

Preparation is Probation

Does our Probation Close When our Preparation is Concluded?

“He held up before Felix and Drusilla the character of God—His righteousness, justice, and equity, and the nature of His law. He clearly showed that it is man’s duty to live a life of sobriety and temperance, keeping the passions under the control of reason, in conformity to God’s law, and preserving the physical and mental powers in a healthy condition. **He declared that there would surely come a day of judgment when all would be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body**, and when it would be plainly revealed that wealth, position, or titles are powerless to gain for man the favor of God or to deliver him from the results of sin. **He showed that this life is man’s time of preparation for the future life. Should he neglect present privileges and opportunities he would suffer an eternal loss; no new probation would be given him.**” *Act of the Apostel*, 423.

“**Now is the time of preparation.** None need to expect that God will do **the work of preparing** and fitting them up, without their efforts. It is for them to work the works of righteousness, and crowd all the right-doing they can into the little space of time allotted to them **before probation closes**, that they may have a clean record in Heaven.” *An Appeal to Mothers*, 33.

“We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. **We are preparing to meet Him** who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality. **When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still.** Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. **But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining**

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process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.

“We embrace the truth of God with our different faculties, and **as we come under the influence of that truth, it will accomplish the work for us which is necessary to give us a moral fitness for the kingdom of glory and for the society of the heavenly angels. We are now in God’s workshop.** Many of us are rough stones from the quarry. But as we lay hold upon the truth of God, its influence affects us. It elevates us and removes from us every imperfection and sin, of what ever nature. Thus we are **prepared to see the King** in His beauty and finally to unite with the pure and heavenly angels in the kingdom of glory. It is here that this work is to be accomplished for us, here that our bodies and spirits are to be fitted for immortality.” *Testimonies to the Church*, volume 2, 355.

“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. 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.**

“Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition: “Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.” Mark 13:33. “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.” Revelation 3:3.

“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

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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.

“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.”** *The Great Controversy* 1888, 490,491.

“It is in a crisis that character is revealed. When the earnest voice proclaimed at midnight, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him,” and the sleeping virgins were roused from their slumbers, it was seen who had made preparation for the event. Both parties were taken unawares; but one was prepared for the emergency, and the other was found without preparation. So now, a sudden and unlooked-for calamity, something that brings the soul face to face with death, will show whether there is any real faith in the promises of God. It will show whether the soul is sustained by grace. The great final test comes at the close of human probation, when it will be too late for the soul’s need to be supplied.” *Christ Object Lessons*, 412.

“Brethren, to whom the truths of God’s word have been opened, what part will you act in the closing scenes of this world’s history? Are you awake to these solemn realities? Do you realize **the grand work of preparation that is going on in heaven and on earth?** Let all who have received the light, who have had the opportunity of reading and hearing the prophecy, take heed to those things that are written therein; “for the time is at hand.” Let none now tamper with sin, the source of every misery in our world. No longer remain in lethargy and stupid indifference. Let not the destiny of your soul hang upon an uncertainty. Know that you are fully on the Lord’s side. Let the inquiry go forth from sincere hearts and trembling lips, “Who shall be able to stand?” **Have you, in**

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these last precious hours of probation, been putting the very best material into your character building? Have you been purifying your souls from every stain? Have you followed the light? Have you works corresponding to your profession of faith?" *Counsels for the Church*, 342.

"We are living in the closing scenes of this earth's history. Prophecy is fast fulfilling. **The hours of probation are fast passing.** We have no time—not a moment—to lose. Let us not be found sleeping on guard. Let no one say in his heart or by his works: "My Lord delayeth His coming." Let the message of Christ's soon return sound forth in earnest words of warning. Let us persuade men and women everywhere to repent and flee from the wrath to come. Let us arouse them to immediate **preparation**, for we little know what is before us. Let ministers and lay members go forth into the ripening fields to tell the unconcerned and indifferent **to seek the Lord while He may be found.** The workers will find their harvest wherever they proclaim the forgotten truths of the Bible. They will find those who will accept the truth and will devote their lives to winning souls to Christ." *Counsels for the Church*, 356.

"Men ... may be interested in mines which yield rich profit in silver and gold. They may devote a lifetime to securing earthly treasures; but they die, and leave it all behind. They cannot take one dollar with them to enrich them in the great beyond. Are these men wise? Are they not insane, **to let the precious hours of probation pass without making a preparation** for the future life? Those who are wise will lay up "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,"—"a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." If we would secure enduring riches, let us begin now to transfer our treasure to the other side, and our hearts will be where our treasure is." *The Review and Herald*, October 7, 1884.

"Now is the time of preparation. None need to expect that God will do the work of preparing and fitting them up, without their efforts. **It is for them to work the works of righteousness, and crowd all the right-doing they can into the little space of time allotted to them before probation closes, that they may have a clean record in Heaven.** I close with the entreaty of the prophet, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11." *A Solemn Appeal*, 80.

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“Let us remember that there will be no second probation. Some flatter themselves with the thought that the Lord will give them another opportunity. Fatal delusion! Just now, day by day, we are preparing for the judgment. We are trading on our Lord’s goods, and **at His coming He will reckon with us.** And from each one He will expect a return. Let us do faithful, unselfish work. Our reward will be proportionate to the work we have done. “Behold, I come quickly,” Christ says; “and **My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**” The Master calls for every man to do the work given him according to his ability. In the love of the Saviour let Christians arise and work for those nigh and afar off.” *The Signs of the Times*, July 24, 1901, par. 10.

