



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Judgment of Christ

David Clayton



This is the first in a series of articles in which we will be examining the teachings of the books of Daniel and the Revelation with particular emphasis on Revelation. As we have studied the wonderful truth of Christ and His righteousness, new insights have opened up to our mind in the study of these books and we believe the time has come to share what we have been seeing. There is much still to be understood, but we are fully persuaded that we live in the time of the fulfillment of these prophecies and therefore, we expect that God will rapidly open up those areas of these prophecies which are still not perfectly clear. In this, the first article in this series, we focus on something which we believe to be the key to understanding the rest of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation.

THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT

There is a certain doctrine in Adventism which has caused significant problems, both inside and outside of Adventism. It is the doctrine of "The Investigative Judgment." Some of the most outstand-

ing minds in Adventism have, over the years, rejected Adventism because of the concepts associated with this doctrine. People such as D.M. Canright, A.F. Ballenger, and more recently, Desmond Ford, rejected it outright and separated from Adventism, partly because of it. Even E.J. Waggoner, the famous minister who brought the emphasis on Christ and His Righteousness to the Church in 1888, confessed before he died that for years he had not believed in this doctrine and that he found it contrary to the truth of Righteousness by Faith. Outside of Adventism, this is the doctrine which opponents of the movement find most repugnant. Donald Grey Barnhouse, the late editor of *Eternity Magazine*, described it as, "flat, stale and unprofitable." Adventism on the other hand has embraced it as one of the fundamental pillars of the faith, closely identified with the very foundations and the beginnings of Seventh-day Adventism.

The doctrine of the Investigative Judgment teaches that before Jesus comes back to gather His people to Himself, there is to be a judgment of God's people which takes place in heaven. All the deeds of God's people are being faithfully recorded in the books of heaven and at this time of the Investigative Judgment, the life record of every single child of God who has ever lived will be closely examined. Adventism teaches that this investigation began specifically in October of the year 1844. This process began first of all with those who are dead and sleeping in their graves,

but eventually, it will move on to those Christians who are still living. This examination will be done by God, Jesus and the angels. During this process of investigation, it will be determined who is fit to be saved. All who are found with sin remaining in their lives will have their names blotted from the book of life, but those whose sins have all been forgiven will have their names retained in the book. When this judgment is over, Jesus will return to earth to gather those whose names have remained in the book of life. Those whose names have been blotted out will take their place with unbelievers and will be lost.

OBJECTIONS

The main objection to this doctrine is the perception that it teaches salvation by works. Most of those who teach the investigative judgment, emphasize that every deed which we have ever done will come up in review before God. Every tiny detail will be examined and we will be judged on the basis of what we have done. Those who fail to confess every single sin will still have sin written against their names in the books and will be condemned, while those who have confessed every sin, will be rewarded with eternal life. The opponents of the doctrine cry, "this is legal-

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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ism! This teaches salvation by works. How can we be justified by faith if we are saved on the basis of what we do?"

Another objection is that the doctrine makes us uncertain about our salvation. The doctrine suggests that a person's name might be called in heaven and his life's record examined at any moment, during this time of the investigative judgment. When a person's name is called he has to have a clean record with all sins confessed and up to date. If he happens to have one un-confessed sin on record, then it is just too bad. He will be lost forever. The logical conclusion is that nobody can actually be sure of his salvation because at any moment he might commit a sin, his name be called and so he would end up lost forever, even if he had served God all his life! Naturally this understanding produces a fear of the judgment, yet if God is doing something and we are afraid of it and of Him, where does that put us in relation to God? He is on one side and we are on the other! But if God and

I are friends and family, then what He is doing should make me happy, not fearful.

When we here at Restoration Ministries started emphasizing Righteousness by Faith ten years ago, several people told us, "it's just a matter of time before you reject the doctrine of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment!" In actual fact, Righteousness by faith has not led us in that direction. However, it has enabled us to gain some deeper insights and some unusual perspectives on this doctrine which have opened up our understanding significantly as to what is really involved in this judgment. Christ has become the main focus of this teaching and it has opened a door to a better understanding of what is really taking place in the prophecies, and particularly in the book of revelation.

The idea that there is a judgment which takes place in heaven, before Jesus returns, is a biblical doctrine. Daniel 7:9,10 teaches this very clearly. A careful Bible student cannot honestly deny the reality of the pre-advent judgment. This judgment is a fact, but the understanding of what is involved has been greatly confused. Many object to the title, *Investigative Judgment*, and indeed it is not found anywhere in the Bible. However, the Bible does teach such a thing as a judgment, based on an investigation which takes place before the return of Jesus, so the title itself is not a problem if we can rid it of the misconceptions and false ideas linked to it.

The main passage which is used in teaching the Investigative Judgment is Daniel 8:14. However, this passage says nothing about judgment and in fact, the context of the passage does not suggest anything about a judgment so we will not go to that passage in trying to establish the truth of the pre-advent judgment. The passage which very clearly teaches this judgment is Daniel 7:9,10.

