

Presentation-5S, Investigative Judgment: Salvation of men

Ungodly men who have departed from the faith tremble at the thought of the investigative judgment whilst God's righteous ones welcome it with joyous anticipation.* **It is applicable only to those who have at some time in their lives acknowledged and been in the service of God, whose names are recorded in the book of life in heaven.** It is a great privilege to have a part in the investigative judgment.* **Those who are found worthy will not have their names blotted out from the book of life.** It is indeed a time for the separation of the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats;* **it is the making up of God's treasure, Christ's kingdom, and the conclusion of Christ's work in behalf of His people.** The judgement of the wicked will be undertaken at another time.

A work of investigative judgment has begun in heaven, and at the same time a special preaching of this Gospel message also began on earth in 1844.* **The standard of judgement is God's Law. Jesus Christ is our mediator and judge.**

The thought of a judgment is rarely welcome to the ungodly. The wicked and the unbelieving ones do not like to face the prospect of coming before the judgment bar of the living God.*

In the SDA Hymn No. 300 (Rock of Ages): The Investigative Judgment is downgraded. In verse three, the message of God's judgment has been taken away from the hymn. Augustus Toplady had written: "When I soar to worlds unknown, see Thee on Thy judgment throne." This was reflected in the SDA song book "Christ in Song Hymnal." But in the 1985 new SDA hymnal the lyrics have been changed to: "When I soar to worlds unknown, and behold Thee on Thy throne."

Why was the word, "judgment," left out, especially at a time when the judgment hour message is so essential to be shared with the inhabitants of the world? Could this be a deliberate attempt to eliminate the judgment message from this hymn? There must be a judgment before the Second Advent of Christ! Do we need a new hymnbook that will not lead unsuspecting souls astray, one that is in harmony with the Holy Scripture?*

King Solomon the wisest of men gave a definite warning of a coming judgement in Ecclesiastes 12:14 at the very last verse of the book of Ecclesiastes "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"

Men may think to conceal their words and deeds from other men, but the Apostle Paul who counseled in* **Hebrews 4:13 "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do"**

God reads the secret motives of our hearts; He knows how much of the light of truth has penetrated the darkness of our hearts, and for every ray He will hold us accountable. In the

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great day of final reckoning it is those who have done the Will of God who will enter into the kingdom.*

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 2:16 that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel."

Also as recorded in Acts 17:31 the Apostle Paul wrote: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." This is the assurance God gave to all that there will be an Investigative Judgment.*

In Amos 3:7 the prophet informs us that "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets."

God does not leave men in ignorance of what awaits them, but warns them of events to come. He does not hide His work from men. He dwells in the light, and it is not His fault if men are found in darkness, so that God's dealings take them by surprise. When the time is at hand for the hour of His judgment, God takes care that everyone shall know about it. **He sends a special message to his servants the prophets, and in the message He gives full and clear information as to the judgment, the standard, the witnesses, the evidences, and the Judge.** He states clearly what is expected of men, and how they may be prepared for the final test.

So in our day, before the destruction of the world at the second coming of Christ, God has abundantly instructed us through the prophecies of His Word. The high honor God bestows upon the prophets is shown by the fact that they are not only "his servants," but His confidants, entrusted with His own counsel.

Sin means "a failing to hit the mark," the act of wandering from the law of God, of violating the moral law.

The standard of holiness is the divine law of God. If a man fails to meet this standard in his life, he is a sinner.

Every transgression is condemned by the law of God.*

Rom. 7:7 "Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law..."

