

# THE FINAL EXAM

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## *Revelation 14:9-12*

### 1) Intro

- a) Finals at MU
  - i) I felt really good about sleeping in and skipping my labs... until exam day! Then I realized, all too late, that I was unprepared!

### 2) Three Angels' Messages review

- a) Our mission

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import--*the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages*. There is *no other work* of so great importance. They are to allow *nothing else* to absorb their attention. – *Testimonies, Vol. 9, p. 19.*

- i) The First Angel's Message drew attention of the world to the nearness of the second coming and the needed personal preparation ("affliction of soul") to meet Jesus in glory.
- ii) The Second Angel's Message exposed the danger of the truth-and-error mixture of Babylon's teachings grooming us to receive the Mark of the Beast.

### 3) The Third Angel (Rev. 14:9-12)

- a) "The mark of the beast is about Sabbath vs. Sunday. When they pass the Sunday law, I'll start back to church, get caught up on my back tithe, start drinking decaf, etc."
- b) Ellen White wrote some interesting words about the 3<sup>rd</sup> message –

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity." {RH 04.01.1890}

The third angel closes his message thus: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." **As he repeated these words, he pointed to the heavenly sanctuary. The minds of all who embrace this message are directed to the most holy place, where Jesus stands before the ark, making His final intercession...** {EW 254.1}

- i) The warning against the Mark is not the **means of resisting** the mark any more than listening to a news broadcast of a coming storm is sufficient to protect you from the storm.

The sanctuary in heaven is the **very center of Christ's work** in behalf of men. It concerns **every soul living** upon the earth. {GC 488}

## 4) A Test of Character

- a) Two marks (Rev. 13:16-14:1)
  - i) Both contain names
  - ii) Names refer to character
    - (1) "I will make all My goodness pass... and I will proclaim the Name of the LORD..." (Ex. 33:19)
- b) Whether or not a person receives the Mark of the Beast will be determined by character rather than knowledge

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. {5T 216.1}

## 5) You *Can* Take It With You

- a) Parable of the Wedding Garment (Mt. 22:8-14)
  - i) Man is certain that his place in the banquet hall is secure
  - ii) He has his *title* to heaven, but not his *fitness* for heaven
  - iii) And is subsequently cast out
    - (1) "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (v. 13)
- b) Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Mt. 25:1-10)
  - i) Not enough oil – character is not formed in a moment

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... We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven. {COL 412, 13}

The foolish virgins do not represent those who are hypocritical. They had a **regard** for truth, they **advocated** the truth, they were **intending** to go forth to meet the bridegroom. They are **attached** to those who believe the truth, and **go with them**, having lamps, which represent **a knowledge of the truth**. When there was a revival in the church, **their feelings were stirred**; but they failed to have oil in their vessels, because they did not bring the principles of godliness into **their daily life and character**. They did not fall upon the rock Christ Jesus, and **permit** their old nature to be broken up. {RH 09.17.1895}

- c) How do we form character?
  - i) Tribulation, patience, character, hope (Rom. 5:1-5)
    - (1) Sow a word... thought... act... habit... character... destiny
  - ii) By beholding we're changed from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18)
    - (1) Both of these passages describe a process. It's not the occasional good deed or bad deed that makes us Christians; it's our habitual commitment to Christ and our daily relationship with Him.
    - (2) Time in God's word is not necessarily devotional time any more than eating lunch with a guy or girl is a date.

## 6) The Final Exam

- a) Peter's denial of Christ
  - i) We will reap what we have sown (Gal. 6:7) – you can't cheat character

By the laws of God in nature, effect follows cause with unvarying certainty. **The reaping testifies to the sowing**. Here no pretense is tolerated. Men may deceive their fellow men and may receive praise and compensation for service which they have not rendered. But in nature there can be no deception. On the unfaithful husbandman **the harvest passes sentence** of condemnation. And **in the highest sense** this is true also in the spiritual realm. **It is in appearance, not in reality, that evil succeeds**. The child who plays truant from school, the youth who is slothful in his studies, the clerk or apprentice who fails of serving the interests of his employer, the man in any business or profession who is untrue to his highest responsibilities, may

flatter himself that, so long as the wrong is concealed, he is gaining an advantage.

ii) I used to write myself sick notes and passes. That led to my college experience of skipping classes and labs. But on the day of the final exam, the jig was up.

But not so; he is cheating himself. **The harvest of life is character,** and it is this that determines destiny, both for this life and for the life to come. {Ed 108.2}

b) "Weeping and gnashing of teeth."

i) I used to wonder what this meant until I got a little taste of it. [Experience of repair "under warranty"]. You know what the worst part of it was? I could have done something about it, but I waited until it was too late. There are no words to give the full impact of the feeling of those who have put their spiritual lives on the back burner until it is forever too late. Some of you just buried a friend way sooner than you expected...