THE UNDERLYING THEME

The book of Daniel is a book about restoration. The background to the book gives us an important clue as to what is really happening in the book. The

writer of the book, the prophet Daniel, was a Jew, whose entire country and nation had been conquered and devastated by the armies of Babylon under king Nebuchadnezzar. The Jewish nation, God's people, had lost their kingdom. The *geographical* kingdom, Palestine, was gone, the *political* kingdom, the monarchy and the system of government was gone, the *religious* kingdom, the sanctuary and its affiliated services with the system of the law, was gone. The *demographic* kingdom, the population of Jewish people, was gone. These four components of a kingdom were all gone and all aspects of God's kingdom were under the absolute dominion and control of Babylon.

The foremost desire in the mind of Daniel and all the Jews would have been the restoration of this kingdom with all its components. In the book of Daniel, God gives a picture of this restoration. Each of the four prophecies in Daniel speaks of the restoration of one aspect of the kingdom

1. Daniel 2: The geographic kingdom restored.
2. Daniel 7: The political kingdom restored.
3. Daniel 8: The religious kingdom restored.
4. Daniel 11,12: The demographic kingdom restored.

So all of the four prophecies in the book of Daniel speak about restoration and cover basically the same periods of time and the same events, but it is important to understand that they all view these events from a different perspective.

FOUR BEASTS AND JUDGMENT

In Daniel 7, Daniel describes a vision in which he saw four great beasts arising from the sea. We are told in verses 17 and 23 that these beasts represent four kings, or kingdoms which would arise on the earth. First, there was a lion with two wings, followed by a bear with three ribs in its mouth, followed by a leopard with four heads and four wings, followed by a dreadful beast with iron teeth and claws, which had ten horns. Another little horn arose

among the ten which destroyed three of the original horns and took their place. What happens next is not only interesting, but critical.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. (Dan 7:9,10)

The next thing that happens is that there is a judgment which takes place in heaven. This judgment is based on what is recorded in “books,” because it says, “the judgment was set and the books were opened.” At first glance we might think that the tens of thousands who are standing before God at the time of this judgment are the people who are being judged, but the context makes it clear that this is taking place in heaven and that the multitudes standing there are not people, but are actually angelic beings. When we compare this passage with Revelation chapters 4 and 5, it becomes even more clear that these are angels and not people. Revelation chapter 4 describes the identical scene which Daniel saw, but gives us many more details. In Revelation 5:11 it explains who these myriads are who are standing before the throne.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; (Rev 5:11)

In Daniel 7 it says, “thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him” The description is exactly the same, using the same words. This demon-

strates that these standing before the throne are not people who are being judged, but actually myriads of heavenly beings who are present to witness this judgment.

Now as we examine the prophecy in Daniel 7, we see these four animals, representing four kingdoms which are successively overthrown. History reveals that these kingdoms are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The last of these kingdoms, Rome, is the kingdom which rules until the end of time and we are told that this kingdom is judged and sentenced in this investigative judgment. Here is what we read:

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn



spoke: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. (Dan 7:11)

So clearly, one of the issues in the judgment is the destiny of the fourth beast (the kingdom of Rome). One of the entities which is being examined in this judgment is Rome and the sentence is that Rome is to be given to the burning flame. However, it is important to notice that there is actually a fifth kingdom mentioned in this chapter, if we don't see this, then we might miss the most important point of the chapter. This fifth kingdom is the kingdom of Christ.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and

came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan 7:13-14)

The question is, when is this decision taken to give Christ this kingdom? This decision is taken at the same time that the beast is consigned to the burning flame, and during the same investigative judgment.

In actual fact, Daniel 7 is describing the contest for dominion between different kingdoms. Each of the four beast-kingdoms is allowed to rule for a time before it is judged and the dominion passes to the next kingdom. This idea that each kingdom is first judged before it is overthrown, is demonstrated in Daniel chapter 5 in the story of Belshazzar's last feast. On that last night before Babylon was overthrown, Belshazzar, Babylon's king was having a great feast with his lords, when a hand appeared and wrote a message on the wall of his palace. The message read:

- God has numbered your kingdom and finished it.
- You are weighed in the balances and found wanting.
- Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.

That night the kingdom of Babylon was overthrown by Medo-Persia and another kingdom began to rule the world. But the point is, we see that before Babylon was overthrown, there was a judgment; Babylon was first “weighed in the balances,” or examined, before the sentence was passed that it was to be replaced by another kingdom. This is the main theme which underlies what we see happening in Daniel 7: It is the theme of judgment. Each kingdom is replaced by another kingdom, but this does not

happen arbitrarily, each kingdom is allowed to rule for a season and to develop its principles and manifest its spirit before it is judged. In each case, the judgment is negative and the kingdom passes to another nation.