1 John 3:4 "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law. For sin is the transgression of the law"

This law is the test in the judgment. If a man's life record reveals obedience to God's law, and a love of its principles, he will not be condemned. Christ is impartial in the judgment. Each will be

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judged by the method appropriate to his case. They that have the Law will be judged by the written law against which they have sinned, and they that have not the Law by the unwritten law of conscience against which they have sinned.*

As stated in Romans 2:12 “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law”

Obviously, the Gentiles who have not the Law will not be judged by a law that they do not possess. Nevertheless, if they transgress the unwritten law of conscience they will be lost just as those who have sinned against greater light. In Romans 1:19, 20, 32 Paul has already explained that the sins of the Gentiles are inexcusable, for they have rejected God’s revelation to them in nature and conscience.*

Furthermore, Sister White in EW p276.1 gave an even greater insight into another class who are deliberately kept in ignorance of God’s Law “I saw that the slave master will have to answer for the soul of his slave whom he has kept in ignorance; and the sins of the slave will be visited upon the master. God cannot take to heaven the slave who has been kept in ignorance and degradation, knowing nothing of God or the Bible, fearing nothing but his master’s lash, and holding a lower position than the brutes. But He does the best thing for him that a compassionate God can do. He permits him to be as if he had not been, while the master must endure the seven last plagues and then come up in the second resurrection and suffer the second, most awful death. Then the justice of God will be satisfied”

Jesus Christ is the Judge. 2 Cor 5:10 states “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”

Some would have said that the Father hath given the Son authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of God; but no, the reason is He is the Son of man. It is a Man who judges men. God the Father does not sit in judgment on men, although ultimately he is the judge, but leaves it to One who has Himself met the temptations that beset men, and knows what it is to be human. He alone knows the full power of temptation; He alone has borne the sins of the world.*

As stated in John 5:22 “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”

In commissioning the Son to carry out the plan of redemption for the saving of man and the glory of God, the Father has also committed to Him the execution of judgment. That this should be so is reasonable, for the Son of God, a divine being, is also the Son of man, a human being, who has resisted temptation, borne sin vicariously, and tasted death.*

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As stated in John 5:27 "And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man."

It is for this reason that God is now calling attention to the fact that, although His law is unchangeable,* **a human ordinance Sunday sacredness, has been instituted as a substitute for the Sabbath of the fourth commandment**, teaching men to honor a day which God has not set apart as holy, leading them to dishonor the rest day divinely appointed, and thus paying allegiance to a false god.

Sabbath keeping was a prominent feature in the life of Christ, and now that men are to be judged by that life, the true standard is to be lifted up that none may be deceived by human alterations.*

Similarly, **a pagan ordinance conferring unholy authority to another being the so-called god-the-eternal-spirit, has also been instituted as a substitute for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Spirit of Jesus Christ and of the Father, allowing insidious fallacies to be promulgated to the ruin of souls**, and through this delusion deceived unsuspecting souls into paying homage to a false god. Again the true standard must also be lifted up that none may be deceived by human alterations.

In the last-days the point of contention is "worship", the worship of the one true God of the Bible versus the unholy Sunday Sabbath and the false trinity.

Some are receiving and accepting God's correction; others are fighting against it. They hate the reform for which God is calling. If they could only realize that the hour of God's judgment is come, and that their lives are being tested by the law of God, they would value the light that comes, and turn from every commandment of man so as to be fashioned after the Divine Pattern.

What about the judgment of the righteous?

It is evident that some kind of investigation must take place before the righteous are permitted to enter into eternal bliss. This is where the investigative judgment is brought into view.*

Sister White in the Great controversy page 480.1 wrote "In the typical service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin-offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the day of atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative Judgment, the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period"

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In the investigative judgement it must be decided whether the life and attitude of those whose names are written in the "Book of Life" warrant entrusting them with eternal life; and this decision must be arrived at before the Lord comes to take them home.

The wicked are not destroyed until the end of the thousand years.* **Revelation 20:5 clearly states this condition "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."** That gives abundant time to judge them after the Lord comes. But this is not the case with the righteous. If they are to be judged at all, if any reward is to be meted out to them, their cases must be decided before the Lord comes. When He comes, His reward is with Him.*

Revelation 22:12 confirms this point "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"

The cases of the righteous must be settled before the Lord comes otherwise how can it be known who is to be saved?

