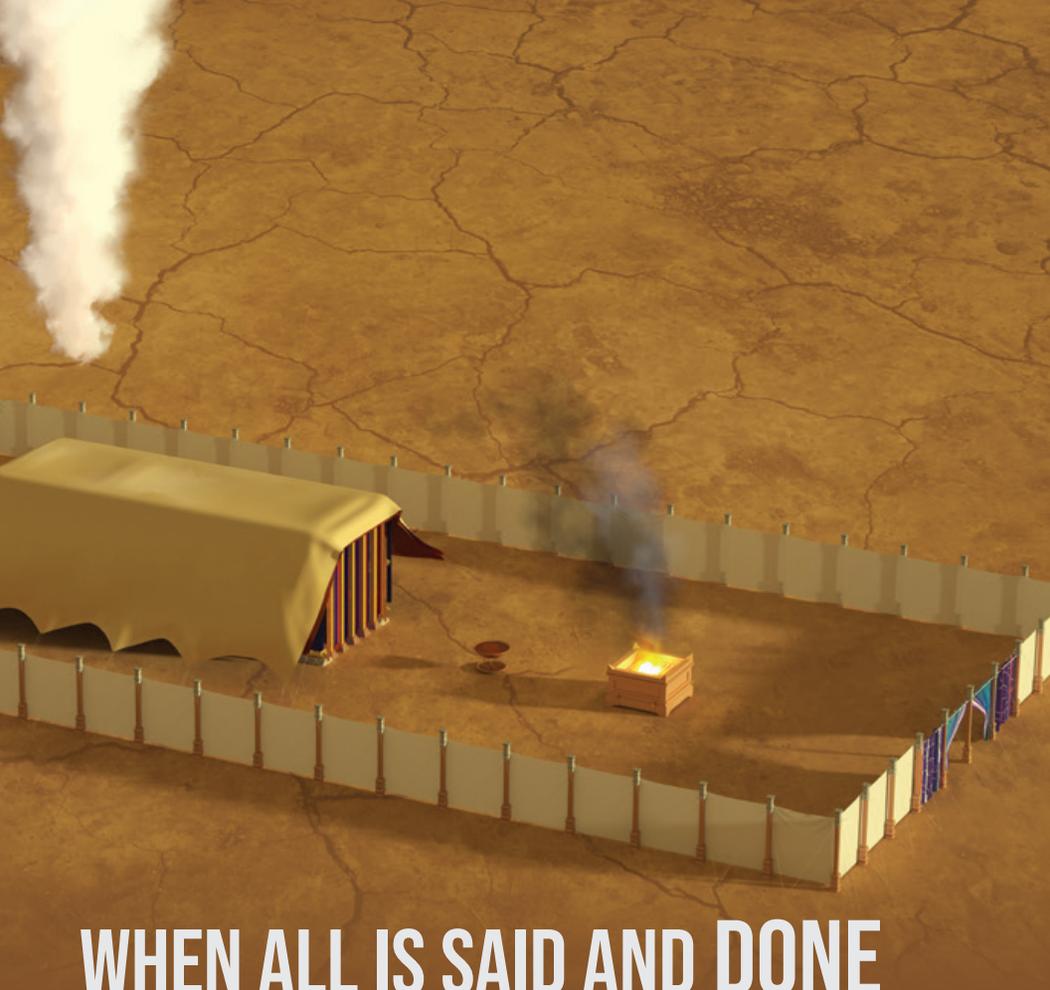




 **3ABN** BIBLE STUDY GUIDES  
*Looking Higher*

# WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE



## WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE

God promised in Amos 3:7, “Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” God revealed each step of His plan of salvation through a dramatic, life-sized visual aid—an interactive illustration called the sanctuary. Psalm 77:13 tells us, “Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary.” In Exodus chapters 25 through 31, God gave detailed instructions for the people of Israel to build a simple but beautiful structure where He could dwell among them, and teach them to trust in Him for salvation from all sin. The sanctuary itself, along with every action God instructed the priests and people to do, symbolically told the story of how Jesus would conquer sin. It also illuminated our part in accepting His salvation. Looking forward to Jesus in faith, the people long ago participated in God’s plan to remove sin from their lives. Today, we put faith in what Jesus has already accomplished by participating in God’s plan to remove sin from our lives, too. Through lessons learned from the sanctuary, God is inviting us to work in unity with Him as He reveals His righteous judgment against sin, both in the world and within us, so He can blot out sin forever.