God declared His involvement in the overthrow of each nation when He said to Nebuchadnezzar,

This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men. (Dan 4:17)

THE COSMIC CONFLICT

We can only understand what is happening when we look at the history of the world from the perspective of a great cosmic conflict. There is a contest between God and Lucifer. From the very beginning Lucifer claimed that he would establish a system where created beings would be better off without God. He insinuated to Adam and Eve, "if you reject the government of God, you will become better people, happier people. In fact, you will become gods in your own right." Ever since his rebellion in heaven, this has been his purpose, to prove his claim that he could establish a system of government which was better than God's. God has given Satan the opportunity to prove his point, to develop this perfect system of government. This is why there has been this succession of overthrown kingdoms on earth. If God gives the kingdom to whomsoever He will, then we understand that these kingdoms do not arise or fall by accident, God is involved in what is happening. It is He who determines that a certain kingdom has come to the end of its time and must be removed from power.

But first, before a kingdom is overthrown, it is judged, it is examined, the fruit is investigated. Notice what Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "*this matter is by the decree of the watchers and the demand by the word of the holy ones.*" The decisions are made by those who

are watching and judging in heaven, those who were once the friends of Lucifer in heaven and who are watching his career with interest to see if he is able to fulfill his promises.

The fourth beast, Rome, is Satan's masterpiece. It is the final product of Satan's six thousand years of manipulating the nations of planet earth. In this final kingdom we can see all the wisdom of the world demonstrated, all the education, the scientific achievements, the wealth of the world – every single advantage that human endeavor can provide has been given to this kingdom. God has allowed Satan to develop these attributes to the highest pinnacle, all that the world can offer has been given to Satan to utilize and he has bestowed these things abundantly on the kingdoms which have represented him. In Revelation 13:2 it says that the dragon gave the Roman beast his power, and his seat, and great authority. It is this beast which is the subject of this judgment which takes place in Daniel 7:9,10.

However, this beast is not the only entity judged. The judgment produces two results. Daniel tells us,

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. (Dan 7:11)

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. (Dan 7:13-14)

Notice that there are two entities which receive a reward at the end of this judgment. First of all the beast is destroyed and given to the burning flame. This is what the judgment determines, this is his sentence. But notice also that at the same time, Christ is given an everlasting

kingdom which will *never* pass away. The judgment determines that there will never again be another kingdom to follow this kingdom of Christ. Why is this so? Why is it that each of the four beast-kingdoms was given a time to rule, a time to demonstrate what principles were behind each one, a period of probation before each of them was successively removed, yet, when we look at the kingdom of Christ, there does not seem to be a probationary time of trial like with the other kingdoms? As soon as Christ's kingdom takes over, the sentence is already passed that it is to remain forever. Why is it different with the kingdom of Christ, does not Christ also need to demonstrate what kind of principles underlie His government? Doesn't He need to demonstrate what kind of kingdom His government produces?

CHRIST'S KINGDOM JUDGED

The answer to all these questions is, yes. Christ's kingdom is also examined in this judgment, it is not only the kingdom of the beast which is examined. Christ established His kingdom two thousand years ago at the same time when the kingdom of Rome was developing and growing into the mightiest force on earth. This was exactly the message which was at the heart of Christ's teaching. John the Baptist taught, "*the kingdom of heaven is at hand,*" Jesus Himself taught this message in every place where He went and He sent out His disciples to teach with the same emphasis:

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matt 10:7)

This was the greatest emphasis of the ministry of Jesus and His disciples and it continued after Jesus returned to heaven. The point is, Jesus did set up His kingdom while He was here, but it was not an outward kingdom of material power and glory with physical territory and geographical boundaries. This kingdom was established in the hearts of men and was manifested and revealed through His Church. When they heard Jesus' great emphasis that the kingdom

of heaven was at hand, the Pharisees came to Him with a question:

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (Luke 17:20-21)

Jesus said it clearly, “the kingdom of God is within you.” It was not something outward which could be seen with the eye, but it was a system of government which operated from inside people. For the past two thousand years, these two kingdoms have been growing side by side, the kingdom of Rome and the kingdom of Christ. These kingdoms are very different in nature. One is of this world and possesses all the advantages that this world has to offer. When we look at it we can see the wisdom, the wealth, the power, the perspectives of human wisdom in full display. All the benefits of education, the highest scientific, literary, artistic and military achievements are revealed there. It is truly the kingdom of man with Satan’s wisdom being the underlying principle. All that human wisdom can achieve is manifested in this kingdom.

The other kingdom has very little of these advantages. There is only one principle on which this kingdom is built and it is the reality of Christ Himself living in His people. There is no worldly glory, no earthly wisdom, no academic, scientific or military prominence. Instead, the glory of this kingdom is the holy character of its people, the service they render to others, the display of selflessness, the heavenly mindset, rather than outward demonstration of earthly advantages.

These two kingdoms have been growing side by side for the past two thousand years and there has been ample opportunity for each one to reveal what it is all about. The fruits of each kingdom have been demonstrated and this is what

the judgment in Daniel 7 examines. Christ is not given a kingdom, arbitrarily, there is no bias or preferential treatment in Christ being given an everlasting kingdom. He is given this kingdom *forever*, it will never pass away, because the judgment demonstrates that Christ’s government is the best of all. His government produces people who are the happiest of all, the most fulfilled, the best kinds of beings in the universe. His system works, and so the decision is taken that this kingdom is the one which is to rule on planet earth for all eternity.

