cordial dialogue with representatives of the Church of God Seventh Day (Denver, Colorado). At the conclusion of the second meeting dealing with our Adventist Understanding of Ellen White, a delegate from the Church of God said: "I can see that the problem with our church has been the lack of the prophetic guidance of a person like Ellen White."

I decided to take the risk in publishing Prof. Graeme Bradford's book *More than a Prophet*, because I firmly believe that much of the controversy about Ellen White stems from a misunderstanding of the Biblical view of the gift of prophecy. And Prof. Bradford has done an outstanding work in clarifying this misunderstanding. He shows that there is both a divine and human element in the prophetic ministry of Bible prophets and of Ellen White. Prophets received divine revelations, but they also had human limitations, which made them subject to mistakes and inaccuracies. By examining the human side of Bible prophets as revealed in Scripture, Prof. Bradford shows that the problems they encountered were not much different from the criticism brought against Ellen White.

This balanced study of the prophetic ministry of Ellen White has been long overdue and will do much to restore confidence in her writings and teachings. But, in preparing the manuscript for publication, the question in my mind has been: Are Adventists ready for a balanced understanding of Ellen White which highlights both the divine and human elements of

her prophetic ministry? How will the “ultra-conservative” or the “ultra-critical” react? Will they flood me with “hate” messages?

So far the positive responses have outnumbered by far the negative ones. I did receive a few “hate” messages like this one, saying: “Dr. Sam, you are a disgrace . . . Ellen White was and will ever be a cancer in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” The rude and accusative language suggests to me that the problem with this person is not Ellen White but the lack of spiritual maturity.

The “hate” messages are easily forgotten when reading the encouraging responses coming in from different parts of the world. For example, Bob Michaelson, who has given me the permission to mention his name, writes: “I have very much enjoyed the latest newsletters. I have found the ones on EGW to be most timely. There are a number of lovely people in our church here in Northern California who are questioning the correctness of Sister White and as a result are questioning the foundational principles of our church as well. *More than a Prophet* is most timely and I believe it is God-sent for His people today. I would like to place an order for 30 books as well as Bradford’s CD/DVD album for \$170.00.

“Thank you for making this timely study available. I thank God for you and the ministry He has laid on your heart. May He continue to bless us all with the knowledge we need so desperately at this time of earth’s history.

Robert Michaelson
3646 Hill Road East
Lakeport, CA 95453”

Encouraging messages such as this have come also from pastors. Pastor Tom Hughes, who has known me for many years, wrote from Ohio: “I love *More than a Prophet*, and your courage and wisdom in publishing it. You can’t imagine the good it will do!” Another pastor called me from the Northwest to tell me that *More than a Prophet* could not have come out at a better time as he is dealing with some members who no longer believe in Ellen White after reading website articles attacking her.

Encouraging messages have come even from former Adventist pastors who receive this newsletter. For example, a former Adventist pastor who

is currently serving in one of the largest evangelical churches in the USA, wrote: “[Your newsletter on Ellen White and the Bible] surely added clarity to my understanding of your view of the authority of Ellen’s writings as an ‘inspired interpreter’ of the Bible. I hope you survive the coming storm. I am sure a lot of us would still be in the Adventist ministry had this been the prevailing view at the time we were dismissed. . . . Yours and Bradford’s view surely is a step in the right direction.” Incidentally, this former Adventist pastor is one of the most faithful readers of our newsletter. He consistently takes time to respond to *each* of my newsletters. I feel guilty for lacking the time to dialogue more fully with him.

Several Conferences have already ordered *More than a Prophet* for all their workers. The Ministerial Secretary of the South African Union ordered 300 copies for their pastors. The Texas Conference initially ordered 30 copies for evaluation by conference officers. Soon afterward I received a rush order for 165 copies to be given out at their workers’ meeting a week ago. Smaller orders have come from smaller conferences. For example, the Ministerial Secretary of the Gulf States Conference ordered 60 copies for their pastors. More orders will come in as conference leaders become acquainted with this timely book.

A Special Offer on *More than a Prophet*

To make it possible for many Adventists to benefit from *More than a Prophet*, we decided to offer the book by the case of 30 copies for the basic cost price of \$5.00 per copy, instead of the retail price of \$25.00. This means that the cost for a case of 30 copies is only \$150.00, mailing expenses included, instead of the regular price of \$750.00. Furthermore, to facilitate your promotional efforts, with a case of 30 books, we offer also Prof. Bradford CD/DVD album containing two disks, one with his publications and the other with his two hour live video lecture on Ellen White. See the details below.

The best way to introduce *More than a Prophet* to your friends and church members, is to show them the DVD with the two hours video lecture where Prof. Bradford shares the highlights of the book. After viewing the lecture, your friends will be most eager to purchase their copy of *More than a Prophet* at the bargain price. Your efforts to promote this timely book are greatly appreciated.

You can order online *More than a Prophet* by the case of 30 copies or as single copies, simply by clicking here: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/BradfordOffer/offer.htm> If you have a problem, call us at (269) 471-2915. We will be glad to take your order by phone and to process it on the same day we receive it.

LEARNING FROM AN ADVENTIST NUN

In his last **GraceNotes Newsletter**, Pastor Mike Leno, from Ontario, CA, shares the gripping and ironic story of Jean Marie, a nun who chose to live her Adventist faith within the confines of her monastery. I wanted to post it, but it would have prolonged this newsletter considerably. I would urge you to read the story and view the pictures at Pastor Leno website: <http://mikeleno.net> You will be glad that I informed you about this story. If you have a problem surfing the web, feel free to contact Pastor Leno at GraceNotes@mikeleno.net He will gladly email you the story.

THE TWO SIDES OF THE LINDA SHELTON STORY

The two sides of the Linda Shelton story are posted at the following website: <http://www.blacksda.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=10128> I would urge you to read both sides of the story, before jumping to conclusions.

THE THREAT POSED BY THE EXPANSION OF ISLAM

The frightening pictures of Hizbullah rockets attacking Northern Israel and of Israelis jets bombarding Hizbullah's strongholds all over Lebanon, is causing many people to take a second look at the threat posed by Moslems, not only to Israel but to the rest of the world. Could it be that the acquisition and use of rockets by the "poor" Palestinians to fight Israel, is a prelude to the armament of Moslem countries wanting to expand their sovereignty over infidel Western countries?

Several scholarly articles I have read this past week, reminded me that the history of Islam has essentially been a history of conquest and reconquest. Some scholars suggest that Islam is engaged today in its third major expansion. The first expansion began in the 7th-century when Islam from Arabia rapidly conquered North Africa, Spain, and thrust into France

to the gates of Paris. It took half a millennium of reconquest to expel the Moslems from Western Europe. The Crusades were one of the few occasions when Christians attempted to regain the “occupied territories” of the Holy Land.

The second major Moslem expansion began in the fifth century, when the Byzantine Empire, weakened by the Crusades, was captured by the ultramilitant Ottoman Sultans. Soon Islam took over the entire Balkans, Hungary, and threatened to capture Vienna and move into the heart of Europe. The Ottoman Empire for centuries was among the most powerful powers of Eastern Europe, constantly threatening Central Europe. The dissolution of the Empire was a direct consequence of World War I, when the Allied Powers defeated the Ottoman Forces and divided their territories.

Moslem Demographic Explosion

The third major expansion of Islam is taking place today, not merely through terroristic activities, but primarily through the demographic explosion of the Moslem population which has immigrated in many Western Countries. A study shows that in the year 2000 the number of deaths outnumbered the number of births in 17 European nations. By contrast, in the same year among the Moslems the fertility rate averaged 7.6 per cent. This means that while the population of European countries is declining and aging, the Moslem population is growing and is overwhelmingly young, both in Europe and in Moslem countries.