## 1 What symbol in the sanctuary introduced the daily experience of forgiveness?

**Exodus 27:1–2, 8** “You shall make an altar of acacia wood .... And you shall overlay it with bronze. ... As it was shown you on the mountain ....”

The first thing you would see when entering the sanctuary’s courtyard was a bronze altar where a *daily sacrifice* was made for sin (Exodus 29:38). The daily lamb sacrifice represented Jesus’ death on the Cross—God’s offer of forgiveness to those who would place their sins on Jesus (John 1:29). Each day, God’s priests took the blood of sacrificed lambs, representing confessed sins transferred to Jesus, and brought it into the tabernacle—a tent with a first compartment that must be passed through before entering the second compartment (Leviticus 5:5–6; Hebrews 9:28). Within the first room, called the “holy place,” three golden items depicted God’s work in our lives when we accept His forgiveness. A seven-branched lampstand represented God’s light shining through His people (John 8:12; Matthew 5:16). A table of bread, given by God, portrayed His blessing through Jesus (1 Corinthians 10:16–17).

Finally, incense burned on a small golden altar, representing our prayers (Psalm 141:2; Luke 1:10). When an offering was sacrificed because of sin, blood was sprinkled on the corners of this altar (Leviticus 4:7). Like the rising smoke of incense, Jesus’ sinless sacrifice brings our prayers for forgiveness into God’s presence in Heaven. The blood of the sin offering was also sprinkled before the curtain covering the entrance to the inner compartment called the “most holy place,” the final barrier between sinners and God’s perfect presence (Leviticus 4:6). By this daily expression of faith, the confessed sins were transferred symbolically to the sanctuary where God dwells and awaited a final cleansing.

## 2 What happens in God’s sanctuary to sins that are confessed and placed upon Jesus, our Sacrifice?

**Hebrews 9:7** “But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins ....”

**Leviticus 23:27–28** “... The tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. ... You shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. ... To make atonement for you before the Lord your God.”

All of the people’s confessed sins must be cleansed from God’s Sanctuary, so that sin will be gone forever. How did this cleansing happen? The climax of the daily cycle of sacrifices was the yearly Day of Atonement. This solemn ceremony illustrated the complete and final removal of sin from God’s people to take place after Jesus’ death. Each person participated by

searching their heart in specific confession (Leviticus 16:29). Then the high priest brought the blood of the Atonement sacrifice into the second compartment of the tabernacle, called the most holy place. There sat the ark of the covenant containing God's perfect Law, the Ten Commandments, broken by each sinner. The high priest sprinkled the blood on the covering of the ark, which was called the "mercy seat" (Leviticus 16:15). This action symbolized setting God's people right with God, cleansed from sin (Leviticus 16:30). When the high priest would leave the sanctuary, the people who chose by faith to participate in these symbols of Jesus, were cleansed of sin. Every step to cleanse us from sin is accomplished through God's power alone, by the blood of a perfect, sinless sacrifice—Jesus' death in our place.

### 3 Does the cleansing from sin take place before or after Jesus' Second Coming?

**Revelation 22:12** "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

Jesus' death has already made forgiveness available to every repentant sinner (Romans 5:6). That is symbolized in the lamb sacrifice on the altar. What remains to be completed is the cleansing from sin, symbolized by the Day of Atonement. Because Jesus brings His reward with Him when He comes (Matthew 16:27), the cleansing from sin that restores righteousness must take place before Jesus returns.

### 4 Since Jesus brings His reward with Him, what divine action precedes His coming?

**Daniel 7:9–10, 22** "I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated .... Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. ... a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom."

The cleansing from sin includes a divine judgment based on God's perfect record in Heaven. The prophet Daniel witnessed God's future judgment in a vision, beginning before the saints receive their reward and "possess the kingdom."