This is what the investigative judgment is really about. It is an examination of the two kingdoms, that of the beast and



that of Christ to settle once and for all the question of which system of government really is best for planet earth. This may seem like a ridiculous idea. After all, isn’t it patently clear that the principles of Satan are evil and that they cause only suffering and sorrow? Isn’t it clear that such a system needs to be destroyed forever? What need is there of a judgment to come to such a decision? And what of the kingdom of Christ? Didn’t Christ prove two thousand years ago that God’s character is infinitely good and that He only means well for the people of earth? Why would there be need of a judgment to decide such a thing?

First of all, Daniel 7:9,10 tells us very clearly that there is such a judgment. The Bible teaches this, so there is no question that there is such a thing. Let us consider the fact that this conflict

between Christ’s kingdom and Satan’s kingdom has continued for the past two thousand years since Christ died on Calvary. In other words, the life, death and resurrection of Christ did not solve all the problems nor answer all the questions! If all the issues were solved, then sin would have been wiped out two thousand years ago. But instead, God has allowed the controversy to continue to develop, He has allowed sin to continue to grow and to display its ugliness for two thousand additional years since the time of Christ. Why?

The answer is, all the questions were not answered. Satan’s accusations against the government of God were partially exposed at Calvary, but not completely. There were still a few things which still needed to be demonstrated and in order to make these clear, there was need that Satan should be allowed to continue His campaign against God and His people for another two thousand years.

RIGHTEOUSNESS ON TRIAL

Now here is the important point: It was not just about God’s character, it was not just about whether or not God

is completely good and worthy of praise, admiration and worship. Jesus did answer those questions at Calvary. However, there is also the question, does God’s system of government really work? Is God able to produce the best and the happiest people by His method of government? Is He able to take people who have been born in sin and shapen in iniquity and so transform them that they will be fit to live forever? The answer has everything to do with the truth of Christ and His righteousness.

Every single system of government utilized by man and by Satan, has focused on the use of external rules and influences. Laws are made to compel men to live by certain principles. Other means such as psychology, education, reform programs, incentives, threats, punishment are all utilized in impelling people to become good, to make them

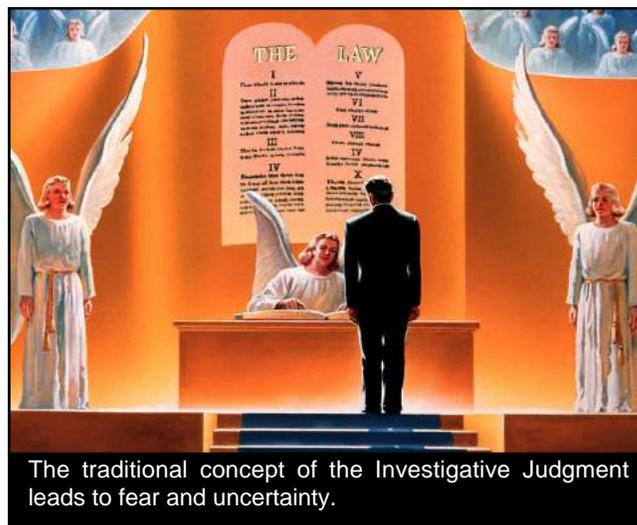
model citizens. These are the methods that Satan and his followers have used over the ages, these are the principles which have been most fully manifested in the kingdoms represented by these beast-powers and supremely in the final beast, Rome.

The kingdom of Christ, on the other hand, is not built on a system of external rules and influences. The essence of the kingdom of God is very simple, it is **Christ in you**. That is it, no more, no less. It is the indwelling of the holy spirit, infusing the believer with the very life of God, in Christ. While the representatives of Satan have employed wealth, force, supreme worldly education, all the power and glory of the world in attempting to produce the perfect people, it has failed miserably. The record of these nations has revealed that the more they grew in wealth and power, the greater they grew in decadence and immorality, in heartlessness and cruelty. Such systems do not work because the true problem of mankind is not an outward problem, it is not a matter of the intellect or behavior, it is a matter of the mind, a matter of the spirit. Man's problem is a carnal nature and the only solution is a new nature. This can only be provided by the indwelling spirit of Christ.

So while the judgment is a contest between Christ and the Beast, Satan's representative on earth, it is more than that; it is also a contest between two **SYSTEMS** of government. First, there is the system of outward control which involves government by legal law and all the affiliated efforts to compel change in behavior. Then there is the system of Christ living inside of people, poor people, often with little worldly education, little money, no worldly influence, little of the advantages of this life. Yet, the judgment will demonstrate that these people were the best people, the happiest people, those who made the greatest contributions to the well-being of humanity. In other words, the judgment will demonstrate that Christ's

system of government (Christ in you), is the one that really works. It is the system which will bring the greatest happiness, the greatest peace the greatest harmony to the human race and this is why Christ is given an everlasting kingdom. His system has been proven, tried and tested and it is demonstrated in the judgment that it has produced the goods.

