

Contents

1	“Principalities and Powers” — <i>June 24-30</i> —————	6
2	Judgment Must Begin — <i>July 1-7</i> —————	14
3	Daniel 2 — <i>July 8-14</i> —————	22
4	Daniel 7 — <i>July 15-21</i> —————	30
5	Daniel 8 — <i>July 22-28</i> —————	38
6	Daniel 9 — <i>July 29–August 4</i> —————	46
7	70 Weeks — <i>August 5-11</i> —————	56
8	1844 Made Simple — <i>August 12-18</i> —————	64
9	Day-Year Principle — <i>August 19-25</i> —————	72
10	Rome and Antiochus — <i>August 26–September 1</i> —————	80
11	The Sanctuary and the Little Horn — <i>September 2-8</i> —————	88
12	The Pre-Advent Judgment — <i>September 9-15</i> —————	96
13	The Gospel and Judgment — <i>September 16-22</i> —————	104
14	The Meaning of the Judgment Today — <i>September 23-29</i> ———	112

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THE *Gospel, 1844,*

The 1844 judgment brings the Cross into greater focus.

As Adventists, many of our “unique” doctrines are not, really, unique. After all, other Christians (not many, admittedly) keep the seventh-day Sabbath, as well. Though a majority of the Christian world believes in the immortality of the soul, other Christians understand that the dead sleep in the grave until the resurrection, either the first or second. Various “Adventist” teachings, i.e., eternal destruction (as opposed to eternal torment) or the nature of the millennium, can be found elsewhere too. In fact, almost all our doctrines are scattered throughout Christendom.

Except one: the 1844 pre-Advent judgment.

For some, this fact is worrisome; *Why don't more Christians see it, as well?* For others, the uniqueness of the doctrine points even more powerfully to the special calling of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It's precisely because no one else teaches this judgment that we have been raised to do so. From this doctrine, perhaps more than any other, our distinct identity as Seventh-day Adventists arises.

This quarter we will study the 1844 pre-Advent judgment. But not in isolation. As the title suggests, we're going to look at the judgment in the context of the gospel, because judgment without the gospel is like law without grace: It leads only to fear, condemnation, and death. On the other hand, judgment with the gospel (like law with grace) leads to faith, assurance, and hope.

Perhaps the clearest link between the gospel and judgment is the first angel's message: “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach. . . . Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come” (*Rev. 14:6, 7*). As far as God is concerned, the “everlasting gospel” includes judgment; how foolish for us to make it any less inclusive.

Our study this quarter will be divided into various parts. First, we'll let Scripture fill in the background for the judgment and the whole plan of salvation.

and Judgment

Next, in the bulk of the quarter, we'll establish the biblical basis for the 1844 judgment, seeing for ourselves just what a solid basis we have for this teaching, rooted in the Cross. For those whose knowledge of the doctrine began and ended with an evangelistic series, this study will help firmly ground you in this key truth. For those who have already studied it in depth, this quarter will reinforce what you already know and, perhaps, help you understand it even better.

We'll then look at some questions the teaching faces, using them as a vehicle to better grasp the biblical basis for the pre-Advent judgment.

Most important, we'll look at the judgment in the context of the gospel, of Christ's death in our behalf, with the understanding that because of His death we can have assurance in the judgment. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (*Rom. 8:1*). No condemnation now, and especially in the judgment.

Finally, we seek to answer such questions as: What does a judgment whose beginning was dated in the nineteenth century mean for us in the twenty-first? What does it tell us about ourselves, our church, and, most important, about the God who promises to return and take us home?

In the end, a proper understanding of the 1844 judgment will bring out Christ's death for us in greater clarity and depth, especially as we await the Second Coming. Perhaps that's why we, as Seventh-day Adventists, have been called to preach it, because it does bring the Cross into greater focus, and as we near the consummation of all things, how important that the Cross be understood with all possible clarity. Thus, more than wanting you to come away from these lessons with a better understanding of charts, dates, and numbers, we want you to come away with a greater understanding of Jesus, of the Cross, and of His ministry in heaven for us. If so, then our work together this quarter will have been—through the grace of God—richly rewarded and more than worth the effort.

Got Questions?

Sabbath School University *has answers!*

Sabbath School University is a 28-minute discussion of the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*. SSU discusses the content and strategies to enrich your Sabbath School with fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and missions. Sabbath School leaders, don't miss this weekly broadcast on Hope Channel.



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