Lesson 165 - The Courts of Heaven

Heaven has a courtroom that few know about. This lesson will reveal the verses that support such scene and their significance.

1. Where does God perform the activity of the courtroom? **Ezekiel 43:5**

   EGW: (no comment)

2. Who is the judge in the courtroom? **Romans 14:10**

   EGW: Then since the Lord is working through his own divine agency upon the hearts of those whom we would term hopeless subjects, let not man be officious, let him stand out of the way of God's work; for his word that goeth forth from his mouth, will accomplish its appointed work, and prosper in the thing whereunto it is sent. Let not man set himself up as judge of his brethren; for God "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." "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . . For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." {RH, January 3, 1893 par. 5}

3. Why is Jesus the judge and not the Father? **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}

4. What is another position that Jesus holds? **1 John 2:1**

EGW: Jesus will appear in the judgment as the advocate of his people, to plead in their behalf before God. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 9:24; 7:25. {SW, October 10, 1905 par. 7}

In the judgment all who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." {SW, October 10, 1905 par. 8}

Jesus said, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." {SW, October 10, 1905 par. 9}

5. Who will appear before the judge? **2 Corinthians 5:10**

EGW: We are nearing the end of time. Trials will be abundant from without, but let them not come from within the church. Let God's professed people deny self for the truth's sake, for Christ's sake. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Everyone who truly loves God will have the spirit of Christ and a fervent love for his brethren. The more a person's heart is in communion with God, and the more his affections are centered in Christ, the less will he be disturbed by the roughness and hardships he meets in this life. Those who are growing up to the full stature of men and women in Christ Jesus, will become more and more like Christ in character, rising above the disposition to murmur and be discontented. They will despise to be faultfinders. {5T 483.2}

6. What should we be aware of that will be used in the judgment? **Daniel 7:10**

EGW: The books of record in Heaven, in which the names and the deeds of men are registered, are to determine the decisions of the Judgment. Says the prophet Daniel, “The Judgment was set, and the books were opened.” The Revelator, describing the same scene, adds, “Another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” [Revelation 20:12.] {GC88 480.2}

The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade his disciples, “Rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven.” [Luke 10:20.] Paul speaks of his faithful fellow-workers, “whose names are in the book of life.” [Philippians 4:3.] Daniel, looking down to “a time of trouble, such as never was,” declares that God's people shall be delivered, “everyone that shall be found written in the book.” [Daniel 12:1.] And the Revelator says that those only shall enter the city of God whose names “are written in the Lamb's book of life.” [Revelation 21:27.] {GC88 480.3}

“A book of remembrance” is written before God, in which are recorded the good deeds of “them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.” [Malachi 3:16.] Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in Heaven. Nehemiah refers to this when he says, “Remember me, O my God, . . . and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God.” [Nehemiah 13:14.] In the book of God's remembrance every deed of righteousness is immortalized. There every temptation resisted, every evil overcome, every word of tender pity expressed, is faithfully chronicled. And every act of sacrifice, every suffering and sorrow endured for Christ's sake, is recorded. Says the psalmist. “Thou tellest my wanderings. Put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?” [Psalm 56:8.] {GC88 481.1}

7. What is recorded in those items? **Revelation 20:12, Ecclesiastes 12:14**

EGW: There is a record also of the sins of men. "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}

8. What two groups will be judged as? **1 Peter 4:5**

EGW: Here the apostle presents a solemn charge to every minister of the Gospel. He arrays them before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, to preach the Word, and they are not to show a partiality for merely the prophecies and the argumentative portions of the Scriptures, but the greatest and most important lessons that are given us are those given us by Jesus Christ Himself. If we become thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines of Jesus Christ, then we shall be able to win souls to Christ. We shall have the love of Christ in our hearts, for we will see that we can do nothing without it. Why, Christ says, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" [John 15:7]. {1SAT 62.1}

9. That means, that at least one group will not physically enter into a courtroom seeing that they are unconscious, therefore, there is more than one phase to the judgment, so when Jesus appears at the second coming, what phase is it? **Jude 1:14-15, John 5:27**

EGW: God desires this solemn truth to be presented to the people who claim to believe the third angel's message. He desires His people to act aright in regard to that decisive day. The truth that Christ is coming should be kept before every mind. He will come in all His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations. "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." {21MR 349.3}

He accepted humanity and lived a pure, sanctified life. For this reason He has received the appointment. He who occupies the position of Judge is God manifest in the flesh. What a consolation it will be to recognize in the Judge our Teacher and Redeemer, bearing all the marks of the crucifixion, from which shine forth 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. {21MR 349.4}

10. What happens before the second coming? **Revelation 22:11 (what declaration is made)**

EGW: When the third angel's message closes, mercy no longer pleads for the guilty inhabitants of the earth. The people of God have accomplished their work. They have received "the latter rain," "the refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and they are prepared for the trying hour before them. Angels are hastening to and fro in heaven. An angel returning from the earth announces that his work is done; the final test has been brought upon the world, and all who have proved themselves loyal to the divine precepts have received "the seal of the living God." Then Jesus ceases His intercession in the sanctuary above. He lifts His hands and with a loud voice says, "It is done;" and all the angelic host lay off their crowns as He makes the solemn announcement: "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." Revelation 22:11. Every case has been decided for life or death. Christ has made the atonement for His people and blotted out their sins. The number of His subjects is made up; "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven," is about to be given to the heirs of salvation, and Jesus is to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. {GC 613.2}