It seems eminently fitting that when the question of who are to be saved comes up, the angels should be present both to give their testimony and to follow the proceedings as recorded in* **Daniel 7:10 "thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened."**

They have been vitally concerned in men's welfare; they have been ministering spirits. Throughout the ages we are to associate and be with them, and they have a right to know who will inherit God's kingdom.* **Heb 1:14 confirms this point "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"**

This also is God's plan. The angels have experienced some of the results of sin. They have seen Lucifer apostatize, and rebelled against God's government. They have seen millions of angels go with him. They have seen the Savior suffered and died, and they know the misery which sin has caused. They are vitally interested in knowing who are to have eternal life. They have no desire to repeat the experience with sin through which they have passed. It is therefore God's wise plan that they have a part in the proceedings.

The Day of Atonement is a fitting type of the Day of Judgment. On that day there was a separation between the righteous and the wicked.* **The decision is pivoted entirely on who had confessed and repented of their sins and who had not.** Those who had brought their offerings and complied with the ritual had their sins blotted out. The others were cut off. Today, we are right now living through the great Day of Atonement.

We do not know of any record being kept in the sanctuary on earth as to who appeared during the year with a sacrifice. However, we do know that the blood placed on the horns of the altars constituted a record.* **Jeremiah 17:1 confirms this fact "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart."**

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We believe God took notice of those who served Him in truth and uprightness.

Only the names of the faithful will be retained in the book of life as recorded in* **Rev 3:5** **“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”**

The names of those who do not endure until the end will be blotted out. Many never had their names recorded there, for the book contains only the names of those who at some time in their lives professed faith in Christ as stated in* **Luke 10:20** **“but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”***

According to 1 Peter 4:17 “Judgment begins at the house of God”

The closed up records of the lives that have long been forgotten among men are brought forth. They have not been forgotten in heaven.

The Lord does not regard with indifference the death of His saints. Guardian angels accompany the saints through the valley of the shadow of death, mark their resting places, and are the first to greet them in the glorious resurrection morning. The scriptures confirms this is in* **Psalm 116:14** **“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints”**

Christ does not forget any that have committed the keeping of their souls to Him. Loving memories stir afresh in angel hearts as familiar names are called from the book of life. The record of their lives is read: it is seen that on earth they endured the cross, despising the shame and they are accounted worthy of a part in the glory. Name after name is called, and for every one that Christ acknowledges, called and chosen and faithful, there is joy among the angels over a soul snatched from Satan’s power, and saved for the Redeemer’s kingdom.

Those who bear witness for Christ among men are the ones for whom Christ can bear witness before the Father. Jesus is now our Witness, our Ambassador before the Father, as we are to be His witnesses and ambassadors before men.

But what of those who heard the call, and girded on the armour, who fought the good fight for a while, and then made peace with the enemy, and returned to his yoke of sin?*

Matt. 10:33 states “Whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven”

Rev 3:21 confirmed the privilege of the overcomer “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne”

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When the investigative judgement is completed and Michael stands up and deliver every one whose name that shall be found written in the book of life, the loud pronouncement will be heard as recorded in* **Rev 22:11 "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."**

The hour of God's judgment began in 1844 and is ongoing even today till Michael stands up. All who are "accounted worthy" of a part in the first resurrection have passed the test, and the Saviour comes for them, His reward is with Him as recorded in* **Rev. 22:12 "and my reward is with me ,to give every man according as his work shall be."**

The future duties of each one have been appointed in the investigative judgment, and Christ brings them the fitness for their future work. Those who have been faithful on earth over a few things are now made rulers over many things, and enter into the joy of their Lord in doing the Father's will. The question may be asked: **What is this joy of the Lord that God's faithful servants shall enter into?** The joyous answer is obvious. **There shall be great joy in heaven when God's faithful servants shall meet the redeemed saints, saved through their witnessing of the three angels' message.**

In part, a reward for faithful service comes in this life, but Jesus here refers primarily to the rewards of the future world to come. The reward for faithful service was to be an increased opportunity to serve.*

This is confirmed in both Matthew 25:21 and 23 "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord".

Sister White confirms this point in Christ's Object Lesson page 361.4 "They will enter into the joy of the Lord as they see in His kingdom those who have been redeemed through their instrumentality. And they are privileged to participate in His work there, because they have gained a fitness for it by participation in His work here. What we shall be in heaven is the reflection of what we are now in character and holy service."

