

“God So Loved The World” Bible Study

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16 (NIV)

Study #21: The Investigative Judgment

In our last study, we examined the Sanctuary doctrine, God’s “show and tell” of the entire plan of redemption. In the next few studies, which will bring these series of Bible lessons to an end, we will consider what the Sanctuary truth reveals about the closing events of this earth’s history. The purpose of these studies is to strengthen your faith in Christ and prepare you to face the coming crisis that will transpire before the second advent and the end of the world.

One of the events that has to take place before Christ can come to take believers to heaven is the vindication of the saints against the accusations of the devil. Satan is “the accuser of the brethren ... which accused them before God day and night.” He is the great enemy of souls, and as such is determined that none of the believers make it to heaven.

Therefore, before the second advent can take place, Christ, our Great High Priest and Intercessor, has to vindicate the saints in the judgment. This is part of the good news of salvation. This judgment of the saints is referred to as the Investigative Judgment. This is what we will examine in this study.

1. What change takes place to our status when we believe in Christ?

John 5:24 _____

Note: As we discovered in a previous study, at the cross the entire human race was executed in Christ, our substitute. Because of this supreme sacrifice every sinner, who by faith receives Christ as their personal Saviour, passes from death (condemnation) to life (justification).

2. Will believers have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ?

Romans 14:10 _____

Note: Since a believer has already passed from condemnation to justification, the question is often asked why believers have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. The answer is because, as in all court cases, there is an accuser.

3. Who accuses the believers and how often does he accuse them?

Revelation 12:10 _____

4. Who is on the believer’s side in this court case?

Romans 8:31 _____

Note: What Paul is saying here is that since God is on the believer's side, it does not matter who is against us. All three members of the Godhead are on our side in the investigative judgment. This is indeed good news!

5. How do we know that God is on our side?

Romans 8:32 _____

Note: With blood mingled with His sweat, indicating great distress, Jesus pleaded with His Father in the garden of Gethsemane, that if it were possible, could He remove the cup from Jesus. The Father's reply was NO because He so loved the world. Without the cross, man would be lost.

6. Besides dying for our sins, what is Christ now doing for us?

Romans 8:34 _____

Note: In Christ we not only have a perfect Saviour but also an intercessor who will defend us against all the accusations of Satan. He is our advocate now and in the judgment (see 1 John 2:1).

7. What witness does the Holy Spirit bear to every believer?

Romans 8:16 _____

Note: In the judgment, all three persons of the Godhead — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit — are on the side of the believers. With such a defense on our side, we can be sure that Satan has no chance in the judgment to win his case against us.

8. According to Peter, with whom does the final judgment begin?

1 Peter 4:17 _____

Note: The term "house of God" refers to all those who by faith have accepted Christ as their personal Saviour and whose names are written in the book of life. In this judgment, Christ acts as their advocate and Satan as their accuser.

9. What will be exposed in the judgment of the believers?

1 Corinthians 4:5 _____

Note: We humans judge each other by our outward acts but God judges us by our motives. Sometimes our acts are wrong even though in our hearts we want to do what is right (see Romans 7:19, 20). This is part of our Christian struggle. But God understands and will judge us by the counsels of the heart.

10. What were we created in Christ to do?

Ephesians 2:10 _____

Note: Not only did Christ save us from condemnation to justification but also from a life of sin to a life of good works. These good works do not save us, but they are evidence of our salvation.

11. What is dead if justification by faith does not produce good works?

James 2:17 _____

Note: Genuine justification by faith always produces good works. However, the believer may not be aware of these good works since they are the fruits of the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 25:34-40).

12. The good works of the believer are profitable to whom?

Titus 3:8 _____

Note: Good works do not save us but they do give evidence to others that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. People judge us by our behavior and they must see the love of Christ manifested in every believer.

13. What clear evidence proves that we are followers of Christ?

John 13:34, 35 _____

Note: The greatest proof we Christians can give to the world that we are born-again believers is by manifesting the selfless love of Christ. According to the Bible, such love is the true keeping of the law (see Galatians 5:13, 14).

14. How is a person justified by God?

Romans 3:28 _____

Note: We must constantly remind ourselves that we are justified, or declared righteous, before God by faith alone in Jesus Christ. Law-keeping does not save us but is the evidence of our salvation. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (see 1 John 5:1-3).

15. How will we be judged in the investigative judgment?

Revelation 20:12 _____

Note: The Bible is clear that we sinners are justified by faith alone, apart from any good works we do (see Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5). Yet believers are judged and rewarded according to their works (see Matthew 16:27; John 5:28, 29; 2 Corinthians 5:10). How do we reconcile this apparent contradiction? This will be answered in the next few questions.

16. What is the greatest proof we can give that we are justified by faith?

Matthew 5:14-16 _____

Note: As Christians we are to be the light of the world. It is not by our words that we give evidence of this but by our works. As Jesus said, they shall know us by our fruits (Matthew 7:16-20).

17. What did (i) Christ redeem us from, and (ii) why?

Titus 2:14 (i) _____

(ii) _____

18. What did the works of Abraham prove?

James 2:22 _____

Note: Abraham’s works proved that his faith was genuine. In the same way, our works of faith will be used by Christ, our advocate, to prove in the investigative judgment that our faith is true.

19. What kind of works will not justify a person before God?

Galatians 2:16 _____

Note: We must not confuse works of faith, which is the fruit of the gospel, with works of the law. The phrase “works of the law” refers to good works or keeping the law in order to earn salvation. In English, we call it legalism. In contrast, “works of faith” are the fruit of the Spirit. While these fruits do not contribute toward our salvation, they do give evidence of it. That is why they will be brought up in the judgment, to prove our justification by faith.

20. According to the prophet Daniel, how many will stand before the judgment seat of God?

Daniel 7:10 _____

Note: Daniel is here describing the investigative judgment of the saints. While the saints themselves will not be physically present there, they will be represented by their great High Priest and advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous (see Zechariah 3:1-4; Joshua is the Hebrew name for Jesus).

21. In this judgment of the saints, who will be vindicated?

Daniel 7:22 _____

Note: The verdict in the investigative judgment will be in favor of the saints. It is only after Christ has vindicated us that He will come to take us to heaven. This is the blessed hope for which we are all waiting.

22. For how long will the saints rule with Christ?

Daniel 7:26, 27 _____

Note: This is the consummation of the ages. At this time, Satan and his kingdom will be forever destroyed. In its place, God will usher in His everlasting kingdom, where peace will reign forever. By faith, plan to be there.