### 5 Where does the Judgment before Jesus' return take place?

**Psalms 11:4–5** "... the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold ... the sons of men. The Lord tests [Hebrew, "investigates"] the righteous ..."  
**Hebrews 9:24–26** "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with

**"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands ..."  
Hebrews 9:24**



hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself .... He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Because Jesus fulfilled each symbol that represented Him, the sanctuary on Earth has completed its purpose. The reality to which it pointed is what Jesus has done, and is doing now. The Judgment unfolds in Heaven. Jesus not only died for our sins, but He is also our High Priest, Who has passed through the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place (Hebrews 4:14; 9:12). He is removing the record of confessed sins for those who have accepted God's righteousness, through faith. Sin will be blotted out completely, and Jesus will "appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

**1 Corinthians 3:16** "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

Jesus' cleansing work in Heaven is accompanied by His cleansing in our lives, where God dwells within us. God both forgives our past sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). When sin is cleansed from our lives, we will display God's righteousness, confirming that we are fit for God's presence in Heaven (Revelation 21:27).

### 6 How does God perform the work of Judgment against sin that separates the righteous from the sinful?

**Jeremiah 17:10** "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test [Hebrew, "investigate"] the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

God neither condemns nor rewards based on human opinion, but by a perfect investigation of the accurate records in Heaven. The Hebrew word for "test" includes investigation. God's pattern has been thorough investigation before judgment is executed, as evidenced with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:11), with the sinful world before the Flood (Genesis 6:5), at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:5), and in the

sinful city of Sodom (Genesis 18:20-21). In Jesus' parable of the great banquet, the king came in to see the guests and saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment (Matthew 22:11). God's righteous investigation reveals who has accepted the pure, spotless garment of God's righteousness that only Jesus gives. God's infinite knowledge reveals the evidence that confirms "Just and true are Your ways ... for Your judgments have been manifested" (Revelation 15:3-4).

## 7 Whose lives will pass in judgment before God?

**2 Corinthians 5:10** "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

Every person will experience God's judgment. No one is exempt.

## 8 Does everyone face God's Judgment at the same time?

**1 Pet. 4:17** "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God ..."

In the sanctuary, only those who had confessed their sins passed through the Day of Atonement's judgment and removal of sin (Leviticus 23:29). The wicked confirm God's judgment by rejecting His Law and His mercy. They make no claim to God's righteousness, which leads to eternal life. The judgment before Jesus returns begins with professed believers, because not all who claim to be God's followers choose to accept His righteousness in their lives. There are tares (weeds) among the wheat (Matthew 13:30), wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15), and those "having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Timothy 3:5). Though their names were written in the Book of Life when they received Jesus (Philippians 4:3), God sees in their hearts that they have rejected His righteousness. Instead of blotting out their record of sins, their *names* will be blotted out from the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).

**Hebrews 9:27** "... it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."

Each person's life record is closed at death. There is nothing more to

add. Though the body returns to dust, Heaven retains a perfect record of their history and their identity (Malachi 3:16-18). At the appointed time for Judgment to begin, the righteous dead will be judged first (Matthew 12:36-37; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

## 9 What is God's standard in the Judgment that reveals the righteous and the unrighteous?

**James 2:12** "So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty."

The standard is God's perfect Law, which shows His flawless character. God's Law, open to all through God's Word, "is a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus confronts those who "outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside ... are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:28). They reject God's Law and His righteousness, and will finally hear the saddest words Jesus ever speaks, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23).

## 10 What is Satan doing during the Judgment while God is blotting out the sins of His people?

**Revelation 12:10** "... the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down."

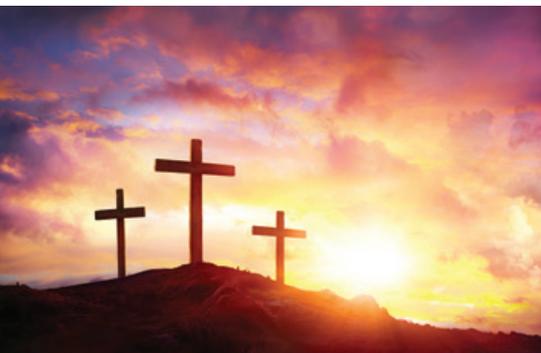
Satan is accusing each follower of God, "standing at his right hand to oppose him" (Zechariah 3:1). He points to our breaking of God's Law and claims God has no right to grant us eternal life. On our own, "there is none righteous" (Romans 3:10), for "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Pointing to our past sins as evidence, Satan denounces Jesus' sacrifice as ineffective in restoring God's perfect character in us. Heaven's angels are interested in God's work to restore and cleanse His people because Satan, by his deceptions, claims God is unjust and that it is impossible to obey Him with love (Job 1:9-11). Satan's accusations challenge God's authority to govern the Universe.