From this perspective we can see why legalism is so repugnant to God and why it is so detrimental to God's true government. We can see clearly why the doctrine of Christ our righteousness must swell and grow until it swallows



up all others. In actual fact, the very security of Christ's government depends upon Christ's people understanding and living by this principle of "Christ in you." The system of living by outward rule may seem to be good, because the laws are good. But notice that this is not the issue. Rules may be good, but they never can produce true goodness in a person, therefore this legal system of government must be rejected by God's people. This system, in fact, is a great deception and a stumbling block to God's people because it creates an imitation righteousness which is not righteousness at all, but which deceives people into thinking that they are good, when in actual fact, they are building on the principles of Satan.

So will God's people be examined in this judgment? The obvious answer is,

yes. How can it be demonstrated that Christ's government really works unless the subjects of that kingdom are examined? How can it be shown that Christ produces the happiest, the best, the kindest, the most peaceful, humble people, unless those people are investigated? It is the lives of His people which demonstrate that Christ's system works! It is their life-records which prove that Christ should rule forever, because He really produces the goods!

So there is an end-time investigative judgment which includes an examination of the lives of God's people. Understanding this is the key to discovering what is really happening in the book of Revelation, and we will look at this more closely in future articles. However, when we see what is really involved in this judgment, the perspective is very different from what we see in the traditional concept of the investigative judgment. Traditionally this judgment is seen as a fearful event in which we are in danger of losing our salvation, a terrible examination in which our eternal destiny is in jeopardy. It is an occasion which causes much uneasiness and even fear among those who believe in it. But no

fair judgment can change the truth. A judgment can only reveal the truth. Therefore, no Christian is in any jeopardy because of the judgment. If we are truly the children of God in Christ, then we are saved, regardless of the judgment. If we are not truly Christ's children, but we are simply false professors, then we are lost, judgment or no judgment. A judgment can only discover the truth, it cannot change it.

PRIVILEGED TO BE JUDGED

This judgment in fact, is really an occasion on which the records of our lives will be used as a means of bringing glory to Christ and establishing His kingdom forever! It is an event which should cause all Christians to greatly rejoice because it does not set us on

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In Spirit and Truth

David Clayton

Many who observe the feast days ask the question, “suppose a person wishes to keep the feasts personally, but does not believe it is obligatory, what is wrong with that? What if a person is not seeking to be justified by observing these festivals, but is only seeking a closer experience with God?” This question often comes up because some seem to think that the only issue is the question of justification. If a person is not practicing feast-keeping as a means of *justification*, then they do not see how there can be anything wrong with the practice.

However, a close examination of the New Testament reveals that it is not simply a question of how one is justified. The issue of how a person relates to God, the issue of how he worships God is a major issue which is focused on in the New Testament.

During Old Testament times the Israelites were required by God to strictly observe all the ceremonies and rituals prescribed in the law, there is no question of that. However, when Jesus arrived on earth, He Himself declared that the time had come for a great change to take place. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well,

“the hour is coming and NOW IS, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth ... for the Father seeketh such to worship Him (John 4:20-24).”

When we examine this passage closely we see that the woman was questioning Jesus about religious practices which were based on a limited understanding of God and His ways. She wanted to know where was the true place of worship, because the Jews worshiped in Jerusalem while the Samaritans worshiped in a rival temple in Samaria. Jesus’ answer in essence, was that God cannot be placed in a box. At one time (according to the teachings of the law),

such worship was acceptable, but the hour had now arrived when the **true worshipers** would no longer worship in such a limited way. They would recognize that since God is a spirit, He is accessible at all times, in all places, under all circumstances, because “God is a spirit,” and their worship practices would match their concept of God.

The apostle Paul teaches the same thing. He says that when we were children (spiritual children), we were placed under the “elements of the world.” He says that like children we were under “tutors and governors.” (See Gal. 4:1-6). But Jesus Christ came to deliver us from that system of worship because God did not want His people to remain immature forever. Christ delivered them that were under the law so that they would no longer relate to God as infants or as servants, but would have the relationship of sons to a Father, something which the system of the law did not encourage.

So feast-keeping is not a harmless practice. First of all it binds a person to childish, immature religion, to a relationship with God that is not based on spirit and truth, but which is based on forms, rituals and ceremonies which were only shadows and imitations of reality. When a person worships in truth, this is opposed to worshipping in form and ceremony. Worshipping in Jerusalem was not false, worshipping in the earthly sanctuary was not false, but it was not the REAL thing. It was only the illustration of the real thing. Likewise, feast-keeping is not spirit and truth, it is form and imitation, it is not the true reality.

All who keep the feast days should consider that God is seeking people to worship Him who worship in spirit and in truth. Feast-keeping is not spirit and truth, it is form and imitation. It is time that we understand the truth about the God we worship and worship Him ac-

cordingly. To continue to worship in the same way as when God’s people were immature is not acceptable.

Some feast-keepers constantly present the argument that people reject the biblical feast-days while they observe the pagan days such as Christmas and Easter. This is a poor argument. It is like saying that instead of sacrificing pigs today, we should go back to sacrificing lambs and goats as prescribed in the law. The fact is, it is not one or the other; both things are unacceptable to God! The fact that some misguided people still observe pagan holidays such as Christmas and Easter is no reason to cling to the system where we worship God in forms and rituals, in shadowy representational ceremonies. This is the age when the true worshipers worship the Father in spirit and in truth!

