



2023 2Q Three Cosmic Messages—Lesson 2 A Moment of Destiny

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

The lesson states in the second paragraph:

In these last days of human history, He has sent a special message to the world and to His people, designed to meet the need of the hour. He pictures this message as being carried by three angels flying in midheaven with their urgent, end-time message to all the world. (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.14)

What is that message?

How would you describe it to people who have not heard it?

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote the following in the book *Christ's Object Lessons*, do you agree with it? And if so, do you see this message in the message of the three angels of Revelation 14?

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. **His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.** *Christ's Object Lessons*, p.415

When you read the message of the 3 angels do you read a message that magnifies God's character of goodness, mercy, truth, and love?

Or do you hear a message that frightens you, a message of a threatening god who will use divine power to torture those who refuse to love him?

If you are not familiar with our magazine, [The Final Message of Mercy to the World: The Three Angels](#) I encourage you to read it. You can read it online at our website. If you have a US postal address and would like a printed copy we will send one at no cost. And we have them to ship to US addresses for you to share in your church. This quarter would be a great time to introduce these magazines to your friends around the circle.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph:

Revelation 14 is Jesus' final message of mercy to a fallen and rebellious world, one that has, for about six thousand years, been steeped in sin and evil. There will come a day when every human being on planet Earth will make a final, irrevocable decision, either for or against Jesus. Revelation's message of Christ's righteousness delivering us from the condemnation of sin, as well as the grip of sin in our lives, will echo and reecho throughout the earth. (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.15)

Do you agree that every single person will make a decision for or against Jesus?

How do you think this will happen?

Is this talking about every person making a personal choice to accept or reject Jesus as their personal Savior?

Do we think that every person will be presented with the Bible story and come to understand the truth of the historic Jesus?

Do we think that it will be based on an issue, say some religious laws and every person will be faced with deciding whether they will obey those religious laws or not?

Or will it be in principle, by method, motive, and conduction in how we treat others?

Jesus said, in Matthew 25, that after He separates the sheep and the goats, He will say:

I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, **you did for me**... whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, **you did not do for me** (Matthew 25:40 & 45 NIV84)

So is it that everyone decides for or against Jesus not in a religious ceremony, or in an attestation of affirmative faith, or by response to some religious law, but in how they treat others?

And if this is so, then it means we decide for or against Jesus by the methods and principles we practice in how we treat others. It means that in how we treat others we are choosing which law is written upon our own hearts—are we surrendered in faith to Jesus and choosing to love God and others more than self so that the law of truth, love, liberty is being lived out in how we treat others, or are we choosing the law of fear, of selfishness, of survival, of protecting self and are willing to sacrifice, harm, exploit, deceive, manipulate, denigrate, and vilify others in order to protect self? Or perhaps we use all these same ungodly methods and claim we are only lying, manipulating, coercing, abusing others to protect the church, or the property of the church, or to save lives.



During COVID various individuals, governments, and organizations revealed the god they worship and the methods they prefer. It is not too late for those who chose to use coercion on their fellow humans to repent and seek God's methods moving forward in living out God's principles in how they treat others.

Read second paragraph:

Jesus' promise that " 'this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world' " (NKJV), given in Matthew 24:14, finds its final fulfillment in Christ's last-day message, in Revelation 14:6, which says that the gospel is proclaimed to "every nation, tribe, tongue, and people" (NKJV). (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.15)

What is the gospel that is to go to all the world? How would you describe it?

Why do you think the three angels' messages starts with the eternal gospel?

If we get the gospel wrong we miss the entire meaning of the 3 angels' messages.

If the good news is not the truth about God, but rather is presented as a legal payment made to a punishing god so that that god won't inflict punishment upon us, not only do we take a false gospel to the world, but the message of the 3 angels is presented in a false light that keeps people trapped in the fear-based false systems of this world. We are to take the *eternal* gospel to the world, the good news that is eternally true, true in eternity past and future, true before sin ever existed, it is the good news about God, that God is not the kind of being Satan has misrepresented Him to be. And this requires that we leave behind the penal/legal imposed law system of Babylon, it requires we return to worship the Creator who made the heaven, earth, sea, and fountains of water, which means we recognize God's laws as design laws not imposed rules like humans make.