The cases of those whose names have been blotted out of the Lamb's book of life yet remain to be dealt with, and among these come the fallen angels. These are the one third of angels that have lost their original position enjoyed by them in heaven, when they followed Lucifer and were cast out of heaven.

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A reference is now made to a period of time following the second advent of Christ. The saints ascend to heaven with Christ at His second advent; there they are to share with Jesus His authority and power to judge. The saints will judge the fallen angels and unrepentant human beings who have not made peace with God through Jesus Christ. This work will be done during the millennium, that is, the thousand years that elapse before Christ together with the saints, come back to this earth.

The judgment of the wicked will take the form of an examination of the records of their lives in the book of iniquity and the book of remembrance, and the apportioning of the punishment to be meted out to them. Their destruction has already been settled by their voluntary rejection of God's offer of salvation through Christ. By their rejection they have by their own choice chosen eternal death. The examination of the life records of the wicked will enable the righteous to see the justice of God and the fairness of His dealings with those who remain rebellious to the end.

This is confirmed in* **Jude 6 "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."**

The Apostle Peter confirms this point in 2 Peter 2:4 that if God will not spare angels, spirit beings who had lived in His very presence, He will not fail to punish wicked men who lead others astray.*

"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment"

These evil angels and those whose names have been blotted out of the Lamb's book of life have sought in every way to overthrow the people of God. Their power and influence have been used unsparingly to make the pathway to heaven a bitter and dangerous one, but through the grace of God their efforts have been defeated, and now the saints who have so often felt their wrath are to sit in judgment upon them, and upon all those who have joined with them in rebellion. The Lord shall deliver the godly and punish the ungodly.*

The Apostle Paul wrote in* **1 Corinthians 6:2,3 "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? ..." "3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels?..."**

In Revelation 20:4,5 it is recorded "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection"

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Before that tribunal of glorified martyrs and overcomers are laid the life records of every sinner. The work of judgment will doubtless involve a careful investigation of the records of evil men in the book of iniquity, and the book of remembrance, so that every man will be convinced of the justice of God in the destruction of the wicked.

Among them come the cases of their own persecutors, the very men who caused them to be beheaded for the witness of Jesus. Will they take full advantage of the change in the situation, and mete out a rich retribution to their tormentors, and everyone connected with their past sufferings?*

There will be no vindictive feeling in that judgment. Those who sit there in judgment are men who gave their lives for others. When persecuted on earth, the Spirit of Christ enabled them to pray and forgive those who despitefully persecuted them so as to make manifest their love for their enemies. Now, when the whole life history of the agents of Satan are unfolded before them, the saints can realize as they could not before, that* **the man who wrongs another wrongs himself more deeply**, that sin is death, and that the pleasures of sin mean torments of despair.

They see that those who sell themselves to Satan thereby procure to themselves a harder fate than their worst enemies could wish them. From their own bright heavenly home, rejoicing in the love of the Savior, and the perfect bliss of the re-united family of God,* **the saints have no thought for the wicked but one of unutterable pity that the lost children should have forfeited so much, and have been so woefully deceived by the common enemy, Satan.**

The servants of Christ are not to judge now on earth, but to leave all judgment till the time that God has appointed for it.*

In 1 Cor. 4:5 Paul makes it plain that it is wrong to entertain a harsh or unkind opinion regarding our fellow men. Being imperfect ourselves, we are not qualified to form correct estimates of the characters of others. It is possible for men to hide their true characters from their fellow men, but when Christ comes again, nothing will remain covered, not even the most carefully guarded secret thoughts and purposes that are harbored in the minds of men*

“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Eccles. 12:14 states “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

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The judgment is not conducted according to human powers of forming decisions. It is written of Christ in* **Isaiah 11:2** **“And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding...”**

Isaiah 11:3,4 **“... and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth...”**

In the same way, the saints shall judge with the Spirit of God resting upon them.

This word shows that judging after the sight of the eyes and the hearing of the ears is not righteousness. Every Christian should avoid judging “after the sight of his eyes,” and reproofing others “after the hearing of his ears.” How many otherwise exemplary Christians form opinions concerning their fellow Christians and criticize them on hearsay evidence! In so doing the unwise Christian unfits his soul for heaven.