Therefore we conclude that the observing of feast-days today is not a harmless practice. It is just as harmful as would be the sacrificing of animals today. God once ordained these things, but they belonged to another age when God’s people were spiritual infants. This is not God’s plan for His people in this period of time. In 1 Cor. 13 the apostle Paul made a profound statement in relation to how we develop in the Christian experience. I use those words here because they are equally applicable to feast-keeping,

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. (1Cor 13:11)

For two thousand years God’s people have been privileged to live in the full light of the gospel. May God help us, in this age of light and privilege, to be mature Christians and to put away childish immature worship.



European Report

Romania, Hungary & Germany 2015

This year in the providence of God we were able to return to Europe for the summer campmeetings in the countries of Romania, Hungary and Germany. These meetings took place during the latter part of July, beginning July 15 and ending on the August 2.

This year the Romania meetings were of a different nature. Our meetings were held, in the small town of Orăștie which is about 40 minutes away from where we stayed. Instead of a campmeeting the meetings were held in a church building borrowed from the Baptists. There were four meetings during the day at this church, but in the evening we moved to the town hall which was much bigger. This evening meeting was open to the public and was evangelistic in nature, although our focus was still, as always, the message of Christ and His righteousness.

The attendance was less than previous years because people had to find their own accommodations as they came from various parts of Romania. Some stayed at Vlad's home where we also were staying in the mountains, but others stayed at motels in the town. Altogether we had perhaps 50 people attending these meetings. The evening meetings were different however. On the first evening there were 50 visitors present in addition to our people, and on the final evening five days later there were 75. These visitors were mostly people from the Baptist and the Pentecostal churches. Vlad has developed a good relationship with some of the leaders of these churches in his town and as a result, they have become very interested in our message

One of the reasons for this interest has been the distribution of our book, *"The Good News is Better Than You Think."* This book has been published in Romania under the title, *"Divina Vindecare,"* which means, "Diving Healing." 4000 copies of this book have already been distributed and the resulting interest has been very good.

Our presentations in Romania and also in Hungary and Germany, were of course focused on the issues of Righteousness in Christ and how the receiving of this results in complete victory over sin. However, some of our presentations were also focused on the undeniable reality that we are at the end of the world. As we presented the evidences for this, as seen in nature, in religious developments, in the devastating and rapid decline in morality, in the institutionalized wickedness among governments and ruling powers, the growing dominance of the beast-power and his accomplice, the two-horned beast, the developing mark-of-the-beast-crisis, this all made a deep impression on many minds and at the end of the meetings it was evident that some were determined to return home



Evening meeting in Orăștie, Romania



Brother Howard in intense discussion in Orăștie, Romania



Emi's baptism -Cserépváralja, Hungary

and to adjust their lifestyles so that they could be more in harmony with what God's people should be at a time like this.

From Romania we traveled to Hungary. Here the meetings were held in a hostel in a small town named Cserépváralja. This town was run by the mayor who seemed to be in charge of everything. He owned the local restaurant, he owned the little shop in town and he was also in charge of the hostel where we stayed. He did everything to make us comfortable - I even saw him arriving early one morning and cleaning out the small swimming pool in the yard. Accommodations at the hostel were a bit cramped, there were seven of us staying in the room where Howard and I stayed, but it was a pleasant place with a pond a boathouse and a boat. There was also a very friendly little horse who was always hanging around begging apples and other fruit.

Most of the meetings were held in a conference room at the Mayor's restaurant because the meeting area of the hostel was too small to accommodate everyone, but each night we had a very intense question and answer session at the hostel. This session was always too short to deal with all the questions even though we continued until close to 10 at night.

One of the highlights of this campmeeting was a baptism which was held in the swimming pool. I had the great pleasure of baptizing 5 very serious new Christians, 4 of whom were young people still in their teens. It was a lovely ceremony and one which I was very happy to perform. It helped that the days were very warm and the water in the pool was very pleasant.

Our final stop was in Germany, in the town of Halle. On the way there from Hungary we drove through the Czech Republic and stopped overnight in Prague. We went for a walk through the town in the evening and it was interesting to realize that we were actually in the town of one of the great lights of the Reformation, John Huss. It is a beautiful city, but certainly, like most of Europe it is now a very secular place, a far cry from what it had been hundreds of years ago in the time of Huss.

The meetings in Halle were held at a youth hostel. Everything was included in the one place, our meeting room as well as a dining room and kitchen where our meals were served, so we did not have to leave the building. At first there were only a few people present, about 9 on the first day, but more arrived as the week progressed and eventually we had a total of 30 people. Most of them were old friends from previous years and we were blessed as we renewed acquaintances. However, there were also about 7 new persons who showed great interest in the messages.