“The precious time of probation is passing, and few realize that it is given them for the purpose of preparing for eternity. The golden hours are squandered in worldly pursuits, in pleasure, in absolute sin. God’s law is slighted and forgotten, yet every statute is nonetheless **binding.** Every transgression will bring its punishment. Love of worldly gain leads to desecration of the Sabbath, yet the claims of that holy day are not abrogated or lessened. God’s command is clear and unquestionable on this point; He has peremptorily forbidden us to labor upon the seventh day. He has set it apart as a day sanctified to Himself.” *Testimonies to the Church*, volume 4, 147.

“What are you doing, brethren, in **the great work of preparation? Those who are uniting with the world, are receiving the worldly mold, and preparing for the mark of the beast.** Those who are distrustful of self, who are humbling themselves before God and purifying their souls by obeying the truth,—these are receiving the heavenly mold, and preparing for the seal of God in their foreheads. When the decree goes forth, and the stamp is impressed, their character will remain pure and spotless for eternity.

“Now is the time to prepare. The seal of God will never be placed upon the forehead of an impure man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of the ambitious, world-loving man or woman. It will never be placed upon the forehead of men or women of false tongues or deceitful hearts. **All who receive the seal must be without spot before God,—candidates for heaven.** Search the Scriptures for yourselves, that you may understand the fearful solemnity of the present hour.” *Christian Experience and Teachings*, 191.

Probation is to Prepare for the Day of the Lord

“That season of distress and anguish will require an effort of earnestness and determined faith that can endure delay and hunger, and will not fail under weakness, though severely tried. **The period of probation is the time granted to all to prepare for the day of God. If any neglect the preparation, and heed not the faithful warnings given, they will be without excuse. Jacob’s earnest, persevering wrestling with the angel, should be an example for Christians.** Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. All who desire the blessing of God, as did Jacob, and will lay hold of the promises as he did, and be as earnest and persevering as he was, will succeed as he succeeded. Why there is so little exercise of true faith, and so little of the weight of truth resting upon many professed believers, is because they are indolent in spiritual things. They are unwilling to make exertions, to deny self, to agonize before God, to pray long and earnestly for the blessing, and therefore they do not obtain it. **That faith which will live through the time of trouble must be daily in exercise now. Those who do not make strong efforts now to exercise persevering faith, will be wholly unprepared to exercise that faith which will enable them to stand in the day of trouble.**” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 1, 124.

Jacob

“It was in a lonely, mountainous region, the haunt of wild beasts and the lurking place of robbers and murderers. Solitary and unprotected, **Jacob bowed in deep distress upon the earth. It was midnight.** All that made life dear to him were at a distance, exposed to danger and death. Bitterest of all was the thought that it was his own sin which had brought this peril upon the innocent. With earnest cries and tears he made his prayer before God. Suddenly a strong hand was laid upon him. He thought that an enemy was seeking his life, and he endeavored to wrest himself from the grasp of his assailant. In the darkness the two struggled for the mastery. Not a word was spoken, but Jacob put forth all his strength, and did not relax his efforts for a moment. While he was thus battling for his life, the sense of his guilt pressed upon his soul; his sins rose up before him, to shut him out from God. But in his terrible extremity he remembered God’s promises, and his whole heart went out in entreaty for His mercy. The struggle continued until near the break of day, when the stranger placed his finger upon Jacob’s thigh, and he was crippled instantly. The patriarch now discerned the character of his antagonist. He knew that he had been in conflict with a heavenly messenger, and this was why his almost superhuman effort had not gained the victory. **It was Christ, “the Angel of the covenant,” who had revealed Himself to Jacob.** The patriarch was now

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disabled and suffering the keenest pain, but he would not loosen his hold. All penitent and broken, he clung to the Angel; “he wept, and made supplication” (Hosea 12:4), pleading for a blessing. **He must have the assurance that his sin was pardoned.** Physical pain was not sufficient to divert his mind from this object. His determination grew stronger, his faith more earnest and persevering, until the very last. The Angel tried to release Himself; He urged, “Let Me go, for the day breaketh;” but Jacob answered, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” **Had this been a boastful, presumptuous confidence, Jacob would have been instantly destroyed; but his was the assurance of one who confesses his own unworthiness, yet trusts the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.”** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 196.

The day of the Lord

For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day. Matthew 12:8.

And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on. Luke 23:54.

“While laboring at Thessalonica, Paul had so fully covered the subject of the signs of the times, showing what events would occur prior to the revelation of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, that he did not think it necessary to write at length regarding this subject. He, however, pointedly referred to his former teachings. “Of the times and the seasons,” he said, “ye have no need that I write unto you. **For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.”**

“There are in the world today many who close their eyes to the evidences that Christ has given to warn men of His coming. They seek to quiet all apprehension, while at the same time the signs of the end are rapidly fulfilling, and the world is hastening to the time when the Son of man shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven. Paul teaches that it is sinful to be indifferent to the signs which are to precede **the second coming of Christ**. Those guilty of this neglect he calls children of the night and of darkness. He encourages the vigilant and watchful with these words: “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” *Act of the Apostel*, 259, 260.

The Day of the Lord as a Thief at Night

For yourselves know perfectly that **the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night**. For when they shall say, **Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them**, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. **But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief**. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. **Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober**. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-8.

But and if that servant say in his heart, **My lord delayeth his coming**; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; **The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware**, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. **And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself**, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. Luke 12:45-47.

“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.” 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.**” *The Review and Herald*, November 9, 1905, par. 15.

When the Lord comes

After a long time the **lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them**. Matthew 25:19.

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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.

And **at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh;** go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. **And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage:** and the door was shut. Matthew 25:6-9.