In an article entitled “Relentlessly and Thoroughly,” published in *National Review*, Paul Johnson, a historian and journalist, writes: “This millennial struggle continues in a variety of ways. The recent conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo were a savage reaction by the Orthodox Christians of Serbia to the spread of Islam in their historic heartlands, chiefly by virtue of a higher birthrate. Indeed, in the West, the battle is largely demographic, though it is likely to take a more militant turn at any moment. Moslems from the Balkans and North Africa are surging over established frontiers on a huge scale, rather than as the pressure of the eastern tribes that brought about the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the 4th and 5th centuries. The number of Moslems penetrating and settling in

Europe is now beyond computation because most of them are illegals. They are getting into Spain and Italy in such numbers that, should present trends continue, both of these traditionally Catholic countries will become majority Moslem during the 21st century.”

While it is true that the Moslems are divided in many sects, from the relatively moderate Sunni to the far more extreme Shiates (who dominates Iran), the fact remains that all of them receive their marching order from the same 7th-century Koran, that teaches the Jihad, that is, the holy war against the infidels. In Sura 9, verse 5 we read: “Then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them. And seize them, beleaguer them and lie in wait for them, in every strategem [of war].” The Koran insists that mighty nations must be fought “until they embrace Islam.”

Adventist Pastor Frank Steyn conveniently summarizes the major Moslem campaigns of the past decade, as follows: “During the past decade Islamic states, militants, murderers and terrorists have conducted major campaigns, war, bombings, and terrorism in:

- Balkan Wars - Bosnia, Herzegovina and Kosovo – 1990’s (Clinton wars)
- United States – 9/11 (2001) mass murder with hijacked planes
- Spain – 3/11 (2004) train bombings
- United Kingdom – 7/7 (2005) train and bus bombings
- Indonesia – Bali bombing 10/1 (2005)
- France – 11/6 (2005) Riots
- India – 7/11 (2006) 200+ killed in train bombings
- Italy – Ongoing riots and protests
- Sudan – Mass killings of indigenous population
- Nigeria – Ongoing civil war in the North - Shariah-related killings
- Israel – Ongoing war, hatred and bombings
- South Africa – Muslim gangs – Pagad – want an Islamic state
- etc. etc. etc.

DOES THIS LOOK LIKE AN ORGANIZED CONSPIRACY?”

Pastor Frank Steyn Ph. D., from the Chillicothe SDA Church, Ohio, has prepared a very informative report entitled “Jihad! The Muslim Wars.” At present he does not have a website, but he will gladly mail you the report if you contact him: <spoedpos@fastmail.fm> You will find his report very enlightening. It offers a brief historical outline of the Moslim Wars and their possible prophetic implications.

Moslem Expansion and Endtime Conflict Over Worship

The demographic expansion of the Moslem population, coupled with a resurgence of militant and uncompromising Moslem fundamentalists, who are eager to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction to expand their faith and sovereignty, poses an unprecedented threat to Western Countries. Could it be that the current conflict between radical Moslems (Hizbullah) and Israel, is the prelude to a global conflict between “Christian” and Moslem nations?

As students of Bible prophecy, we need to ask: How does the Moslem religious, military, and demographic expansion fits into the endtime conflict over worship graphically portrayed in Revelation 13? Our Adventist tendency has been to place all our eggs in the basket of the papacy. But, it is becoming increasingly evident that for the past 14 centuries Islam has been and still is today a Satanic agency that plays an important role in promoting false worship through coercive methods.

The prophetic role of Islam in the final showdown, can hardly be ignored. You will find a discussion of Islam in Prophecy in my DVD album with a two hours video lecture on *The Mark and Number of the Beast*. You can order the album online: <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/BeastAD/> or by calling us at (269) 471-2915.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTERS

A detailed description of the special offers on goods and services is provided at the end of this newsletter. Here is a brief listing of the announcements that are expanded at the end of this newsletter.

1. CALENDAR OF FORTHCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS for the months of August and September 2006. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

2. PROF. BRADFORD NEWLY RELEASED BOOK *MORE THAN A PROPHET*, AND HIS CD/DVD ALBUM. Both the book, the CD/DVD album, are being offered at a special introductory price. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

3. DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S NEW DVD ALBUM ON THE MARK AND NUMBER OF THE BEAST. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

4. DR. BACCHIOCCHI'S PACKAGE OF ALL HIS RECORDINGS. The package consists of 5 albums which are offered for only \$100.00, instead of the regular price of \$500.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

5. PROF. JON PAULIEN PUBLICATIONS IN ONE CD ALBUM. The album contains more than a dozen of books and scores of articles written during the past 20 years of research. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

6. PROF. JON PAULIEN'S 60 CD DISKS containing 120 lectures that explain verse by verse the book of Revelation. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

7. TAGNET SPECIAL NEW WEB HOSTING OFFER for Adventist churches and members. TAGnet provides an incredible number of web-hosting services to our churches and members. This newsletter comes to you through their gracious and efficient service. For detail information, visit their website at <http://www.netadventist.org> or <http://home.tagnet.org/> You may also call their office 800 - 9TAGNET. They are ready and eager to help you.

8. SPECIAL OFFER ON HITACHI PROJECTORS: HITACHI has offered an additional discount to help especially our churches and schools in developing countries. For examples, the special offer for the new 2000 LUMENS PROJECTOR CP-X250 IS ONLY \$1095.00, instead of the previous SDA price of \$1995.00. See the details at the end of this newsletter or call me at 269-471-2915

9. SPECIAL OFFER ON NEW TOSHIBA LAPTOP TECRA A8 released on June 28, 2006. See details at the end.

10. REMOTE PRESENTER: Special offer on the smallest and most powerful REMOTE powerpoint presenter by Honeywell. See the details at the end of this newsletter.

“The Pre-Advent Judgment”**Samuele Bacchiocchi, Ph. D.****Retired Professor of Theology, Andrews University**

Someone has said that in the new world there will be three surprises for the redeemed. First, there will be the surprise to discover that some of the “saints” we expected to find there will not be there. Puzzled, and confused, some will ask: How can such a godly person as Mr. Smith be missing? Second, there will be the surprise to note that some of the “sinners” we thought would never make it to the Kingdom, in actual fact will be there. “How can Mrs. Morris be here when she stopped attending church?” Third, there will be the most pleasant surprise of all, namely, to find ourselves there.

Surprise about God’s criteria for offering eternal life to some while allowing others to experience eternal death could give rise to feelings of doubt and mistrust about the fairness of God’s judgments. If allowed to persist, such feelings could threaten the eternal security of the new world. Rebellion against God could arise a second time and the redemptive mission of Christ into this world would have been in vain.

The eternal security of the new world will rest on the unquestioning attitude of trust, love, and obedience to God of its inhabitants. This attitude cannot be demanded, it can only be earned. A significant method used by God to gain and maintain the unconditional love and trust of His creatures is by making adequate provision for them to understand and accept the justice of His judgments. Numerous Scriptural passages to be considered in this chapter speak of God’s inviting the moral beings of His universe to participate in His final judgment process that will decide the eternal destiny of people and angels (Dan 7:10, 22, 26; Matt 19:28; 12:41, 42; 1 Cor 6:2-3).

