

The True Fast in the Judgment

By John Thiel, [mp3](#)

Scripture reading: Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye [even] to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him...?

The message for these times is clearly delineated in the words of Revelation 14.

Revelation 14:6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

This is the serious message that has been sounded on this planet well before we ever came into this life – ever since 1833. And for all these years it has been proclaimed at the hand of all the true servants of God who have been before us. Their experience, and the years of the development of this message in all its dimensions, is an experience that they testified of, and we must be sure that we are on the same page with them. We must make sure that we are of that church that understood and proclaimed this message in all its dimensions, the message that continues in verse 8 and 9, and also in Revelation 18:1-4. This is present truth that needs to be understood and practised – to give God the glory because the hour of His judgment is come.

Our purpose at this time is to appreciate this in reference to the practice that pertains to the day of judgment, or the day of atonement, which was in the time of the Old Testament a typical representation of the time we are living in today; they had the typical Day of Atonement once a year.

In the Judgment

As the hymn expresses it, *How shall we stand in that great day* when our name comes up before God? This is a solemn message.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Says the Saviour: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36, 37. The secret purposes and motives appear in the unerring register; for God "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts." 1 Corinthians 4:5. "Behold, it is written before Me, . . . your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord." Isaiah 65:6, 7. {GC 481.2}

This is an impact that is to affect our inmost soul.

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. {GC 482.1}

It is important that we actually stop to take on board what is stated here. It isn't just a blanket statement to say that this is what is happening. It is something that you and I are engaged with. There in the judgment all these details are recorded and examined. We are also told that God has a perfect photograph of every man's character; and this photograph He compares with His law. There in the books, in the photographs, are shown our deficiencies. This is serious.

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God's remembrance. {GC 483.1}

This is what we are reading as God's word upon all of us; and this has been going on for a long time. How am I standing before the Lord as I am reading and meditating on this? How shall we live, and what shall we do?

The Activity Called For

Turning our attention to the typical, symbolic picture of the Day of Atonement, what did God tell the people to do in the seriousness of such event?

Leviticus 16:30 ...on that day shall [the priest] make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, [that] ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It [shall be] a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever.

You shall afflict your souls on that day, says God. And we read also:

Leviticus 23:27 ...on the tenth [day] of this seventh month [there shall be] a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 28 And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it [is] a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29 For whatsoever soul [it be] that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. 30 And whatsoever soul [it be] that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people.

This was a serious consideration. It had to do with life and death. But it is a symbol for us living in the day of judgment. The Spirit of Prophecy helps us:

We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making the atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. {GC 489.3}

What they had to do was to afflict their souls, but not only that; to help them to afflict their souls it was also a day of fasting.

In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance. There must be deep, faithful searching of heart. The light, frivolous spirit indulged by so many professed Christians must be put away. There is earnest warfare before all who would subdue the evil tendencies that strive for the mastery. The work of preparation is an individual work. We are not saved in groups. The purity and devotion of one will not offset the want of these qualities in another. Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine the case of each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there

were not another being upon the earth. Everyone must be tested and found without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. {Ibid.}

Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing in this time of investigation. The seriousness of this is here powerfully spelt out. Every name is mentioned and every case closely investigated.

The deepest interest manifested among men in the decisions of earthly tribunals but faintly represents the interest evinced in the heavenly courts when the names entered in the book of life come up in review before the Judge of all the earth. {GC 483.3}

When you have been condemned by someone and you have to go to court, it is a frightful time. But this is small material compared to the eternal reality. This serious time in which we are living is addressed in the following words of Isaiah, where the fasting, or the affliction of soul, is called for in such a time as this, and the people are not doing it. In the time of the Hebrews, if they didn't afflict their souls on that day, they were cut off from among God's people. In the following passage, this consideration is applicable to the reality, not the symbol.

Let Us Eat and Drink

Isaiah 22:12 And in that day...

In that day in which we are living; in that day when Jesus is opening, and no man shutteth, and when He is shutting, and no man openeth, as it is written:

Isaiah 22:22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

This is what Jesus was doing when He went into the most holy place.

Isaiah 22:12 And in that day did the Lord GOD of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth:

And what happened instead of them doing that, instead of them afflicting their souls?