The lesson asks at the bottom:

How does God shape our characters?

- Truth and Love via the working of the Holy Spirit
- Life events/experiences in which we must choose to apply God's truth, love, methods, principles in how we live, act, respond, and treat others

What means does He use for us to grow in grace?

- That we develop with each day in godly ways
 - Deeper love, experience, appreciate for, and knowledge of God—which means we spend time with God, studying His Word, talking with Him, sharing Him with others
 - Greater wisdom into the things of God, which means greater discernment
 - More godly habits in how we react and think, the fruits of the Spirit-- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.



What can we do to more fully allow the Holy Spirit to transform us to be more like Jesus?
(Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.15)

- Surrender to Him
- Be willing to listen and be corrected by the Spirit of truth
- Spend regular time with God
- Share God and His truths and methods with others
- Apply God's methods in our daily lives
- Eliminate known activities that are opposed to God's kingdom

MONDAY

Read second paragraph:

Jesus used the term “Son of Man” to refer to Himself 82 times in the Gospels. It was one of His favorite titles. He used it as an expression of endearment to identify with us. He is a Savior who understands us, has experienced our temptations, and has passed through our trials. He is the “Son of Man” who is returning to take us home. The Jesus who comes for us is the same Jesus who lived among us. He is qualified to redeem us because He became One of us, and yet, as one of us, He met the full fury of Satan's temptations and, yes, was victorious. (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.16)

What do you think of this term Son of Man?

Why do you think Jesus used it so frequently? What does Jesus want us to know?

- That He “understands us, has experienced our temptations, and has passed through our trials”?
- Does Jesus understand and sympathize with us more than the Father?
- Or does Jesus' life reveal to us, in a persuasive way, how closely the Godhead does know us, sympathize with us, love and value us?

Could the term Son of Man be a great controversy statement?

I am going to share a series of statements with you from EG White, the most influential founder of the SDA church. And the contribution to Christian thought that I believe she provided is the Great Controversy perspective—the view of the sin problem extending beyond just human beings, but also including the heavenly realm where 1/3 of the angels fell, and that Christ's mission to Earth included more than just saving human beings, but also eliminating sin from the universe and securing the unfallen beings in their loyalty so that sin will never arise again.

There are Bible texts to support this. Jesus speaking of His pending crucifixion said up:

But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* to myself. (John 12:32 NIV84)



The word “men” is not in the Greek, it is inserted by the translators.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him [Jesus], and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20 NIV84).

We of course find the threads of the Great Controversy throughout Scripture:

- The serpent in Eden
- The first chapter of Job
- Zechariah chapter 3
- The temptations of Christ in the wilderness
- The demoniacs that Jesus healed
- Revelation chapter 12

But EGW put this together in an incredible way helping us see this greater universal landscape of the war, which centers on the character of God.

So, back to my question—is Jesus’ use of the term Son of Man a Great Controversy statement?

Consider these quotes:

Before the fall of Satan, the Father consulted his Son in regard to the formation of man.

They purposed to make this world, and create beasts and living things upon it, and **to make man in the image of God, to reign as a ruling monarch over every living thing which God should create.** When Satan learned the purpose of God, he was envious at Christ, and jealous because the Father had not consulted him in regard to the creation of man. Satan was of the highest order of angels; but Christ was above all. He was the commander of all Heaven. He imparted to the angelic family the high commands of his Father. The envy and jealousy of Satan increased. Until his rebellion all Heaven was in harmony, and perfect subjection to the government of God. Satan commenced to insinuate his dissatisfied feelings to other angels, and a number agreed to aid him in his rebellion. Satan was dissatisfied with his position. Although very exalted, he aspires to be equal with God; and unless the Lord gratifies his ambition, determines to rebel, and refuse submission. He desires, yet dare not at once venture to make known his envious, hateful feelings. But he contents himself with gaining all he can to sympathize with him, as though deeply wronged. He relates to them his thoughts of warring against Jehovah. *Spiritual Gifts Vol. 3 p. 36.*

After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, the Father and Son carried out **their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image.** They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it. And now God said to His Son, “**Let us make man in our image.**” As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator he was of noble height and of beautiful symmetry...*Story of Redemption 20.*



God, in His foreknowledge and eternal wisdom, had a purpose for the species human *before* Satan rebelled in heaven. What was that purpose?