Historically little or no attention has been given to the role which heavenly and human beings play in God’s final judgment. The focus has been primarily on the executive aspect of the final judgment. Even this aspect has been viewed primarily as a day of gloom and doom on which Christ will manifest His vengeance by inflicting punishment upon the wicked.

Objective of this Bible Study

The objective of this Bible Study is to ascertain the Biblical understanding of the judicial process which precedes and follows the Advent judgment. A brief analysis will be made of the most significant passages which refer implicitly or explicitly to the judicial process of the final judgment. The final part of the chapter will reflect upon the theological and existential significance of the Biblical teaching on this subject. The study is divided into the following four parts:

1. The Pre-Advent Phase of the Final Judgment
2. The Post-Advent Phase of the Final Judgment
3. The Outcome of the Final Judgment
4. The Theological Significance of the Final Judgment

In view of the length of this study, I have decided to post in this newsletter only the first part dealing with “The Pre-Advent Phase of the Final Judgment.” The remaining three parts will be posted in the next newsletter

PART ONE

THE PRE-ADVENT PHASE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT

Biblical Emphasis on Reality of Judgment

The emphasis of the Scriptures is not on the time or dynamics of the final judgment, but rather on its inevitability and finality. To Bible writers the *reality* of the final judgment was more important than its *time* or *modality*. This observation applies to other Biblical truths such as the Second Advent and the resurrection. For example, no attempt is made by Christ or by most of the New Testament writers to differentiate between the resurrection of believers at the time of Christ’s Coming and the resurrection of unbelievers at the end of the millennium.

Jesus speaks of “the hour” that is coming “when *all* who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29). In this statement Christ presents the

resurrection of the “good” doers and that of the evildoers as taking place contemporaneously (cf. Matt 25:32; Luke 11:32). Yet John the Revelator distinguishes between the two resurrections by placing the former at the beginning of the millennium and the latter after “the thousand years were ended” (Rev 20:4-5).

Fact More Important than Phases

To a scientific modern mind, those two statements stand in open contradiction. Yet Biblical writers had no difficulty in reconciling the two statements because for them the *reality* was more important than the *modality* of the resurrection. In fact, most of the references to the resurrection mention the *fact* rather than the *phases* or manner of the event.

The same principle applies to the Biblical references to the final judgment. In most cases the concern is to emphasize the *reality* and *finality* of the event rather than its *modality*. Yet as in the case of the resurrection so in that of the final judgment, there are some Biblical passages which implicitly suggest a Pre-Advent and a Post-Advent phase of the final judgment. A study of these passages offers a fuller appreciation of the dynamics of the final judgment.

The Pre-Advent Judgment in the Teaching of Jesus

The Notion of Reward. The notion of a Pre-Advent judgment is an underlying assumption of much of Jesus’ teachings. Such a notion is implied even in those numerous passages where the technical terms for judgment are not used. Jesus often spoke about receiving or missing God’s *reward*, which implies a previous evaluative judgment.

In Matthew 5 each of the Beatitudes contains a promise of reward (5:1-12). In verse 46 Jesus says: “If you love those who love you, what reward have you?” The same notion is found several times in the following chapter and throughout the Gospels: “Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 6:1; cf. 6:2, 4, 5, 16, 18; 10:41, 42; Mark 9:41; Luke 6:23, 35).

The Time of Rewards. The time for assigning rewards or retribution is clearly given as the Second Advent: “For the Son of man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and *then* he will repay every man for what he has done” (Matt 16:27; cf. 25:31-32). In this and similar statements, the Second Advent is perceived as the time for the assignment of rewards or punishments, and not for the evaluation of what each person deserves. In *none* of the statements of Jesus is the suggestion ever made that He will set up the traditional Grand Assize at His Return to investigate and determine the destiny of every person who ever lived.

Since the time of Christ’s Coming is primarily the occasion for bestowing rewards or punishments, we may reasonably assume that the evaluative process that determines such decision takes place *before* the Advent. Some may wish to argue that there is no need for God to investigate the deeds and attitudes of each person to determine what they deserve, because He already knows it all. There is some truth in this argument, for God obviously does not need to seek for lacking information about His creatures. Yet, Jesus and other Biblical writers speak of a judgment that will investigate not only deeds, but also words: “I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter” (Matt 12:36).

The purpose of this investigation, as we shall see, is not to enable God to ascertain the truth about each person, but rather to expose and disclose this truth to His moral universe. Our immediate concern, however, is not to understand the purpose of God’s evaluative judgment but rather to acknowledge its reality and validity. We have already noted that a Pre-Advent judgment is presupposed by the fact that Christ comes not to institute a judgment process but to execute the judgment which has already taken place.

Human Accountability. The notion of a Pre-Advent judgment is also implied in Christ’s statements about *human accountability*. Jesus said that the extent of our accountability includes not only acts but also “every careless word” (Matt 12:36). Paul expresses the same thought when he writes that God will judge “the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (Rom 2:16). Such a thorough investigation of the conduct of the billions of persons who have lived on this planet presupposes a Pre-Advent judi-

cial process because, as noted earlier, the Advent judgment is primarily the moment of final adjudication or separation and not the institution of a judicial investigative process.

In some of His parables, Christ illustrates the principle of human accountability at the final judgment. In Matthew, for example, three parables are given following the Olivet Discourse which illustrate areas of accountability. In the parable of the Ten Virgins the emphasis is on the accountability for our *spiritual preparation* (Matt 25:1-13). In the parable of the Talents, the area of accountability is the *stewardship of our resources* such as time, money, and skills (Matt 25:14-30). In the parable of the Sheep and Goats, the area of accountability is our *social responsibility* toward the needs of others (Matt 25:31-46).

Dead Resurrected Already Judged. The accountability of each human being is obviously decided before Christ comes to call forth “those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29). The resurrection to life or to condemnation represents Christ’s executive judgment which presupposes the termination of the evaluative judgment. In this text Christ indicates that people will be resurrected *not to be judged* but *already judged*. If those who are resurrected to eternal life or death were still to be judged, we would have an incongruous situation whereby the results of the judgment would be meted out before the convening of the judgment itself.

The phase “resurrection of judgment” actually means “resurrection of condemnation,” since it is contrasted with the “resurrection of life.” This meaning is accurately rendered in the New International Version: “those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.” The judgment that decides who “will rise to live” and who “will rise to be condemned” must obviously take place before the resurrection itself. This thought was expressed by Christ in a conversation with the Sadducees when He said that only “those who are accounted worthy” will “attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead” (Luke 20:35).

The Notion of Separation. The idea of the separation that will take place at the Coming of Christ between the saved and the unsaved also presupposes a Pre-Advent judgment. Jesus describes this Advent separation in a variety of ways. He compares it to the separation that takes place at harvest time between the wheat and the weeds. Note that the reapers are simply told: “Gather the weeds . . . gather the wheat” (Matt 13:30). There will be no need for them to ascertain which is the wheat and which is the weeds because by harvest time the distinction between the two has already been established.

Jesus illustrates the Advent separation also by the parable of the good and bad fish. In the parable the task of the angels is not to determine who are “the evil” and who are “the righteous,” but simply to separate one from the other (Matt 13:49). The implication is that the determination of the status of each has already taken place.

A dramatic reference to the Advent separation is found in the Olivet Discourse where Jesus, speaking of the day of “the coming of the Son of man,” says: “Then two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one is taken and one is left” (Matt 24:40-41). The sudden separation between the saved and the unsaved presupposes a previous determination of their respective destinies.