11. Who witnesses the activity of the judgment? **Revelation 14:10**

EGW: The time has come for the true light to shine amid moral darkness. The third angel's message has been sent forth to the world, warning men against receiving the mark of the beast or of his image in their foreheads or in their hands. To receive this mark means to come to the same decision as the beast has done, and to advocate the same ideas, in direct opposition to the word of God. Of all who receive this mark, God says, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." {RH, July 13, 1897 par. 5}

12. What will be lacking when God executes the judgment? **James 2:13**

EGW: The Lord is coming. This earth's history is soon to close. Are you prepared to meet the Judge of all the earth? Bear in mind that "he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy." How terrible it will be in the last great day to find that those with whom we have been familiarly associated are separated from us forever; to see the members of our family, perhaps our own children, unsaved; to find those who have visited our homes, and eaten at our tables, among the lost. Then we shall ask ourselves the question, Was it because of my impatience, my unchristlike disposition; was it because self was not under control, that the religion of Christ became distasteful to them? {RH, March 18, 1902 par. 15}

13. Despite that, what will God's judgment be recognized as? **2 Thessalonians 1:5**

EGW: The word of inspiration pronounces judgment against all who pass by the wonderful exhibition of the love of God, and refuse the gift that the Father has given to the world, even his only-begotten Son. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in welldoing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life." Mark the terms; for it is essential for everyone to know the conditions on which we are called to the service of Christ, to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. We are "laborers together with God." And we should desire most earnestly to know, and we must know or die in our sins, what terms or conditions he requires in this partnership. You cannot trust to the multitude, because they walk in a false way. You must learn for yourself what are God's requirements, and know whether you are obeying them. {ST, November 16, 1891 par. 4}

14. What will the judgment be according? **Romans 2:2**

EGW: Those who have a knowledge of the law of God, and become proud of that knowledge, despising others who are more ignorant, are not doers of the law. While the apostle admits that the Gentiles were as dark and sinful as the Jews represented them, still he urges home upon the Jews

their own defects of character. He says, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things." Those who acknowledged God, and condemned the practices of the Gentiles, thereby condemned themselves, as they were guilty of similar practices. He asks, "Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" {ST, August 12, 1889 par. 6}

15. Who will God hold up to those that claim they could not stop sinning? **Luke 11:32**

EGW: Tho Christ had given them evidence upon evidence of his divine power in healing the sick, in casting out devils, in opening the eyes of the blind, and in doing many mighty works, yet certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees came to him, and said: "Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Then he goes on to illustrate the manner of their unbelief, and the consequences that would come upon them. He said: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." {ST, October 1, 1896 par. 6}

16. Who will God hold up to those that claim they did not know when they had opportunity to know? **Luke 11:31, 1 Kings 10:1**

EGW: Christ knew that the Israelites regarded Solomon as the greatest king that ever wielded a scepter over an earthly kingdom. By special appointment of God, he had built their first magnificent temple, which was a marvel of beauty, richness, and glory, and gave influence and dignity to Israel as a nation. He was endowed with wisdom, and his name had been glorified by them. To be superior to him was, in their eyes, to be more than human, to possess the prerogatives of Deity. Yet Christ declared: "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." {YI, September 23, 1897 par. 6}

17. Who will suffer less for the same sins committed as mighty works of Jesus were not performed there but was with those that rejected Him? **Luke 10:13-14**

EGW: Has the truth sanctified the receiver? Is he purer, nobler, better, for believing it? The words and deeds are the fruit which testifies whether the mind of God dwells in us, and we are guided by his law. We shall surely deceive ourselves if we think that because we hold certain Bible doctrines firmly, we actually possess the blessings which these doctrines were designed to bestow. The intellect may accept truth in its noblest form; but if this truth exerts no influence on the life and character, it is of no practical value. On the contrary, it proves a delusion if it quiets the conscience while it does not sanctify the soul. A theory of truth may be a beautiful covering to hide the deformity of a carnal heart. This was the sin of Chorazin and Bethsaida, which called forth the denunciation of Christ: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." {ST, May 22, 1884 par. 9}

18. Who will suffer less for rejecting the testimony of Jesus as the prior sufferers never were exposed, even by rumor, of Jesus? **Mark 6:11**

EGW: But very few have an experimental knowledge of the sanctifying influence of the truths which they profess. Their obedience and devotion have not been in accordance with their light and privileges. They have no real sense of the obligation resting upon them to walk as children of the light, and not as children of darkness. If the light that has been given to these had been given Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, and would have escaped the signal wrath of God. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for those who have been privileged with the clear light, and have had a vast amount of labor, but have not profited by it. They have neglected the great salvation which God in mercy was willing to bestow. They were so blinded by the devil that they verily thought themselves rich and in the favor of God, when the True Witness declares them to be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

19. What shows that there will be no method of appeal once all is said and done? **Daniel 7:26**

EGW: Who can measure the responsibilities of the influence of every human agent whom our Redeemer has purchased at the sacrifice of His own life? What a scene will be presented when the judgment shall sit and the books shall be opened to testify the salvation or the loss of all souls! It will require the unerring decision of One who has lived in humanity, loved humanity, given His life for humanity, to make the final appropriation of the rewards to the loyal righteous, and the punishment of the disobedient, the disloyal, and unrighteous. The Son of God is entrusted with the complete measurement of every individual's action and responsibility. To those who have been partakers of other men's sins and have acted against God's decision, it will be a most awfully solemn scene. {1888 810.2}

20. How shall Zion, God's people, be redeemed? **Isaiah 1:27**

EGW: The Lord's work needs to be distinguished from the common affairs of life. He says: "I will turn My hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Isaiah 1:25-27. These words are full of importance. They have a lesson for all who occupy the editorial chair. {7T 152.3}

21. What will the end result be towards God? **Isaiah 5:16**

EGW: (no comment)