When Adam came from the Creator's hand, he bore, in his physical, mental, and spiritual nature, a likeness to his Maker. "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27), and **it was His purpose that the longer man lived the more fully he should reveal this image**—the more fully reflect the glory of the Creator. All his faculties were capable of development; their capacity and vigor were continually to increase. Vast was the scope offered for their exercise, glorious the field opened to their research. The mysteries of the visible universe—the "wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (Job 37:16)—invited man's study. Face-to-face, heart-to-heart communion with his Maker was his high privilege. **Had he remained loyal to God, all this would have been his forever.** Throughout eternal ages he would have continued to gain new treasures of knowledge, to discover fresh springs of happiness, and to obtain clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the wisdom, the power, and the love of God. **More and more fully would he have fulfilled the object of his creation, more and more fully have reflected the Creator's glory.** Education 15.

What was God's purpose in creating human beings? What would have been the result of Adam and Eve staying loyal and governing the planet like God governs the universe? How would they have treated each other? How would they have treated their children in a sinless world? Would this have revealed anything about how God governs?

Do you think Satan wanted this purpose in humanity's creation to occur?

As soon as the Lord through Jesus Christ created our world and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, **Satan announced his purpose to conform to his own nature the father and mother of all humanity**, and to unite them with his own ranks of rebellion. **He was determined to efface the image of God from the human posterity, and to trace his own image upon the soul in the place of the divine image....** Christ Triumphant 10.

God had a purpose for humanity to be the repositories of His living law of love. God's law cannot be understood on stone, for love requires life, and human beings were created in the image of God to live out God's law of love in governance of themselves and in how they treat others and govern the planet.

Satan is the father of lies, fear, and selfishness. His goal is to erase fidelity, love, truth, integrity, honesty, loyalty from the living temple where God placed His image and instead have living human beings carry around his law of survival of the fittest, of me-first, of power, control, coercion, force, abuse, murder, and death.

Jesus came as the second Adam to overthrow the infection of fear, selfishness and sin that Satan introduced into the heart and mind of Adam and Eve and to restore God's image in us.

In assuming human nature, that he might reach to the very depths of human woe and misery and lift man up, Christ has shown what estimate he places upon the human race. In this work



everything was at stake. Satan claimed to be the lawful owner of the fallen race; and with what persistent effort did he seek to overthrow Christ through his subtily! It was only by the most desperate conflict with the powers of Satan that **Christ could accomplish his purpose of restoring the almost obliterated image of God in man, and place his own signature upon his forehead.** It was a desperate battle; for Satan had so long worked in league with human intelligences as to almost completely intercept every ray of light shining from the throne of God upon the human mind. **The cross of Calvary alone could destroy the works of the devil.** In that wondrous sacrifice all eyes were called to ‘behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ The love of Christ kindles in the heart of all who continue to behold him. General Conference Daily Bulletin March 2, 1897, par. 17

Is it possible that Jesus uses the term *Son of Man* because He is not just redeeming individual humans that He loves, but is redeeming the mission and purpose for which humanity was created?

And by doing this, Christ not only reveals the truth of God’s character of love, His design laws of life, but also reveals that Adam’s sin was not because of a manufacturer’s defect! By His victory, in weakened humanity, Jesus proves that the sin of Adam was not because of some flaw in his design, or creation, or lack of a resource.

Read the last paragraph:

Notice some elements in these passages: (1) Jesus, the Son of Man, is coming in glory with His angels. (2) He will divide the sheep from the goats (basically a judgment). (3) The destiny of the nations and all humanity will be decided for eternity. (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.16)

What does this mean? What law lens do you view these things through?

If we use human law what does judgment mean? In a human law system, it is the ruling of the judge (or jury) that determines whether a person is found guilty or is acquitted. But that is NOT how judgment works in God’s kingdom, for God’s law does not function like human law. God’s law is not made-up rules, but the design protocols reality is built upon.