The Sheep and the Goats. The Advent separation is also compared by Christ to a shepherd who “separates the sheep from the goats,” by placing the former at the right hand and the latter at the left (Matt 25:32-33). In a similar fashion Christ “will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, . . . inherit the kingdom . . .’” and “to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, . . . into the eternal fire’” (Matt 25:34, 41).

Some have interpreted the description of the gathering of all the nations before Christ (Matt 25:32) as representing a universal investigative judgment conducted at the time of Christ’s Return. The description, however, contains only Christ’s *invitation* and *condemnation* (Come, . . . Depart . . .) with the respective *explanation* (“For I was hungry and you gave me food” or “you gave me no food”), but not an *investigation* of who did or did not act compassionately. The judicial process that led to this determination is presupposed as having already occurred.

The Wedding Garment. A Pre-Advent evaluation process is also presupposed in Christ's parable of "a king who gave a marriage feast for his son" (Matt 22:2). When the original guests refused to come to the marriage feast, the wedding invitation was extended to as many as could be found and "so the wedding hall was filled with guests" (vv. 3-10). The king went to a great deal of expense not only in extending the invitation but also, according to custom, in supplying to each guest a beautiful robe to wear for the occasion. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment" (v. 11).

Evidently the king examined the guests *before* the marriage feast began. In Revelation 19, the Coming of Christ is compared to the "marriage of the Lamb" (vv. 7, 17). The consistency of this imagery suggests that the marriage feast of Matthew 22 is an allusion to the celebration that will accompany the Second Advent. The Church, espoused to Christ by faith (Eph 5:32), waits, as in the parable of the Ten Virgins, for the Coming of the Heavenly Groom to celebrate the marriage feast. If this interpretation is correct, then the examination by the king of the wedding guests *before* the celebration of the marriage feast would represent an evaluation process that will take place before the Coming of Christ.

Ellen White offers this interpretation when she writes: "In the parable of Matthew 22 the same figure of the marriage is introduced, and the investigative judgment is clearly represented as taking place before marriage. Previous to the wedding the king comes in to see the guests, to see if all are attired in the wedding garment, the spotless robe of character washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb . . . This work of examination of character, of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above." (*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* p. 428).

This brief survey indicates that the idea of a Pre-Advent evaluative judgment is an underlying assumption in much of Jesus' teaching about the judgment. Each of the themes examined (reward, accountability, and separation) presupposes a Pre-Advent judicial investigation that determines who is "accounted worthy" to attain to the resurrection of life and who to the resurrection of condemnation (Luke 20:35; John 5:28-29). This notion of a Pre-Advent evaluative judgment is implicitly expressed, as we shall now see, by other New Testament writers.

The Pre-Advent Judgment in Paul's Writings

Emphasis on Certainty. Paul, like Christ, emphasizes the certainty and inevitability of the final judgment, rather than its modality. He writes that “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God; . . . So each of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom 14:10-12; cf. 2 Cor 5:10; Acts 17:31).

No explicit explanation is given by Paul regarding the time of this universal accountability before the judgment seat of God. Did Paul associate this universal accountability with the Coming of Christ? If he did, he failed to indicate it, especially in his references to the Second Advent, which he describes as the joyful reunion of believers with their Lord and not as the inauguration of a judicial process that will examine each person who ever lived.

Revelation Presupposes Investigation. The Advent judgment is seen by Paul as the disclosure (1 Cor 4:5) or revelation of God's judgment rather than as a process of judicial investigation. In Romans 2:5, he describes it as the time “when God's *righteous judgment will be revealed.*” This revelation will consist of the executive act of Christ who will give “eternal life” to “those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality” and “wrath and fury” to “those who are factious and do not obey the truth” (Rom 2:7-8).

This revelation of “God's righteous judgment” presupposes some prior process of investigation that determines who is to receive the gift of eternal life and who “the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thess 1:8-9).

Dead Judged While Dead. The same inference can be drawn from Paul's reference to Christ “who is to judge the living and the dead” (2 Tim 4:1; cf. 1 Pet 4:5). The personal presence of defendants is unnecessary, because the existence of a perfect record of each life (Dan 7:10; Ps 69:28; Mal 3:16; Rev 20:12) provides all the necessary evidences for the heavenly court to see.

If the dead are judged while still dead, such judgment must precede the Advent judgment when the resurrection to eternal life or eternal death takes place. We noted earlier that people will be resurrected *already judged*. By the status of each person at the moment of the resurrection “God’s righteous judgment will be *revealed*” (Rom 2:5). The *revelation* of God’s judgment at the Second Advent presupposes the *termination* of God’s judging before the Advent.

Judgment Precedes Appearance of Christ. As Paul comes to the end of his letter to Timothy, he challenges him by reminding him of three vital truths about Christ: “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word, . . .” (2 Tim 4:1-2).

William Barclay notes the significance of the sequential order of the charge: (1) Judgment, (2) Appearance, (3) Kingdom. This sequence, he points out, reflects the logical progression that leads to the consummation of salvation-history. Christ’s judgment of the living and the dead is followed by His appearance which will usher in His eternal Kingdom.

The King James Version places the judgment at the time of Christ’s appearing in its translation: “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.” This translation has been largely rejected by modern translators and commentators because of conceptual and textual reasons.

Conceptually the judgment would be linked not only to Christ’s appearance but also to His Kingdom. Nowhere does the Scripture suggest that Christ will judge the living and the dead in His kingdom. Textually, the preferred Greek text contains the two conjunctions “*kai . . . kai*” (and . . . and): “*and* by his appearing *and* his kingdom” (RSV). The New International Version, like the Revised Standard Version, accurately renders the Greek text: “In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom I give you this charge: Preach the Word, . . .”

A Three-Parts Composition. Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelman note that Paul’s charge “is to be regarded as formulaic, as in 1 Tim 5:21.” In the latter text Paul’s charge to Timothy also contains three elements: “In the presence [1] of God and [2] of Christ Jesus and [3] of the elect angels I charge you . . . “ (1 Tim 5:21). The structural similarity between the two charges supports a three-part composition for both.

Moreover, since Paul’s charge to Timothy is expressed by a liturgical formula, presumably it represents a basic Christian belief. Liturgical formulas express basic truths of the Christian faith. In such a case, Paul’s progressive sequence: Christ’s judgment of the living and dead, His appearing and His kingdom, presumably represents the prevailing understanding of the sequence of events leading to the consummation of salvation-history.

Second Advent Precludes Investigative Judgment. Of all the New Testament writers, Paul provides the most vivid and informative descriptions of the Second Advent. Our understanding of the manner of Christ’s Coming and of the events associated with it would be very deficient if we did not possess Paul’s descriptions of this event (1 Thess 4:13-18; 2 Thess 1:7-10; 1 Cor 15:51-58).

The Pauline descriptions, however, exclude the possibility of a universal investigative judgment being set up and conducted by Christ at His Second Advent. This can be seen by looking at the sequence of events given by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:

1. Glorious descent of Christ from heaven (v. 16)
2. Resurrection of the “dead in Christ” (v. 16)
3. Transformation of living believers (v. 17)
4. Meeting of believers with the Lord (v. 17)
5. Eternal communion with the Lord (v. 17)

The shorter description found in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 makes mention only of the immediate outcome of Christ’s Coming, namely, “eternal destruction” for the wicked and glorification for the “saints.” Both descriptions of the Second Advent make no mention of or allowance for a universal judicial process conducted in conjunction with the Second Advent. The

Coming of Christ is followed immediately, not by a judgment process, but by Christ's executive act which resurrects/transforms believers and destroys unbelievers. Any process of evaluation and determination of each human destiny has already taken place before the Parousia.