Therefore, it is evident that if anyone would sit with the saints in judgment must not judge indiscriminately.

Christ states this truth in* **Matthew 7:1,2** **“Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.”**

The merciful man faces the judgment with glad confidence, unafraid. He knows that God will be merciful to those who show mercy. In showing mercy God does not dispense with justice as Satan had charged. This point is reflected in* **James 2:13** **“For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy...”**

At the end of the thousand years the wicked dead are raised from the graves.* **“The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished”** as recorded in **Rev. 20:5**.

John 5:29 states that they that have done evil come forth **“unto the resurrection of damnation”**

They had lived in open violation of God’s divine precepts. They flouted the authority of God’s law and challenged its jurisdiction over them.

They have no bright future before them, only a fearful prospect of judgment and eternal death as stated in* **Hebrews 10:27** **“But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”**

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"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" as recorded in 2 Cor. 5:10.

The day is coming when everyone will have to stand face to face with Jesus Christ to answer for himself. He will not be able to take comfort in being one among many. He will see no other. There will be no place to hide. Heaven and earth flee before the face of Him that sitteth on the throne. Seeing nothing but Christ, the sinner has to stand in the light, naked and alone, to face Him. The wicked may urge his excuses then, and plead his cause if he will, but he will be speechless. He has slighted divine love, and he is without excuse. Sadly, he hears his sentence, and he knows that God is both just and merciful.

Ungodly men turn from Christ to-day and seek to forget Him. But every day that passes brings them nearer to that terrible encounter with the King they will not serve. Their choice has been made, they have judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, and they see, in that bright light where falsehood cannot come, that the blame is all their own. They shall confess that God has done all that a loving God could do for them, but their stubborn hearts have thwart His purposes of love. Their hardness of heart is voluntary and continued to increase unabated, in spite of God's leading.

This is confirmed in* **Romans 2:5 "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God"** The rejection of the riches and goodness of God has as its consequence a treasure of wrath. A man who rejects God's love is not in the same condition as one who has never known divine grace. Persistent resistance of the love of God imperceptibly but surely accumulates a store of God's wrath for the day of reckoning.

Revelation 20:14 confirmed this condition "This is the second death."

The fulfilment of the righteous judgment of God is seen in* **Philippians 2:9-11 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

Because of Christ's self-emptying, God has been able to raise Him to an even more glorious position than He enjoyed before His incarnation. The Son was all-glorious before, but His voluntary humiliation has added to the glory which He had with the Father before the world

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was. John 17:5 states* **“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”**

As man Christ lived a perfect earthly life, overcame the adversary, and won salvation for mankind. Such triumphs certainly added an inestimable weight of eternal glory to God’s dear Son!

This is the life of His life experiences here on earth that Christ gave his disciples.

Sister White confirmed this point in* **Review and Herald, January 5, 1911 par. 6 “Christ gives them the life of his life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in mind and heart.”**

She wrote in* **The Desire of Ages, p. 805 “The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ.”**

Again she reiterated in* **The Desire of Ages, p. 827 “Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind.”**

Satan with all his angels, the nations of the lost, and the nations of them that are saved, unite then in acknowledging Christ. If only the whole world would do it now, instead of waiting till it is too late; if they would let the love of God save them instead of resisting Him until the kindest thing He can do is to take from them the life which has become a curse to themselves and to others, how bright and glorious would that day be which, through their own stubbornness, must now end in the lake of fire.

Take Home Message

The Investigative judgment is completed.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire”

“This is the second death”

“And there shall be no more curse”

“The former things are passed away”

“Affliction shall not rise up the second time”

“And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new”

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It is our hope and prayer that this short presentation may lead some, peradventure many, to deeply desire to have a part in this most solemn event that is even now taking place in heaven, the investigative Judgment.

God's Spirit shall empower all who so desire, to resist with all resolute firmness even unto blood, striving against sin, that our names shall be retained in the book of life in heaven for eternity.

Doxology

Romans 11:33

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!