## 11 What is Jesus doing to counter Satan's accusations?

**1 John 2:1** "... And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

**2 Corinthians 5:19** "... God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them ..."

**2 Corinthians 12:9** "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. ...'"



"... God was in Christ  
reconciling the world  
to Himself ..."  
**2 Corinthians 5:19**

Jesus is not our accuser, but our Advocate. He is in complete unity with the Father, “for the Father Himself loves you” (John 16:27). In the Judgment, God is for us, not against us. And our Advocate is also our Judge, “for the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). His death blots out the record of our past sins so they are not imputed (counted) *against* us. Then His righteous character, offered to us, blots out the sin in our lives. We are cleansed, not with sin or in sin, but “the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

## 12 How is the evidence revealed in the Judgment?

**Ecclesiastes 12:13–14** “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.”

The evidence that we have accepted God’s work of cleansing from sin is the record of our lives. Salvation is given “by grace” and received “through faith” (Ephesians 2:8), but each person is “judged according to their works” (Revelation 20:12). The Judgment reveals the choice each person has made with unmistakable clarity. Nothing is hidden from God. He has perfect insight not only into words and actions, but also into motives, secrets, and opportunities accepted or rejected. He “will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts” (1 Corinthians 4:5).

## 13 How do we participate in the Judgment?

**Proverbs 28:13** “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”

On the Day of Atonement, God’s people were to thoroughly confess their sins: “... you shall afflict your souls .... For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord” (Leviticus 16:29–30). God permits trials and temptations to reveal each sinful trait in our hearts (James 1:2–3). We must hide nothing from God (Hebrews 4:13), but welcome His judgment and participate with His work to remove sin from our lives. As God reveals our faults, He offers not only forgiveness for past sins, but also Jesus’ sinless character that keeps us from sin today (1 John 3:4–9). Jesus’ character is the perfect wedding garment given to us by God to wear (Matthew 22:11). When we choose to put on Jesus’ character, we will “pursue ... holiness, without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14–15), “depart from evil and do good” (Psalm 34:14), and “follow what is altogether just, that you may live” (Deuteronomy 16:20).

## 14 How does the Judgment vindicate God against the accusations of Satan?

**Ephesians 3:10–11** “... now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

There is no ignorance in God that His investigation must satisfy. “The Lord knows those who are His” (2 Timothy 2:19). God’s eternal plan of salvation, accomplished through the power of Jesus’ death, reaches its climax when God’s power is “made known by the church.” It is made known, even to heavenly angels, in the lives of people. Satan’s accusations are fully refuted when God’s character is reproduced in His people, showing that through Jesus, God’s Law can be kept. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit ...” (John 15:8). All who “see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16) will be satisfied through the Judgment that God is just. In the sanctuary on Earth, there were two golden angels. They were not positioned at the bronze altar that represented Jesus’ death, but on the ark of the covenant, gazing at the mercy seat (Exodus 25:19–20). This is where the judgment that removed sin and cleansed God’s people took place (Leviticus 16:15). The attention of Heaven’s angels is on God’s work in our lives in the Judgment, His work that restores us to what He intended and makes us a “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

## 15 When does the time of Judgment begin?

**Acts 17:31** “... He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

“... Fear God and keep His commandments ...”  
**Ecclesiastes 12:13**





**“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man ...” Revelation 14:14**

God’s Apostles foresaw the appointed time of Judgment in the future, after the era of the New Testament church. The prophecy of Daniel 7 focused more specifically on the time following the rise and fall of four world kingdoms and a powerful religious authority, when “the court was seated, and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:10). Daniel 8 more precisely opens to us God’s longest and last time prophecy. “... ‘For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed’” (Daniel 8:14). From Daniel’s perspective long ago, this time period “refers to the time of the end” (Daniel 8:17), “to many days in the future” (Daniel 8:26).