A Prevailing Misconception. Many Christians mistakenly view the resurrection as the preliminary step to the final judgment. Thus, the judgment is regarded as an event distinct from the resurrection and taking place after it. This is not the teaching of Jesus or of Paul or of the rest of the Biblical writers who view the resurrection to life or to death as being the revelation and execution (Jude 15) of God's righteous judgment.

J. A. Seiss perceptively notes in this regard: "The truth is, that the resurrection, and the changes which pass 'in the twinkling of an eye' upon the living, are themselves the fruits and embodiments of antecedent judgment. They are consequences of adjudications then already made."

Pre-Advent Judgment in the Book of Revelation

Centrality of Judgment. The theme of judgment is central to the book of Revelation. The book opens with the vision of Christ executing the final judgment upon the wicked: "Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, every one who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will wail on account of him" (1:7). Their reason for mourning is that Christ has come to execute judgment upon impenitent evil hearts. The book closes with the vision of the judgment before the Great White Throne (20:11-15) and with the promise "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done" (22:12).

The rest of the visions are in a sense a series of judgments. First the church is warned about God's judgment if she does not repent (2:5, 16, 26; 3:3, 16, 21). Then a series of judgments are predicted for the heathen world. They begin with the Seven Seals (6-7) and continue with the Seven Trumpets (8-14) and the Seven Plagues (15-16). They close with the description of God's judgment upon Babylon (17-18), the beast and the false prophet (19:20), Satan (20:10) and all the wicked who ever lived (20:12-15). A crescendo is noticeable from the partiality of the prelimi-

nary judgments (“a third of”—8:7, 8, 11; 9:15) to the totality of the final judgment (“every living thing”—16:3; “all were judged”—20:13).

The theme of judgment is central in Revelation because it represents God’s method of finally overcoming the opposition of evil to Himself and His people. The martyrs who cry for judgment (6:10) are reassured that God will shortly vindicate them. When finally the redeemed stand beside the sea of glass they sing: “O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, . . . for thy judgments have been revealed” (15:3-4).

Phases of the Final Judgment. The emphasis on the centrality and finality of God’s judgment in Revelation overshadows the concern to differentiate between its phases: Pre-Advent, Advent, Post-Advent judgment. Yet these distinctions are not altogether absent. For example, it is explicitly stated that “judgment was committed” to those who share “in the first resurrection” (20:4, 6).

Evidently this phase of the judgment is conducted after the Advent since its participants shared in the first resurrection associated with Christ’s Return. Similarly, the judgment before the Great White Throne presumably takes place after the Second Advent, since it is held before the One from whose “presence earth and sky fled away” (20:11)—a clear allusion to the Second Advent (6:13-14). Thus, the Book of Revelation implicitly recognizes certain distinct phases of the final judgment.

The Vision of the Lamb. The Pre-Advent judgment is presupposed in several places. The series of preliminary judgments mentioned earlier anticipate and foreshadow the final judgment. A more specific allusion to a Pre-Advent judgment can be seen in the vision of the Lamb holding the scroll of human destiny, sealed with seven seals (ch. 5). This scroll, which contains the complete destiny of mankind (“written within and on the back”—5:1), rests safely in the “right hand” of God (5:1), as the seven stars rest firmly in the hands of Christ (1:16).

There are at least three reasons why the sealed scroll seems to represent the divine decision-judgment regarding the destiny of every human being. First, the fact that only the Lamb that was slain is worthy to open it (5:9) implies that its content has to do with the decision regarding the salvation or perdition of human beings. Second, Revelation refers several

times to “the book of life of the Lamb that was slain” which is said to contain “the names” of the redeemed (13:8; 17:8; 21:27).

Third, the only book that is ever opened in Revelation is “the book of life” during the judgment before the Great White Throne (20:11-12). It is said that “if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (20:15). The removal of the seals by the Lamb, which results in the manifestation of preliminary divine judgments upon mankind, seems designed to build up to the climactic moment when the suspense is broken by the opening of the book, which discloses who is to be punished with “the second death” (20:14).

Judicial Elements of the Vision. This vision of the Lamb holding the sealed scroll, technically speaking, does not appear as a judgment session. Yet under closer scrutiny the vision contains some clear judicial elements. The image of the Lamb, for example, which is used 29 times in Revelation, as John A. Bollier notes in his perceptive study on “Judgment in the Apocalypse,” is “the predominant symbol representing Christ as Judge.”

The title “Lamb” is used interchangeably with “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (5:5). Thus the figure of the Lamb represents not so much the meek and mild aspect of Christ, but rather His victory which gives Him authority to judge. The wicked fear “the wrath of the Lamb” (6:16).

The Lamb is surrounded by living creatures, elders, and “many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands” (5:11). This vision is reminiscent of the judgment scene found in Daniel 7 where “a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; and the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened” (Dan 7:10).

Approval of Judgment. In Revelation the multitude of heavenly beings do not sit in judgment before opened books, but rather ascribe to the Lamb the right “to take the scroll and to open its seals” (5:9). They are satisfied to let Christ reveal and proclaim the final verdict regarding human destinies because they acknowledge that He was “slain” and by His “blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” (5:9).

By acknowledging the right of Christ to open the scroll and reveal God's verdict regarding human destinies, these heavenly beings implicitly approve the judgment process which has already taken place. Their approval is determined by their understanding of how God's justice and mercy have been manifested through the Lamb who has ransomed people of "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (5:9).

This vindication of the justice of God's government is a vital function of the Pre-Advent judgment, to be discussed later. At this juncture we conclude that the vision of the Lamb holding the sealed scroll in its own unique way implies a Pre-Advent judgment in which heavenly beings express their approval of God's final judgment and of Christ's right to reveal that judgment by opening the seals.

The Announcement of Judgment. A clearer portrayal of the Pre-Advent judgment is found in Revelation 14. This chapter contains three distinct visions, each introduced by the phrase: "Then I looked . . ." (14:1, 6, 14). The first vision presents the 144,000 singing the song of triumph before God's throne (14:3). They are said to be the "first fruits" of the redeemed (14:4). This vision introduces the next two visions, the first of which announces God's judgment (14:6-13) and the second of which describes its execution (14:14-20).

The function of the introductory vision is to offer to believers the assurance of divine vindication on the day of the judgment. In the light of this setting the proclamation of God's judgment that follows is not a moral deterrent, but a moral stimulant to live "chaste," "spotless" lives (14:4-5) in the expectation to "follow the Lamb wherever he goes" (14:4).

The second vision describes three angels flying in mid-heaven, proclaiming three judgment messages. The first angel declares: "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the fountains of water" (14:7). The second angel announces God's judgment upon Babylon (14:8) and the third warns people about God's judgment upon those who worship the beast and its image (14:9-11).

The Last Call to Repentance. The third vision portrays dramatically the execution of the final judgment by Christ at His Coming by means of the imagery of the harvest (14:14-20). It is noteworthy that the harvest of the earth is preceded by the announcement that “the hour of his judgment has come” (14:7). This announcement is designated as the “eternal gospel” (14:6). This means that the time of judgment that precedes the execution of the final judgment at Christ’s Coming is not a time of no return, but rather the time when God sounds the last call to repentance. The Pre-Advent judgments in Revelation, as aptly stated by John A. Bollier, “are educative in purpose rather than vindictive or retributive. They are meant to bring both the church and the world to repentance.”

