Lesson 9 - The Investigative Judgment

1. What is stated before Jesus returns that strongly implies that a verdict has been declared? **Revelation 22:11**

EGW: When the work of the investigative Judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a short time before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. Christ in the Revelation, looking forward to that time, declares: “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. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” [Revelation 22:11, 12.] {GC88 491.1}

The righteous and the wicked will still be living upon the earth in their mortal state—men will be planting and building, eating and drinking, all unconscious that the final, irrevocable decision has been pronounced in the sanctuary above. Before the flood, after Noah entered the ark, God shut him in, and shut the ungodly out; but for seven days the people, knowing not that their doom was fixed, continued their careless, pleasure-loving life, and mocked the warnings of impending judgment. “So,” says the Saviour, “shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” [Matthew 24:39.] Silently, unnoticed as the midnight thief, will come the decisive hour which marks the fixing of every man's destiny, the final withdrawal of mercy's offer to guilty men. {GC88 491.2}

“Watch ye therefore; . . . lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.” [Mark 13:35, 36.] Perilous is the condition of those who, growing weary of their watch, turn to the attractions of the world. While the man of business is absorbed in the pursuit of gain, while the pleasure-lover is seeking indulgence, while the daughter of fashion is arranging her adornments,—it may be in that hour the Judge of all the earth will pronounce the sentence, “Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.” [Daniel 5:27.] {GC88 491.3}

2. Since that is the verdict, what is the sentence? **Revelation 22:12, Matthew 16:27, Isaiah 40:10**

EGW: God's people must give to the world a representation of the character of God in Jesus Christ. The Christian churches are fast losing their knowledge of God. His character has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. But a message has come from God which must be proclaimed. The trumpet must give a certain sound. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to proclaim these things to the churches." The truth, the revelation which Jesus gave to John, must be sounded forth everywhere. "Lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work

before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." {ST, December 23, 1897 par. 14}

3. What do we receive sentence for doing? Why was a verdict given? **Ecclesiastes 12:14**, **James 2:12**

EGW: Every man's work passes in review before God, and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of Heaven is entered, with terrible exactness, every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far-reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel. {GC88 481.3}

The law of God is the standard by which the characters and the lives of men will be tested in the Judgment. Says the wise man: “Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into Judgment.” [Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.] The apostle James admonishes his brethren, “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.” [James 2:12.] {GC88 482.1}

4. In the parable where a king is having a marriage feast for his son, what key words are in **Matthew 22:11** that tells about an investigation (two references)?

EGW: By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples. Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. This decision must be made prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven; for when He comes, His reward is with Him, "to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. Before His coming, then, the character of every man's work will have been determined, and to every one of Christ's followers the reward will have been apportioned according to his deeds. {COL 310.1}

5. Prior to what event is the verdict declared? **Revelation 18:8, Revelation 16:5**

EGW: "Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him. But Omnipotence will interpose, and to the apostate churches that unite in the exaltation of Satan, the sentence will go forth, 'Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.'" {TM 62.1}

6. What is in the first angel's message warning that tells us that God has not always been judging every soul? **Revelation 14:7**

EGW: The announcement, "The hour of his Judgment is come," points to the closing work of Christ's ministration for the salvation of men. It heralds a truth which must be proclaimed until the Saviour's intercession shall cease, and he shall return to the earth to take his people to himself. {GC88 435.2}

7. What was yet future to the day of the apostles that also tells us that God was not judging back in the day? **Acts 17:31, Romans 2:16**

EGW: Before any can enter the mansions of the blest, their cases must be investigated, and their characters and their deeds must pass in review before God. All are to be judged according to the things written in the books, and to be rewarded as their works have been. This Judgment does not take place at death. Mark the words of Paul: "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." [Acts 17:31.] Here the apostle plainly stated that a specified time, then future, had been fixed upon for the Judgment of the world. {GC88 548.2}

8. What is the position of the judgment in Daniel's vision, which infers that the process did not begin but simply got ready? **Daniel 7:10**

EGW: “I Beheld,” says the prophet Daniel, “till thrones were placed, and One that was ancient of days did sit. His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof 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.” [Daniel 7:9,10, Revised Version.] {GC88 479.1}

Thus was presented to the prophet's vision the great and solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered “according to his works.” The Ancient of days is God the Father. Says the psalmist, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” [Psalm 90:2.] It is he, the source of all being, and the fountain of all law, that is to preside in the Judgment. And holy angels, as ministers and witnesses, in number “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,” attend this great tribunal. {GC88 479.2}