Isaiah 22:13 And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die. 14 And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

They will be cut off; this is a death sentence. It is an iniquity that cannot be forgiven in the time when He has called for us to examine ourselves closely and repent of all our sins so that they can all be cleansed from the sanctuary record. Therefore it makes sense, if people are not taking this seriously, and are not afflicting their souls, that it is then an iniquity if they will eat and drink as their hearts' desire is – *killing sheep, eating flesh* (clean flesh), *drinking wine* – saying, *Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.*

This is no different to exactly what is written in Revelation 3. Jesus is speaking to the people in the period of Philadelphia and Laodicea: I open, and no man shuts, He says; and I shut, and no man opens. In that day we are called upon to seriously examine ourselves. And the call to afflict ourselves is expressed very clearly in several scriptures.

Be Afflicted, and Mourn

James 4:8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse [your] hands, [ye] sinners; and purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded. 9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and [your] joy to heaviness. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

There is really something to meditate here. We don't like to be under an oppressed spirit, do we? We want to lift ourselves up by being a little bit happy; and we create our happiness by laughter, light-heartedness, to just release ourselves from the stress. But here we are told that only the Lord can do that correctly. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and *He* shall lift you up." If I want to be happy, if I want to be lifted up, I need to follow God's way. And as I do examine myself and draw near to God, I see myself as I am; He reveals to me the things that mar my life, as we stand before Him in the judgment hour; and we are called upon to repent and turn from those things that are marring our life.

So as I do draw near to God, humbling myself, the *Lord* will see to it that He will lift me up. The *Lord* will lift me out of this oppressive mentality. I will never forget the words of my late brother, who said to me many years ago, because he had gone into Adventism in its nominal stage. He said, I don't like Seventh-day Adventism; it is the most depressing message that has ever been given. He said, That can't be right; this judgment hour message is depressing. By God's grace I was able to show him this story. Because if we will go through the processes of afflicting our souls, the *Lord* will lift us up. This is the message of affliction of soul that pertains to the subject of the judgment:

Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye [even] to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; [even] a meat offering and a drink offering unto the LORD your God? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: 16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. 17 Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where [is] their God? 18 Then will the LORD be jealous for his land, and pity his people.

This is the instruction that has to do with the understanding of the judgment hour; and this is the call of the first angel's message. *Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.* Ever since this message was proclaimed, already in 1833 up to 1844, and then onwards, God's people have been directed and guided by Him to examine their souls and reflect deeply upon what is going on in heaven, and how their own lives need to be cleansed of all that is not in harmony with heaven – everything.

The Meaning and Purpose of Fasting

The Spirit of Prophecy gives us a very important description of the seriousness of the time we have been reading of thus far, and of the call to repent by afflicting our souls, in the sense given in Joel of rending our hearts and not our garments and doing what the Hebrews did in the typical Day of Atonement, that is, fasting:

For certain things, fasting and prayer are recommended and appropriate. In the hand of God they are a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind. We obtain answers to our prayers because we humble our souls before God. {CD 187.6}

This is a positive appreciation of fasting. Fasting is, *in the hand of God*, that is, as I do it with the hand of God upon me, the *means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind*. This is what it's about. It is not just that we are supposed to be fasting, and therefore we don't eat, and we are going through a personal bodily discomfort. No; it is something which, by going through this bodi-

ly self-denial, is, in the hand of God, *a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind.* Thus we obtain answers to our prayers.

But considering the fact that this day of atonement is not just one single day as it was in the typical service, but rather a period of time from 1833 through to our present time and to the close of probation, the finishing of the judgment, it is clear that we cannot stop eating. So it is very clearly the afflicting of our souls by following God's counsel in regards to this kind of fasting that is meant in Isaiah 22. He says they should afflict their souls, but they were eating flesh, drinking wine, and saying, Let us eat and drink; I want to enjoy the way I eat and drink; I don't want to be put into a strait jacket of health.