The Timing of the Judgment. The timing of the announcement that “the hour of his judgment has come” is significant. It comes, as noted by John A. Bollier, between the end of the first two series of judgments (seven seals and seven trumpets—chs. 6 to 13) and beginning of the last series of judgments (seven plagues, punishment of Babylon, of the beast, the false prophet, Satan and the wicked—chs. 15 to 20).⁸ What this means is that the judgment announced by the first angel begins before the outpouring of the seven last plagues, which terminate with the Coming of Christ (16:15).

The Pre-Advent nature of the first angel’s judgment-message is indicated by the fact that it precedes the third vision of the same chapter which describes the two harvests reaped by Christ at His Coming. The first is the harvest of the grain which represents the gathering of the righteous into God’s Kingdom (14:14-16). The second is the harvest of the grapes which refers to the vintage of God’s wrath manifested in the condemnation of the wicked (14:17-20).

The fact that the announcement about the beginning of the judgment is made before Christ comes “for the harvest of the earth” (14:15) suggests that his is the Pre-Advent phase of the final judgment. This is a time when not only an evaluative judgment is conducted in heaven, but also God’s last call to repentance is given on this earth.

As in the typical Levitical system the trumpets were blown ten days before the Day of Atonement to call the people to repentance during the Pre-Atonement judgment, so in the antitypical service an angel announces with loud voice that “the hour of his judgment has come” and calls upon mankind to repent and worship God during the Pre-Advent judgment and before the Advent harvest.

Pre-Advent Judgment in the Book of Daniel

Judgment Vision. The seventh chapter of the book of Daniel describes a most impressive judgment *vision* which sheds light on the nature and timing of the Pre-Advent judgment. The chapter is structured in three parts and each of them climaxes with a court scene in heaven around the throne of “the Ancient of Days.”

In the first part (7:1-14) Daniel describes a vision in which he saw an unfolding of historical powers symbolized by the successive arising out of the sea of four great beasts, each different from the other. Daniel is astonished by the dreadfulness of the fourth beast out of which arises a persecuting power represented by a little horn with “eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (7:8).

While observing the little horn, Daniel’s gaze shifts heavenward where he sees the dazzling appearance of the Ancient of Days seated on His throne: “a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment and the books were opened” (7:9-10). While viewing this celestial tribunal, Daniel’s gaze shifts back momentarily earthward, where he sees God’s judgment being visited upon the insolent despot and the beasts (7:11-12).

Then Daniel’s gaze shifts back again to heaven where he sees “a son of man” coming to “the Ancient of Days” to receive His eternal dominion and Kingdom “which shall not pass away” (7:13-14). It is noteworthy that the celestial judgment in this first scene begins after the appearance of the insolent Little Horn, and before the Coming of the Son of Man to receive the eternal Kingdom. Thus the sequence of events clearly indicates that the heavenly judgment described in verses 9-10 precedes the Coming of Christ to establish God’s eternal kingdom.

The Explanation of the Vision. In the second part of the chapter (7:15-22), Daniel asks for and receives the explanation of the meaning of the four beasts. He is told that the four beasts represent four kings, the last of which will give rise to a power which will make war against “the saints” (7:21). The persecution of the saints by this despotic power will continue “until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints received the kingdom” (7:22).

This second part adds some details to the judgment scene of vv. 9-10, by explaining that the judgment concerns both the persecuting power and the persecuted saints. The outcome of the judgment is the reception of the kingdom by the saints. Here, as in the first court scene, the heavenly judgment is a process that precedes the establishment of God’s Kingdom.⁹

An Additional Explanation. In the third part of the chapter (7:23-28), the angel returns and gives to Daniel an additional explanation about the terrible fourth beast (7:23-24) and especially about the powerful apostate “little horn” who will endeavor to “wear out the saints of the Most High, and . . . to change the times and the law” (7:25).

The climax of this vision, as in the previous two, is again the heavenly court which sits “in judgment,” condemns the godless tyrant and divests him of all power (7:26). These heavenly judicial proceedings result in the giving of the eternal kingdom “to the people of the saints of the Most High” (7:27).

Time of the Judgment. We noted that each of the three parts of Daniel 7 climaxes with the scene of a heavenly judgment and in each instance this judgment stands in historical sequence after the war against the saints by the despotic little horn and before the Coming of Christ to establish God’s eternal kingdom.

The complete historical sequence runs as follows: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, ten horns, apostate horn, judgment, Coming of the Son of Man, establishment of God’s eternal Kingdom. This sequence indicates that the judgment is not an executive act carried out on this earth at the time of Christ’s Return, but the evaluative process conducted in heaven before myriads of heavenly beings prior to the Second Advent.

A Comparison with Revelation 5. A parallel vision is found in Revelation 5 where, as already noted, myriads of heavenly beings surround the throne of God, expressing their approval of the worthiness of the Lamb to open the scroll which contains God's verdict regarding human destinies. Both in the vision of Daniel 7 and in that of Revelation 5, all the angelic hosts are present to give their approval to God's judgment regarding the destiny of mankind.

In the former vision they are seen as participating in the judgment process, while in the latter they are shown as expressing their approval of the right of the Lamb to reveal God's final judgment. In a sense, these two judgment visions are complementary since they indicate that heavenly beings participate in the final judgment both by investigating the records and by approving Christ's right to reveal the final verdict. The large participation of heavenly beings in this Pre-Advent judgment suggests that this is one of the greatest events of salvation-history.

Sanctuary Vision of Daniel 8. The vision of Daniel 8 covers much the same ground as that of Daniel 7, but it defines more precisely the commencement of the Pre-Advent judgment. The judgment scene of Daniel 7 is thematically linked to the purification ("cleansing") of the sanctuary in Daniel 8. The time of the latter is clearly eschatological since the angel repeatedly explains to Daniel that "the visions is for the time of the end" (8:17; cf. vv. 19, 26).

The End-time is linked to the time prophecy of Daniel 8:14 where a heavenly being says: "For two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state." The "restoration" or "cleansing" (KJV) of the sanctuary occurred in Old Testament times annually on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29-30). This event, as will be shown shortly, typologically represented the final judgment that will bring about the eradication of sin. On the basis of the terminological and contextual connection which exists between Daniel 8 and 9, Seventh-day Adventists believe that the seventy-weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 provides the starting point of the 2300 day-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14.

The starting point of both prophecies is the first decree of Artaxerxes of 457 B.C. (Dan 9:25) which provided for the repatriation of the Jews and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Accordingly, the endpoint of time of the 2300 day-year prophecy falls into the year A.D. 1844. Since that time the Pre-Advent phase of Christ's heavenly ministry has been going on. The nature of this ministry will be clarified shortly in our study of the typology of the Day of Atonement.

The Scope of the Judgment. The scope of the Pre-Advent judgment described in Daniel 7 and 8 includes both a judgment *against* the enemies of truth, of God and His people (7:25-27; 8:11-14, 23-25) and a judgment *in favor of* "the saints of the Most High" (7:22). In either case this judgment discloses the "rightness" of the divine verdict of salvation or punishment.

This judicial process is conducted on the basis of a perfect record of each human life kept in so-called "books": "the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened" (7:10). Here Daniel does not explain which books were opened. The Scripture, as mentioned earlier, refers to several books (Mal 3:16; Ps. 69:28; Rev 3:5; 20:12; Phil 4:3). Whatever these books are, they must contain a record of all the relevant "facts" which include motives as well as overt and covert actions. These data enable the heavenly assize to evaluate and thus vindicate the "rightness" of God's judgment.