As we traveled to these places and shared the messages,

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Newly baptized family members - Cserépváralja, Hungary



Brother David, keeping nice company - Halle, Germany



Campmeeting group - Halle, Germany

Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 8:11)

“A blessing is in it”

Lenworth Frankson



There is a Bible verse that makes a profound statement regarding grapes. It states: “*Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all*”

The verse clearly states that there is a blessing in the cluster of grapes. The “*cluster*” refers to the bunch. We know that the “*the new wine*” is referring to the freshly squeezed grape juice, not the fermented juice. It seems logical to conclude then that there is a blessing, or health benefits, in eating fresh grapes as well as in drinking the unfermented juice.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF GRAPES

Some of the health benefits of grapes include the following:

Asthma: Grapes can be used as a cure for asthma. In addition the hydrating power of grapes is also high, which increases the moisture present in the lungs and reduces asthmatic events.

Bone: Grapes are a source of copper, iron, and manganese, all of which are important in the formation and strength of bones. Adding grapes into your diet on a regular basis can prevent the onset of age-related conditions like osteoporosis. Manganese helps the body form connective tissue, bones, blood clotting factors, and sex hormones. Low levels of manganese in the body can contribute

to infertility, bone malformation, weakness, and seizures. New research suggests that regular grape consumption may help alleviate pain associated with symptomatic osteoarthritis of the knee, and improve joint flexibility and overall mobility.

Heart diseases: Grapes increase the nitric oxide levels in the blood, which prevents blood clots, so adding grapes to our diet may help to reduce the chances of heart attacks. Some research studies suggest that red and purple grape juices may provide some of the same heart benefits of red wine, which would include:

- Reducing the risk of blood clots
- Reducing low-density lipoprotein (LDL, or “bad”) cholesterol
- Preventing damage to blood vessels in your heart
- Helping maintain a healthy blood pressure

Grapes are rich in health-protecting antioxidants. The two main types are **resveratrol** and **quercetin**. These two compounds negate the effects of free radicals that threaten the body and stimulate LDL cholesterol’s harmful effects on arteries. Also, these two antioxidants act as a cleanup crew to reduce platelet clumping and filter toxins out of the blood. These antioxidants are found mainly in the skin, stem, leaf and seeds of grapes, rather than in their pulp. The amount of antioxidants in grapes depends on many factors, including the kind of grape, its geographic origin and how it’s processed. Dark red and purple grapes tend to be higher in antioxidants than are white or green grapes. Let us keep in mind that it is very beneficial to eat whole grapes and not just drink the grape juice.

Wine made from red grapes is an alcoholic drink that millions have craved and enjoyed drinking for thousands of years. The red pigment that is found in

the grape along with a variety of antioxidants is credited as responsible for the numerous health benefits of this beverage. But red wine has a darker side and especially individuals with particular medical conditions should best avoid it. It is often thought that alcohol consumption is not entirely dangerous when done in moderation. However, even moderate consumption of red wine can disrupt sleeping patterns, and can pose serious dangers when taken alongside medications like acetaminophen, anticonvulsants and anti-depressants.

Migraine: Ripe grape juice is an important home remedy for curing migraines. It should be drunk early in the morning, without mixing additional water. Ironically, drinking red wine is often considered a cause of migraines, but grape juice and grape seed extract is considered a solution to the problem. There are many causes behind migraines, and it can be difficult to pinpoint the culprit, since they include chemical imbalances, lack of sleep, changes in weather, or even dietary deficiencies. Alcohol in general causes migraines, but grapes have so many antioxidants that they can cure the same illness.

Constipation: Grapes are very effective in overcoming and eliminating constipation. They are classified as a laxative food, because they contain organic acid, sugar and cellulose. They also relieve chronic constipation by toning up intestinal muscles and the stomach. Grapes are high in insoluble fiber, meaning that it remains intact as it moves through the digestive tract. It builds up bulk, which promotes the formation and excretion of healthy stool, so grapes can help make you much more regular. However, if you suffer from loose stool or diarrhea, grapes should not be used as a way to regulate your system. Insoluble fiber

doesn't soak up water to dry out loose stool, and grapes don't have a high level of soluble fiber.

Indigestion: Grapes play an important role in *dyspepsia*. (another word for indigestion and heartburn in the stomach and first part of the small intestine) They relieve heat and cure indigestion and irritation in the stomach. They are also preferred over other digestive aids because they are considered a "light food".

Fatigue: Light and white grape juice can supplement the iron content in the body and help in preventing fatigue. Anemia is a real problem for many people, and eating grapes can help keep your iron and mineral levels balanced in the body. A lack of iron can make you sluggish both physically and mentally. Iron is an essential mineral that impacts a number of bodily functions. Dark grape juice however might not give an iron boost but may actually decrease iron levels.

Kidney disorders: Grapes can substantially reduce the acidity of uric acid and help to eliminate acid from the system, thereby reducing the stress and pressure on the kidneys. Grapes are also extremely good for your kidneys. Compounds in grape seed and skin extract have actually been found to **reverse kidney damage**. Grapes seem to have a key role in treating kidney disease that is induced by high-fat diets, which are one of the most common causes of kidney problems. Since grapes have high water content, they induce urination, which helps to eliminate the uric acid still present in the body after its acidity is reduced.