The true fasting which should be recommended to all, is abstinence from every stimulating kind of food, and the proper use of wholesome, simple food, which God has provided in abundance. {CD 188.3}

This is the fast, in connection with the seriousness of the time in which we are living. We then have laid out before us, under the ministry of the early Adventists and the Spirit of Prophecy, the health reform. And this health reform is to be understood from the perspective of the hour of God's judgment. It is not to be understood from the perspective of merely keeping my body healthy and concentrating on looking after my body. It is a time of a relationship with Jesus our High Priest who is presenting our cases before God; and I want to be cleansed and purified by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. My relationship with Him as my High Priest is first to be considered, and I am humbling my soul in reference to the fasting that He is talking about, which is putting away *every stimulating kind of food*, and, as it says in Isaiah, even clean meats, wine, and everything connected with those kinds of stimulating elements. I am to examine closely the health reform message for the purpose of afflicting my soul. And what is the purpose of afflicting my soul in fasting? So that in the hand of God it may be *a means of cleansing the heart and promoting a receptive frame of mind.*

An Object Lesson of True Fasting

Daniel went through such a fast; and he describes it here:

Daniel 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

This is what he was doing to be illuminated from God, and in God's hand that fast would be honoured to clear his mind.

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing [was] true,

but the time appointed [was] long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

So he had an understanding; his mind became clear. Why?

Daniel 10:2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

This is the true fast – a fasting over a long period of time. And for God’s people who are awakened and called by the reality of the hour of God’s judgment to give Him the glory, to humble themselves before the Lord, in the hand of God, the true health reform message is the avenue by which God will be able to enlighten our understanding, to help us; because He wants to reveal to us the things that mar our life. A relationship in judgment is here laid out before our mind’s eye.

So when it comes to following the health reform, we are not to pick up the mentalities of the health reforms of those around us who are just concentrating on trying to make their bodies healthy, because it is confusing. You hear one person saying this and another person saying that; this naturopath says this and another person says something else... This is not what God intended the health reform to be. He has given us *His* inspiration through the Spirit of Prophecy; study it closely and follow the counsel that is given *there*. Anything else and we are missing the point.

A Relationship in Judgment

We will be far stricter in health reform in the balanced approach that is given in God’s word, than anyone else who is a “health reformer”; because we will not break the fast. We want to understand this very deeply. God has called upon us to fast so that in His hand it may be a means by which He would illuminate our mind. If I break the fast by indulging here or there, in some way or another, in something that is not wholesome, something that is not perfectly pure from His hand, what am I doing? I am interfering with God’s intervention in my life. It is a relationship factor. This is what makes my heart ache when I hear people talking about health reform on a different level than what it is really meant to be. Our approach to health reform may have something to do with our health, but it has much more to do with our spiritual health. And it is not the spiritual health that the alternative religions around us are presenting. It is a direct relationship factor in which we are humbling ourselves before God. And when I am tempted to eat something, or to indulge in something, that is not part of the fast,

I am disassociating myself from the close relationship that God wants me to have so that He can purge and purify my life.

For us who are followers of the original Seventh-day Adventist church, we will be strict reformers in the way it has been instructed to us, and we will be faithful. We will examine every will of God in reference to the fast, and every other practice of our life. The things that are marring my life I am searching out; and I am finding out what is God's will for me. This is what the children of Israel were supposed to be doing – searching their hearts.

Turn to Me With All Your Heart

Joel 2:12 Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye [even] to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: 13 And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he [is] gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. 14 Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him... ?

Search out. If you have difficulty in time to search out all the details that are involved, it is the work of the servant of God to do it and to show you. And if you give me the right, I will search it out; and I have already searched it out. And I will show you step by step the things that we do that are not God's will. Many times we don't have the time to search it all out. But we *are* to search it out. We are to examine what is God's will in every respect of my life, so that, as I come up to the close of probation, I know precisely what I am meant to put away which is not God's will.

The Spirit of Prophecy tells us that to do this will be like drawing the very life-blood out of your veins. This is the way it will feel. But as we humble ourselves before the Lord and let Him do this, He will lift us up. I know this to be true. In all the years of my searching out of all these things in reference to this message, I have continued to examine everything that is God's will for me, and for the sake of the people that I have ministered to, and I have made continual discoveries of more detail. However, I have found detail not in reference to extremism, but detail into God's will. What is God's will? Not what *I* think is God's will, not what I think I have to do because I have to make myself right before God, but because I just want to be obedient to Him; that's all. This is what we need to learn – to come to the Lord and humble ourselves. Draw near to Him, and He will draw near to us. This is the secret. And there you can see this beautiful relationship in the day of judgment. Fear God, give Him the glory. What a privilege we have. May God help us to keep focused, and to keep in the frame of mind that is here suggested to us. Amen.