The Outcome of the Judgment. The outcome of this judicial process described in Daniel 7 is the complete destruction of God's enemies ("destroyed to the end" — 7:26) and the reception of the "everlasting kingdom" by "the people of the saints of the Most High" (7:27). The finality of this outcome indicates that this is the final judgment which determines the eternal destiny of each human being.

This final outcome is described in similar terms in the vision of Daniel 12. In the latter, Daniel is shown Michael delivering during the "time of trouble . . . every one whose name shall be found written in the book" (12:1). The verdicts contained in "the book" presumably determine also who is to have part in the resurrection "to everlasting life" or in the resurrection "to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:2).

In Daniel 12, there is no mention of any judicial process but reference is made to the execution of the verdicts contained in “the book,” namely, the resurrection to eternal life for some and to eternal contempt for others. This executive phase presupposes the evaluative phase described in Daniel 7. Thus Daniel 12:1-3 complements the judgment vision of Daniel 7 by describing the outcome of the latter in terms of resurrection to “everlasting life” or “everlasting contempt.”

The “books” which are opened in Daniel 7:10 to inaugurate the Pre-Advent judgment are the basis that determines which “name shall be found written in the book” of Daniel 12:1, when eternal destinies are adjudicated. Revelation presumably refers to the same book when it says: “if any one’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:15). In short, Daniel 7 describes the evaluative phase of the final judgment which determines the eternal destiny of every human being and which precedes the executive phase when the actual granting of rewards and punishment will take place.

Pre-Advent Judgment in the Typology of the Day of Atonement

A Time of Judgment. The need for a final judgment, in both its investigative and executive phases, was effectively taught in Old Testament times through the rituals of the Day of Atonement. The great Day of Atonement was viewed as a time of solemn judgment which dealt in a total and final way with the accumulated sins of Israel. This annual day of judgment and cleansing was rendered necessary by the sins which symbolically had been transferred and accumulated in the sanctuary during the daily atonement through the rite of blood (Lev 4:5, 6, 16-18) and the rite of eating the sacrificial flesh by the priest (Lev 6:24-30; 10:18).

These accumulated sins of Israel were disposed of in a *corporate* (“all their/your sins”—Lev 16:16, 22, 30, 34) and *conclusive* (“you shall be clean”—Lev 16:30) manner, through the elaborate ritual of the Day of Atonement, which included a sacrifice for the priest, a sacrifice for the people, and the release of Azazel (Lev 16).

A Judgment Process. The final disposition of Israel’s sins was the outcome of a judgment process which began on the first day of the sev-

enth month (New Year) with a “blast of trumpets” (Lev 23:23) to usher in a period of repentance. This period of soul-searching which lasted ten days, that is, until the Day of Atonement (Lev 23:27), was in a sense an investigative judgment during which God judged in a total and final way the accumulated sins of Israel.

The judgment nature of this period was clearly established by the rabbis who taught: “The judgment is passed on New Year and the decree is sealed on the Day of Atonement.” The judgment-function of the Day of Atonement is also indicated by the fact that people were asked to “afflict” themselves (Num 29:7), that is, to repent and to confess their sins. Anyone who refused to participate in this corporate repentance was to be “cut off from his people” (Lev 23:29).

Judgment Ritual. The judgment-nature of the Day of Atonement can be seen also in the ritual performed on that day. It was only on that day that the high priest appeared before the Shekinah glory of God, which was manifested above the ark of the covenant (the throne of God’s judgment—Rev 7:15; Ps 99:1; 80:1), to present the cases of all the people.

Inside the ark were the tables of the law (Ex 40:20), representing the moral standard of God’s judgment (Ps 89:13-14). The believer did not appear in person before God’s judgment throne, but waited expectantly and penitentially while the high priest presented his case before God. This ritual effectively symbolized, as we shall see, Christ’s entrance into the heavenly sanctuary “to appear in the presence of God on our behalf” (Heb 9:24).

A Time of Vindication. The judgment of the Day of Atonement was not intended to be punitive but redemptive. It was a day in which the Israelite was vindicated by God before his fellow beings and before the universe. This redemption/vindication was expressed in a variety of ways. For example, the focal point of the priestly atonement was the *mercy seat* (cover of the ark where blood was sprinkled seven times (Lev 16:14-15) to reassure the people that God had fully “covered” their sins.

The vindication of the believer was in a sense the vindication of God’s justice manifested in saving those who accepted His atonement

for their sins. Such a vindication was finally shown through the rite of the goat Azazel upon which were symbolically transferred Israel's sins (Lev 16:21). Azazel, as symbol of Satan (Enoch 6:7—"chief of fallen angels"), was taken into the wilderness to pass away (Lev 16:21-22) and thus indicate the permanent removal and elimination of sin.

Jubilee Celebration. The finality of the cleansing and elimination of sin was also expressed through the blasting of the ram's horn ("yobel" from which "jubilee" derives—Lev 25:9) at the close of the services of the Day of Atonement to usher in the New Year and the Jubilee Year every 49th year.

It is noteworthy that the liberation and restoration of the Jubilee Year was ushered in by the cleansing and new moral beginning granted by God to His people on the Day of Atonement. This may explain why the imagery of the Jubilee's trumpet blast is used in the Scripture to describe both the messianic ingathering of the exiles (Is 27:13; Zech 9:9-14) and the Return of Christ (Matt 24:31; 1 Thess 4:16; 1 Cor 15:52).

All of this shows that the Day of Atonement marked *the end* of the judgment process of sin and resulted in *the beginning* of a new order. It symbolized God's final and conclusive disposition of the sins of the people as a whole and the restoration of a new covenant relationship.

The Heavenly Antitypical Day of Atonement

The Reality of the Heavenly Sanctuary. The momentous typological significance of the Day of Atonement as a judgment process resulting in the final cleansing and vindication of God's people points to corresponding redemptive activities performed by Christ. The Scripture teaches the existence of this correspondence by explaining how the earthly sanctuary and its services typified the corresponding greater reality of the heavenly sanctuary is established especially in Hebrews by means of *vertical* and *horizontal* typologies.

Vertically, the *heavenly* sanctuary is presented as the "true tent" (Heb 8:2), the "perfect tent" (Heb 9:11; cf. 9:24), of which the *earthly* one was a "symbolic" pattern (Heb 9:9; cf. 8:5; Act 7:44; Ex 25:40). Similarly,

the priestly services and sacrifices of the earthly tabernacle are seen as a “copy and shadow” (Heb 8:5) of the “more excellent” (8:6) High Priestly ministry conducted by Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 7:24-25; 8:4, 11-13; 10:11-21).

Horizontally, the *past* (before Calvary) typological services of the earthly sanctuary (Heb 9:6-9) are viewed as fulfilled and superseded by the *present* heavenly intercession and mediation of Christ (Heb 9:9, 11-14). The existence of a real heavenly sanctuary where Christ ministers as High Priest and Intercessor is also attested by the numerous Biblical references to a heavenly sanctuary-temple or parts of it (Is 6:1; Ezek 10:3; Rev 1:13; 7:15; 11:19; 14:17-18).

Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary. The typological correspondence between the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries presupposes a correspondence between them in the priestly ministry performed. In the earthly sanctuary, the priestly ministry consisted of two phases: (1) a daily service of *intercession* in the Holy Place, and (2) an annual service of *judgment* and cleansing in the Most Holy on the Day of Atonement. These two phases of *intercession* and *judgment* find their correspondence in Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

Intercession. The first phase of Christ’s ministry of *intercession* began at the time of His ascension to heaven and installation at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-34; 7:56; Heb 8:1-2). The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is seen as the evidence of the official enthronement of Christ to His heavenly ministry (Acts 2:33). The installation of Christ to His heavenly ministry is reflected in those passages which speak of His sitting at the right hand of God (Acts 2:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3, 13).