Blood cholesterol: Grapes contain a compound called *pterostilbene*, which has the capacity to lower a person's cholesterol levels. Pterostilbene is closely related to resveratrol, the beneficial antioxidant and coloring flavonoid mentioned earlier. Research has shown that it has anti-cancer qualities as well as a great impact on cholesterol levels. It is also thought to have preventative powers. Another compound called "sa-

ponins" present in the skin of grapes can also prevent the absorption of cholesterol by binding with it.

Antibacterial activity: Red grapes have strong antibacterial and antiviral properties that can protect you from infections. They display strong antiviral properties against the polio virus and the herpes simplex virus. Studies have also shown that grape juice can tackle bacterial infections in the gut and other systems.

Cancer: The skin of the grape contains the most resveratrol, and red and purple grapes contain significantly more resveratrol than green grapes. Studies suggest that resveratrol; in particular, possesses potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. In laboratory studies, resveratrol prevented the kind of damage known to trigger the cancer process in cell, tissue and animal models. Other laboratory research points to resveratrol's ability to slow the growth of cancer cells and inhibit the formation of tumors in lymph, liver, stomach and breast cells. Resveratrol has also triggered the death of leukemic and colon cancer tumors. In one series of studies, resveratrol blocked the development of skin, breast and leukemia cancers at all three stages of the disease (*initiation, promotion and progression*).

Grape juice not only prevents the risk of cancer but also suppresses the growth and propagation of cancer cells. The pigments contained in grapes enhance the overall immunity of the body to a wide range of diseases. The antioxidants that are present in grapes can reduce and fight the damage caused by free radicals. These free radicals can cause things like the development of cataracts, as well as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and various age-related problems. Fortunately antioxidants help to fight off and prevent these diseases.

Alzheimer's disease: Studies suggest that the resveratrol found in grapes can enhance brain health and delay the onset of degenerative neural diseases. One study published in the British Journal of Nutrition claims that grape juice can even improve the brain function of older

people who have already displayed mild cognitive impairment. Further studies are currently under way to determine the exact interaction between grape components and neural systems.

Macular degeneration: Grapes can prevent age-related loss of vision and macular degeneration. Research study conducted at University of Miami suggests that grape-enriched diet supports eye health and may prevent vision-threatening retinal diseases. Studies have shown that three servings of grapes a day can reduce the risks of macular degeneration by over 36 %. Grapes can contribute to a reduced loss of vision over time, and as with all of the organ systems, the health and susceptibility to disease or damage is lessened by the antioxidants packed into grapes.

Immune System: Grapes are not only packed with flavonoids and minerals, but vitamins as well! The high levels of Vitamin C, K, and A in grapes gives a healthy boost to many of your organ systems, particularly your immune system, which means less chance of coming down with common colds, as well as more serious health issues.

Raisins - dried grapes - are also nutritious and can help treat many disorders, including constipation, acidosis, anemia and fever. Raisins can also help people gain weight quickly and protect the health and function of the eyes. Grapes indeed take a place among the world's healthiest foods. Jesus said in Mark 14:25 "I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God" Jesus probably had a deeper spiritual meaning when he said these words but I am indeed looking forward to that day when all the redeemed will sit with Jesus to drink the juice from the fruit of the vine, for indeed there is a blessing in it.



The Judgment of Christ

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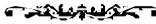
one side and God on the other, no, rather it is an occasion where we and God are a part of the same movement to overthrow the enemy once and for all, and to establish Christ on the throne of this planet for ever. This does not in any way jeopardize our salvation. That is not the point of the judgment. It is not the destiny of God's people, individually, which is at stake, no, rather, it is the destiny of Christ's kingdom! We are the instruments that God will use to finally establish Christ's right to be on the throne forever!

Therefore no Christian should be afraid of this judgment. We should rejoice that we are involved in it and should, for Christ's sake, cooperate with our Lord in every possible way so that His name may truly be glori-

fied in us.

So in conclusion, there is an end-time investigative judgment. The Bible teaches this very clearly. However, this doctrine has been surrounded with faulty perspectives and ideas until it has come to be regarded as a harmful, legalistic, useless teaching. When we view this doctrine in the light of the truth of Christ our righteousness, it takes on a completely different perspective which is beautiful, meaningful and in fact it becomes something which all Christians need to understand and appreciate so that we may be aware of the important part we play in establishing the kingdom of Christ forever.

Thank God that we can be privileged to have a part in this wonderful purpose of His.



Europe 2015

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one thing was always in the back of our minds and it was the very real possibility that this would be the last time that we would be seeing these dear brethren. None of us knows for sure what the next few years will hold, but the present developments are ominous. There is no realistic hope that things will change for the better so when we said our goodbyes there was a somber mood.

We flew out of Germany on August 5, having spent three weeks in Europe. It had been a blessed time. If our Father wills it, we will be back again in a couple of years, but the prospect of that happening is not as bright as it was a few years ago. More and more we are focused on that final meeting when there will be no more goodbyes.



Open Face

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