9. What event does Daniel see happening afterwards? **Daniel 7:13, 14**

EGW: "I Beheld," says the prophet Daniel, "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." "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." [Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14.] {4SP 307.1}

Thus was presented to the prophet's vision the opening of the investigative Judgment. The coming of Christ here described is not his second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of days in Heaven to receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, which will be given him at the close of his mediatorial work. {4SP 307.2}

10. What does that action signify? **Malachi 3:1-3**

EGW: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." {RH, April 10, 1894 par. 1}

A refining, purifying process is going on among the people of God, and the Lord of hosts has set his hand to this work. This process is most trying to the soul, but it is necessary in order that defilement may be removed. Trials are essential in order that we may be brought close to our heavenly Father, in submission to his will, that we may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. God's work of refining and purifying the soul must go on until his servants are so humbled, so dead to self, that when called into active service, they may have an eye single to the glory of God. Then they will not move rashly from impulse, and imperil the Lord's cause because they are slaves to temptation and passion, because they follow their carnal desires; but they will move from principle and in view of the glory of God. The Lord brings his children over the same ground again and again, increasing the pressure until perfect humility fills the mind, and the character is transformed; then they are victorious over self, and in harmony with Christ and the Spirit of heaven. {RH, April 10, 1894 par. 2}

The purification of God's people cannot be accomplished without suffering. God permits the fire of affliction to consume the dross, to separate the worthless from the valuable, in order that the pure metal may shine forth. He passes us from one fire to another, testing our true worth. True grace is willing to be tried. If we are loath to be searched by the Lord, our condition is one of peril. God is the refiner and purifier of souls. He places us in the heat of the furnace, that the dross may be forever separated from the true gold of Christian character. Jesus watches the test. He knows just what fire of temptation and trial is needed to purify the precious metal, in order that the radiance of divine love may be reflected. {RH, April 10, 1894 par. 3}

It is by close, testing trials that God brings his people near to himself; for in trial and temptation he discovers to them their weakness, and teaches them to lean upon him as their only help and safeguard. When this result is attained, his object is accomplished, and his tried servants are prepared to be used in every emergency, to fill important positions of trust, and to accomplish the grand purposes for which their powers were given them. God takes men upon trial, and he proves them upon the right hand and upon the left, until they are educated, trained, and disciplined for his use. {RH, April 10, 1894 par. 4}

11. What dominions must pass away in between the judgment being “set” and Jesus being brought unto the Father in the heavenly courtroom to receive dominion? **Daniel 7:12**

EGW: No comment.

12. What beasts must have their dominions taken away, clearly placing the day of judgment at least after the fall Rome? **Daniel 7:4-7**

EGW: The great kingdoms that have ruled the world were presented to the prophet Daniel as beasts of prey, rising when the “four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” [Daniel 7:2.] In Revelation 17, an angel explained that waters represent “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” [Revelation 17:15.] Winds are a symbol of strife. The four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea, represent the terrible scenes of conquest and revolution by which kingdoms have attained to power. {GC88 439.3}

13. Who is actually our Judge? **John 5:22**

EGW: To His Son the Father has committed all judgment. Christ will declare the reward of loyalty. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son . . . and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." Christ accepted humanity, and lived on this earth a pure, sanctified life. For this reason He has received the appointment of judge. He who occupies the position of judge is God manifest in the flesh. What a joy it will be to recognize in Him our Teacher and Redeemer, bearing still the marks of the crucifixion, from which shine beams of glory, giving additional value to the crowns which the redeemed receive from His hands, the very hands outstretched in blessing over His disciples as He ascended. The very voice which said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," bids His ransomed ones welcome to His presence. The very One who gave His precious life for them, who by His grace moved their hearts to repentance, who awakened them to their need of repentance, receives them now into His joy. Oh, how they love Him! The realization of their hope is infinitely greater than their expectation. Their joy is complete, and they take their glittering crowns and cast them at their Redeemer's feet. {RH, June 18, 1901 par. 10}

14. But who is our attorney? **1 John 2:1**

EGW: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But God has not given his Son to a life of suffering and ignominy and a shameful death to release man from obedience to the divine law. So great is the deceptive power of Satan, that many have been led to regard the atonement of Christ as of no real value. Christ died because there was no other hope for the transgressor. He might try to keep God's law in the future; but the debt which he had incurred in the past remained, and the law must condemn him to death. Christ came to pay that debt for the sinner which it was impossible for him to pay for himself. Thus, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, sinful man was granted another trial. {RH, March 8, 1881 par. 4}