So if any person of authority, including God, separates sheep from goats, what is the basis of that judgment? Is it not the reality that sheep are sheep and goats are goats—i.e. it is the inherent nature of the two living beings. The judgment of God does not make a sheep a sheep or a goat a goat.

So too in the final judgment God’s judgment merely confirms who is a sheep and who is a goat. **God’s judgment does NOT determine one’s eternal destiny**, God’s judgment sustains, affirms, confirms the choice that every single person has made in forming their own character, in solidifying themselves in love and trust to God or hardening themselves in rebelling against Him.

Thus we read in Revelation, the close of probation closes when every heart seals itself either into loyalty to God or loyalty to sin.



Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy. Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:11-12 NIV84).

TUESDAY

Then what about the title of this day's lesson: The Heavenly Judgment—what is that?

What comes to mind when you think of the heavenly judgment?

In our magazine, [The Final Message of Mercy to the World: The Three Angels](#)

we address the question of judgment and identify four judgments.

In the 3 angels' message, what judgment is being referred to?

The hour of God's judgment has come—what does this mean? Is it the hour in which God has a tribunal, or the hour in human history in which we are finally able to judge Him correctly in the true light that Jesus revealed?

The lesson takes the position that the judgment is a judicial process in which records are open and a heavenly tribunal sits. They use Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 as a basis for this. Let's read those verses and see what you think:

As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened... In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 NIV84).

A court was set—what type of court? If one views the Bible through the human imposed law lens, then this is a judicial court, a court of law, to examine records, determine guilt or innocence and just punishments.

But if we recognize God's law as design law, and God's government governs the operations of reality itself, then we see what is actually described in the text, what is transpiring, what is really happening,



what is the reality of the event recorded in this Scripture. We realize that this is not a judicial court being convened, but it is God's royal court in which Jesus comes and receives the kingdom from His Father that is rightly His, and that He objectively proved, through His self-sacrificial death, to be worthy of receiving. And all the intelligences in heaven attend and affirm Him as worthy, worthy, worthy the Lamb who was slain!

This is the same event as recorded in Revelation chapter five, let's read it in Revelation 5 and please take note of the similarities. Because Revelation confirms for us that this is not a judicial court and the book being opened in this court is not the book of our recorded sins:

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. [this is the book referenced in Daniel chapter seven that is being opened] And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders... He came and **took the scroll** from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"



The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Revelation 5:1-14 NIV84)

Do you see the same event here as in Daniel chapter 7?

- God is on His throne
- The heavenly intelligences are gathered around
- Jesus comes to His Father and is found worthy and receives His kingdom
- And Jesus opens the book
- And the heavenly beings rejoice

So what is in this book that is sealed with seven seals?

This is from the Remedy:

Then I looked, and I saw that he who sits on the throne had written out the history of the world before the world began, and sealed it up. It was symbolized by a book in his right hand, with writing within, and sealed with seven seals. ²And I watched as a mighty angel asked in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the book of God's foreknowledge, and intervene in human history?" ³But there was no created being in heaven, or living on earth, or amongst the dead, who could open the scroll or even look at its contents. ⁴My heart broke with sadness because there was no one found who could open the book or look inside. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Don't be sad! See, Jesus—the Lion from Judah, the descendant of David—has overcome and is now able to open the book of God's foreknowledge, sealed by seven seals."

⁶Then I saw a Lamb, appearing as if it had been slain—symbolizing Jesus who sacrificed himself to eradicate sin—standing at the command center of the universe, surrounded by his staff and agents symbolized by the four living creatures and the elders. He had all heavenly power and all wisdom at his disposal — symbolized by seven horns and seven eyes, which represented God's Spirit — and he was directing every heavenly agency to rescue, heal and restore his children living on earth. ⁷He came and took the book from God's right hand. ⁸When he took the book, his staff—symbolized by the four living creatures and twenty-four elders—were so relieved that they fell down in joy and awe before him. They were processing requests from God's children on earth—symbolized by the golden bowls of incense they each held. They also had renewed hearts that were like musical instruments making a beautiful melody, ⁹and they sang a new song stemming from their admiration for Jesus:

"You are able to take the book and reveal the sealed contents because you were killed, and by your death you revealed the truth and achieved the Remedy to free humans from sin and restore people from every race, language, tribe and nation to God. ¹⁰You have healed their minds, making them a kingdom of priests ministering the Remedy of our God, and they will administer God's methods on earth."