The meaning of “sitting” as intercessory ministry is explained especially in Hebrews 8:1-2, where Christ is presented as the “high priest, . . . seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent.” Through His intercessory ministry, Christ sustains the Church (Rev 1:13, 20), mediates repentance and forgiveness to believers (Acts 5:31; 1 John 2:1-2; 1:9), makes our prayers acceptable to God (John 16:23-24; Rev 8:3), and provides us with the invisible and yet real assistance of His angels (Heb 1:14; Rev 5:6; 1:16,20).

Judgment. The second and final phase of Christ's heavenly ministry involves, as in the earthly sanctuary, a *judgment* process which results in the final disposition of sin and the jubilee-celebration at His Second Coming. This final phase of Christ's heavenly ministry represents not a replacement of, but an addition to the work of intercession. The special sacrifices of the Day of Atonement were offered in addition to the "continual [daily] burnt offering" (Num 29:11).

Intercession is intrinsically related to judgment because the positive or negative response to the gift of salvation offered through Christ's intercession presupposes a final judgment that reveals what each response has been. Both intercession and judgment are the work of the same High Priest. Intercession is Christ's work in actualizing His redemptive love manifested at the cross. Judgment is Christ's work in realizing His redemption in a final and conclusive way at the end of history. Thus the difference between the two is one of perspective: intercession is the work of Christ viewed from the perspective of His First Advent. Judgment is the work of Christ viewed from the perspective of His Second Advent.

The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary. The Scripture alludes to the final phase of Christ's heavenly ministry in a variety of ways. Hebrews, for example, establishes a correspondence between the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary and that of the heavenly sanctuary: "Thus it was necessary for *the copies* of the heavenly things [the earthly tabernacle and its vessels—9:21-22] to be purified with these rites, but *the heavenly things* themselves with better sacrifices than these" (9:23). This text emphasizes the necessity of the "cleansing" of the "heavenly things" and its accomplishment through the "better sacrifice" of Christ which does not need to be repeated annually as did the typical Day of Atonement (9:25).

How is the heavenly sanctuary cleansed? Hebrews recognizes *past*, a *present*, and a *future* aspect in Christ's removal of sin represented by the Day of Atonement. In the *past*, Christ "*has appeared* once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9:26). In the *present* ("now"), Christ *appears* in the presence of God on our behalf" (9:24). In the *future*, Christ "*will appear* a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (9:28).

The past, the present, and the future ministry of Christ are in Hebrews ideologically connected because they are all dependent upon the same “once for all” sacrifice on the Cross. It is the same atoning sacrifice that enables Christ to fulfill the two phases of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary: intercession and judgment.

An “Already” and a “Not-Yet” Fulfillment. In a sense the Cross represents an “*already*” fulfillment of the Levitical Day of Atonement, since through it Christ “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb 9:26). This, however, does not lessen the “*not-yet*” future and final aspect of Christ ministry. The principle of a double fulfillment—“an already and not-yet”—is common in the New Testament. The author of Hebrews recognizes that the Cross does not exhaust Christ’s redemptive ministry, because he explains that Christ not only “appeared” in the past “to put away sin” but also appears now in the present before God’s presence and “will appear” in the future to save.

The ministry of Christ “in the presence of God on our behalf” (9:24) includes both a work of intercession and a work of judgment. Regarding the first, Hebrews says that Christ “always lives to make intercession for them” (7:25). Regarding the second, Hebrews suggests that the work of the investigative judgment will be completed before Christ comes. This suggestion is made by means of the following comparison: “And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (9:27-28).

Pre-Advent Judgment. In this passage the author correlates human death which will be followed by the final judgment (cf. Heb 10:26-27) with Christ’s atoning death which will be followed by His Second Advent. In this correlation, the judgment is placed in correspondence with the Second Advent. Yet the judgment implicitly precedes the Second Advent because the author says that the latter does not “deal with sin.” Christ “will appear a second time,” not to judge but “to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (9:28).

The implication is that the judgment process that decides who is to receive the gift of eternal life is completed before Christ comes. As the appearance of the High Priest out of the sanctuary at the end of the Day of Atonement marked the completion of the judgment process which resulted in the final disposition of sin and the inauguration of a new covenant relationship with God, so Christ's Second Advent appearance at the end of the antitypical Day of Atonement marks the completion of the process of judgment which results in the bestowal of eternal life to those "who are eagerly waiting for him" (9:28).

The above survey indicates that the concept of a Pre-Advent evaluative judgment is clearly implied in different ways in the Scripture. This concept is an underlying assumption of much of the teachings of Jesus and of Paul. More explicit descriptions of the Pre-Advent judgment are found in the apocalyptic judgment visions of Daniel (chs. 7 and 8) and Revelation (chs. 5 and 14).

Valuable insights into the Pre-Advent judgment work of Christ are provided also by the typological correspondence which Hebrews establishes between the ministry of the Day of Atonement performed by the high priest in the earthly sanctuary and that performed by Christ in the heavenly. These cumulative indications point convincingly to a Pre-Advent phase of the final judgment.

In the next newsletter we will examine the following three aspects of the final judgment:

1. The Post-Advent Phase of the Final Judgment
2. The Outcome of the Final Judgment
3. The Theological Significance of the Final Judgment

UPCOMING WEEKEND SEMINARS

As a service to our subscribers, I am listing the date and the location of the upcoming seminars for the months of August and September 2006. I wish to extend my personal, warm invitation to all who are able to attend one of the followings rallies.

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For information call Pastor Brighton Kavaloh at (020) 8851 3383

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For information call Pastor Keith Boldeau at 01923 460 968 or Elder Tristan Cuniah at 0207 539 5826

SEPTEMBER 15-16: CANADA - KENDALWOOD SDA CHURCH

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For information call Pastor Hymers Wilson, at (905) 728-6459

SEPTEMBER 22-23: LOS ANGELES: 54TH STREET SDA CHURCH

Location: 1973 West 54th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90062.

For information call Pastor Stewart Walker at (661) 947-7931

SEPTEMBER 29-30: ORLANDO -ALTAMONTE SPRINGS SDA CHURCH

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- * The CD/DVD album with Prof. Bradford's writings and live video lecture on Ellen White

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The CD disk offers a searchable data base of most of Prof. Graeme Bradford published and unpublished writings. It includes also the latest book *More than a Prophet!* During the past 30 years, he has written books and articles on a wide variety of subjects such as occultism, near death experiences, Israel in Prophecy, expository preaching, kids and drugs, the Bible and Archeology, and endtime prophecies. His articles always offer a refreshing biblical perspective on current issues.

Until now Prof. Bradford's books and articles were available only in a printed form, often unavailable at local ABC stores. In view of my indebtedness to Prof. Bradford scholarship, I have offered to help him to place all of his books and articles on a CD album. This makes it

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You will find in this collection a priceless resource to enrich your understanding and experience of biblical truths. You will especially appreciate his latest book *More than a Prophet*—a book that has been long overdue and will do much to restore confidence in the validity of Ellen White’s prophetic ministry.

The DVD Video Recording

On June 20, a professional crew recorded Prof. Bradford’s popular two hours powerpoint lecture on “More than a Prophet,” at the Avondale College Media Center in Australia. With the help of 75 slides, he discusses in an open and objective ways the major issues related to the prophetic ministry of Ellen White.

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