The starting point of the time period that takes us to God’s appointed time of Judgment is linked to the beginning of the prophecy of the Messiah in Daniel 9:25, which began at “... the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem ...” (See Ezra 7:11–28 to read about the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.) In prophetic language, with each prophetic day representing a literal year (Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), this time period began in 457 B.C. and concluded 2,300 years later, in A.D. 1844. In that year, Jesus began the Judgment for the righteous who have died. The attention of Heaven will finally focus on Jesus’ work in us who are living. Now is the time to “‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come’” (Revelation 14:7). Jesus’ next movement will be out of His Sanctuary in Heaven to rescue His true friends on Earth. What an important time to be a friend of Jesus, welcoming His Judgment and cleansing from sin.

## 16 When will “the hour of His judgment” be completed?

**Mark 13:35–36** “Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.”

God has not revealed the time. Instead of getting ready when we think the time of Judgment is nearly complete, we must “be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:44). Jesus

“always lives to make intercession” for us (Hebrews 7:25), but the time will soon come when there is nothing left to forgive. By accepting Christ’s righteousness as their own, God’s people will have no more sin to confess; and those who are unrepentant will bring no sins to Jesus for cleansing. The righteous will live without a Mediator, because they have fully accepted the righteousness of Christ. God will say, “He who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still ...” (Revelation 22:11). Jesus’ work of judgment and cleansing from sin will be complete in those who truly love Him, who love to “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12).

## 17 What will happen at the end of the Judgment?

**Revelation 14:14–15** “Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’”

Jesus used the metaphor of a harvest to illustrate His return to give to each person what they have chosen by their life (Matthew 13:24–30). When “the hour of His judgment” announced in Revelation 14:7 is complete, there is no more forgiving of sins, because Jesus will leave the Sanctuary in Heaven to return to Earth. The righteous who have been tested through “the great tribulation” will have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Revelation 7:14). They will have accepted the character of Jesus as their own, and eternal life will be given.

## 18 Why does God continue to wait to bring the Judgment to an end?

**Jonah 4:2** “... You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.”

God is patient toward us, “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). There are “multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:14). God’s invitation to receive His righteous character is open to us today. Let us accept what God offers before today ends.

# WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE TODAY?



## 1. Each member of the Godhead is united to restore you to be righteous and holy, as God is holy.

How does this give you strength and joy to meet the daily tests that God permits, which reveal your heart?

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## 2. The righteousness of Jesus is not simply a concept to think about, but His sinless character that we must choose for ourselves.

God has intended for you to enjoy this all along. What choices will you face today where you can think of Jesus and allow Him to influence how you think and live?

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## 3. What godly priorities, decisions or relationships is God longing to set right, cleanse, and restore in your life?

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## 4. God's Judgment is an important event, but we should not be terrified by it.

God's Judgment is always against sin and "in favor of the saints of the Most High" (Daniel 7:22). How can you thank God for what He wants to do in your life through His righteous Judgment?

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## 5. Who do you know that needs to hear what you have learned?

"With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth" (Psalm 119:13).

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Additional Notes:

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# WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN GOD'S JUDGMENT?



**1. God is not eagerly seeking to catch the guilty in sin, but pleading with all to come to Him for salvation.** "... 'As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!' ..." (Ezekiel 33:11).

**2. God's invitation to choose Him fully is still being proclaimed to anyone who will listen.** "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

**3. God never turns away a repentant sinner.** "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise" (Psalm 51:17).

**4. God's investigation is a blessing, because our human eyes are too weak to see our own needs.** "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23–24).

**5. The Judgment of God is trustworthy, for there is nothing He does not know.** "You are great in counsel and mighty in work, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of the sons of men ..." (Jeremiah 32:19).

**6. We do not need to be afraid of a righteous God.** "Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously ..." (Psalm 67:4).

**7. Because God is our Judge, we have no need to judge each other.** "So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore ..." (Romans 14:12–13).

## LESSON SUMMARY

**1. Sin has removed God's righteous character from us.** Our character must be restored so we may enter Heaven.

**2. Restoring God's character in us** involves a Judgment to identify and remove sin.

**3. The Judgment for both the dead and the living** who have accepted God's forgiveness takes place before Jesus returns with His reward.

**4. In the Judgment, God's investigation reveals** the lives of those who claim to be followers of Jesus.

**5. Jesus is our Advocate,** and is for us in the Judgment, pardoning our sins with His sacrifice and offering to give us His righteous character as our own.

**6. The Judgment is going on now** and will conclude before Jesus returns; but we do not know when it will end.

**7. God's people participate with God** in removing sin from their lives before Jesus returns.

Additional Notes:

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