¹¹Then I heard many voices, so I looked, and I saw millions of angels—so many that it was beyond my ability to count. They surrounded the throne and the living creatures, and the elders. ¹²In rich booming voices, they sang:

"Worthy is Jesus the Lamb to possess all power, resources and ability, and receive all honor, glory and praise, because he was slain, proving that he will never abuse such mighty power!"

¹³Then I heard every living being in the universe singing in unison:

"To him who sits on the throne and to Jesus the Lamb be praise and honor, glory and power, for ever and ever, without end!"

¹⁴The four living creatures said, "Absolutely right!" and the elders fell down in adoration and awe.

Do you recognize that the events in Daniel 7 are not judicial, they are the description of Jesus receiving His kingdom, His power, and authority and taking command of all heavenly resources for the purpose of healing and saving us.

The book with seven seals is the book of God's foreknowledge that He recorded before He began creating. Then, after recording His foreknowledge of events in the book sealed with seven seals, God created and at some point established recording angels to record history as it unfolded. And when Jesus unseals the seven seals the book of God's foreknowledge is compared with history as it happened and all see that God does in fact have perfect foreknowledge, but never uses that foreknowledge to restrict our liberty, take away our freedom of choice, or manipulate for selfish purposes. In other words, God's character and government are vindicated.

Fear God and give Him glory for the hour of HIS judgment has come!

Some might argue that I am taking only a portion of Daniel 7 out of context and not including later verses that they claim establish this court as judicial, specifically Daniel 7:21-22 which read from the NIV:

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and **pronounced judgment in favor of the saints** of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. (Daniel 7:21-22 NIV84).

Those who view the Bible through human imposed law lenses will read this verse and say, "see God is pronouncing judgment. This is a tribunal, it is a legal court." However, the translation "pronounced judgment in favor of the saints" is an interpretation based on the preconceived ideas of the translators, namely that God's law functions like human law and thus this is a legal process, so they translate it as such.

It is a legitimate translation, so I don't allege anything nefarious against the translators, but it is not the only legitimate translation. Here is another from the KJV:



I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and **judgment was given to the saints of the most High**; and the time came that hithe saints possessed the kingdom. (Daniel 7:21-22 KJV).

When we understand design law, we understand that the war between Christ and Satan is a war for our hearts and minds, who we believe and who we are loyal to.

Satan is the father of lies and those lies are primarily about God. Thus Paul said in this warfare that we have divine weapons to demolish every argument and pretention that sets itself up against the knowledge of God (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

This prophecy in Daniel is about the war, about the little horn power that misrepresents God in a way that sets up a false version of God in the spirit temple that people believe. That false version is the idea that God is a dictator, a being who makes up rules like we do and then uses His power to punish rulebreakers. This is the imperial Roman idea of law that the Roman church accepted and promulgated, and which lead to the Dark Ages and the many abuses that the church perpetrated upon humanity, such as the Crusades, Inquisition, burning people at the stake etc.

God is telling us in these prophecies that the little horn power will war against the saints and be winning until the saints are given judgement or discernment to tell the difference between the false imperial Roman god and the true Creator God. Thus the message of the 3 angels we are called to receive the eternal gospel, the eternal good news that God is not like a Roman Caesar, to reject the imperial dictator view of God, to receive the ability to make a right judgment and to judge God to be exactly like Jesus revealed and His government to operate upon design laws. To worship Him who made the heavens, earth, seas and fountains of water. Then the little horn power will be defeated.

And when does this happen—at the end of the 2300 years, when enough truth is recovered from the Bible being translated into the language of the people that our minds can be freed from the lies about God.

WEDNESDAY

Read third and fourth paragraphs:

The angel comes from the presence of God in the glory of the temple and says, “It’s time. The harvest is fully ripe.” Go and get Your children and bring them home.

Jesus uses illustrations from agriculture repeatedly in the New Testament. On more than one occasion, He uses the symbolism of a ripening harvest to illustrate the growth of the seed of the gospel in the lives of His people. (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.18)



What do you understand is happening, what is being described?