It is the sophistry of Satan that the death of Christ brought in grace to take the place of the law. The death of Jesus did not change, or annul, or lessen in the slightest degree, the law of ten commandments. That precious grace offered to men through a Saviour's blood, establishes the law of God. Since the fall of man, God's moral government and his grace are inseparable. They go hand in hand through all dispensations. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." {RH, March 8, 1881 par. 5}

15. What does God not clear? **Exodus 34:7**

EGW: God has given to men a declaration of his character, and of his method of dealing with sin. “The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” [Exodus 34:6, 7.] “All the wicked will he destroy.” “The transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off.” [Psalm 145:20; 37:38.] The power and authority of the divine government will be employed to put down rebellion; yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being. {GC88 541.2}

16. How do we become guilty? **Numbers 5:6, James 2:10**

EGW: The law demands perfect obedience. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Not one of those ten precepts can be broken without disloyalty to the God of heaven. The least deviation from its requirements, by neglect or willful transgression, is sin, and every sin exposes the sinner to the wrath of God. Obedience was the only condition upon which ancient Israel was to receive the fulfillment of the promises which made them the highly favored people

of God; and obedience to that law will bring as great blessings to individuals and nations now as it would have brought to the Hebrews. {1SM 218.2}

17. How is the guilty status removed? **Luke 24:47, Acts 3:19, 1 John 1:9, Luke 5:32**

EGW: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The conditions of obtaining mercy from God are simple and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order to gain forgiveness. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression. Proverbs 28:13. {AA 552.1}

18. What does “repent” and “confess” really mean in action? **Proverbs 28:13**

EGW: Christ was manifested as the Saviour of men. The people were not to trust in their own works, in their own righteousness, or in themselves in any way, but in the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. In Him the Advocate with the Father was revealed. Through Him the invitation was given, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This invitation comes sounding down along the lines to us today. Let not pride, or self-esteem, or self-righteousness keep any one from confessing his sins, that he may claim the promise: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Keep nothing back from God, and neglect not the confession of your faults to the brethren when they have a connection with them. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Many a sin is left unconfessed, to be confronted in the day of final accounts; better far to see your sins now, to confess them, and put them away, while the atoning Sacrifice pleads in your behalf. Do not dislike to learn the will of God on this subject. The health of your soul, the unity of your brethren, may depend upon the course you pursue in these things. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, "casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." {FE 239.1}

19. If we do not use Jesus as our Advocate, how may He present us in the courtroom of Heaven? **Matthew 10:33**

EGW: A spirit contrary to the spirit of Christ would deny Him, whatever the profession. Men may deny Christ by evilspeaking, by foolish talking, by words that are untruthful or unkind. They may deny Him by shunning life's burdens, by the pursuit of sinful pleasure. They may deny Him by conforming to the world, by uncourteous behavior, by the love of their own opinions, by justifying self, by cherishing doubt, borrowing trouble, and dwelling in darkness. In all these ways they declare that Christ is not in them. And "whosoever shall deny Me before men," He says, "him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven." {DA 357.2}

20. How will Jesus present us in the courtroom trial if we do exactly what He tells us to do? **Jude 1:24**

EGW: You will lose nothing by connecting with the King of the universe. He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." He will welcome you to the home of the blest. There you will see that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." What greater evidence could we ask of the love of God than he has given? Let us dwell upon his rich promises, till our hearts are melted into tenderness and devotion. {ST, March 2, 1888 par. 9}

21. In this world where most people think that God has a checklist to keep people out of Heaven, and the judgment topic not providing much hope, what is the true character of God? **Psalms 86:5**

EGW: Should you become alarmed for your own souls, should you seek God diligently, He will be found of you; but He will accept no halfhearted repentance. If you will forsake your sins, He is ever ready to forgive. Will you just now surrender to Him? Will you look to Calvary and inquire: "Did Jesus make this sacrifice for me? Did He endure humiliation, shame, and reproach, and suffer the cruel death of the cross because He desired to save me from the sufferings of guilt and the horror of despair, and make me unspeakably happy in His kingdom?" Look upon Him whom your sins have pierced, and resolve: "The Lord shall have the service of my life. I will no longer unite with His enemies; I will no longer lend my influence to the rebels against His government. All I have and am is too little to devote to Him who so

loved me that He gave His life for me--His whole divine self for one so sinful and erring." Separate from the world, be wholly on the Lord's side, press the battle to the gates, and you will win glorious victories. {5T 438.2}