What laws are involved in what is described? What kind of law is involved in agriculture?

If we get congress to pass a law that crops in America are legally allowed to grow without water, what happens?

If congress passes a law that says plants that receive sunshine and rain are not allowed to grow—what happens?

If congress passes a law that says anyone who plants thornbushes in their fields will harvest figs, what happens?

So what determines whether one is among the wheat or the tares?

What determines when the harvest is ready?

In the fifth paragraph, which is a quote from *Christ's Object Lessons* it states that "Sanctification is the work of a lifetime."

What does this mean? Does it mean we don't experience sanctification until the end of our life? Does it mean that the antediluvians who lived 900 years had an advantage over us in becoming sanctified?

How do you understand this statement: "Eating is the work of a lifetime"?

Sanctification is growing in godliness and if we have chosen Jesus as our Savior then every day we are to be growing in godliness, every day internalizing more truth, living out His methods and principles, gaining increasing insights, greater wisdom, maturing with more fruits of the spirit.

Sanctification is not a point in time, it is a way of living, we live sanctified lives!

THURSDAY

Read the second paragraph:

"Another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire" (Rev. 14:18, NKJV). Here is the angel who commands the fires of God's final judgment. The harvest is ripe. Sin has reached its limits. Rebellion has crossed the line of God's mercy. As evil and bad as things have been, it's going to get even worse before it's all over. A loving God has done everything He can do for us, which included offering Himself on the cross as a sacrifice for our sin. "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21, NKJV; see also Gal. 3:13). (Adult SS Guide Second Quarter 2023, Three Cosmic Messages p.19)



I found it interesting how the lesson clipped Revelation 14:18 right in the middle of the sentence in order to advance the idea that the fire is the fire of God's judgment.

Let's read the entire sentence and also what the angel in charge of the fire does, which is verse 19:

Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the altar and called in a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe" (Revelation 14:18-19 NIV84).

Does the angel use fire to inflict some punishment? Is fire used at all? If we allow the text to influence our conclusion about this fire, what fire would you say this is? Where is the angel coming from? The altar of God, and the angel is in charge of the fire, would it be the fire that burns in the altar of God? Would that idea be foreign to the text or a reasonable conclusion?

And is it likely that these images of fire and altars are literal or are they symbolic here in the book of Revelation?

The Bible tells us the meaning:

I saw the Lord. He was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple. [Where is this? And is the angel in Revelation 14 coming from? The altar, which is where? The heavenly temple] Round him flaming creatures were standing, each of which had six wings. [What kind of fire is this? Is it combustion or something else?] Each creature covered its face with two wings, and its body with two, and used the other two for flying. They were calling out to each other:

"Holy, holy, holy!
The LORD Almighty is holy!
His glory fills the world."

The sound of their voices made the foundation of the Temple shake, and the Temple itself was filled with smoke.

I said, "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes, I have seen the King, the LORD Almighty!"

Then one of the creatures flew down to me, **carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar** with a pair of tongs. He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, "This has touched your lips, and **now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven.**" (Isaiah 6:1-7 GNT)



So this angel in Revelation is in charge of the fire—and what does the fire of God do? It cleanses us from sin!

So this angel comes and tells the others to harvest—why? Because there are no more people who are willing to be cleansed by the fires of truth and love that flow from the throne of God. Every person has become settled, sealed, solidified either into loyal love to God or sinful selfishness to Satan.

The lesson asks the following question at the bottom of the page:

How well can you discern the contrast between good and evil? Why is it important that we do?
(See Heb. 5:14.)

Just consider the events around COVID, the lockdowns, the mandates, the coercion, pressure, the willingness to close churches, businesses, the forceful blockade of families from visiting their loved ones in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice care, the refusal to stand with individuals whose consciences did not want to comply in injecting experimental substances into their bodies, the willingness to accuse those who had questions of not loving their fellow man, of being the cause of deaths.

It became very clear to me that the majority of people don't have good discernment skills, in my direct experience with people it we clear the vast majority of the people in my community, neighborhoods, and professional organizations could not discern—sadly many in the church also failed to discern good from evil during this time.