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Light in the Shadows

An Overview of the Doctrine of the Sanctuary

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OBJECTIVES

When you have completed your study of this overview of the Biblical doctrine of the sanctuary, you should be able to:

1. Identify the several Israelite sanctuaries and state their general purpose.
2. State the relationship between the Israelite religion, the patriarchal worship which preceded it, and Christianity, which came after it.
3. Explain the relationship between the Israelite sanctuary on earth and the heavenly sanctuary, as well as the nature of the latter.
4. Formulate a sound procedure for interpreting the symbolism of the earthly sanctuary.

5. Distinguish and explain the three foundational truths of the salvation process emphasized by the sanctuary symbolism.
6. Explain the time dynamic of the prophecies in Daniel 7-9 and its relationship to the opening and closing of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.
7. Demonstrate how the Biblical doctrine of the sanctuary provides genuine Christian assurance as well as important insights into the plan of salvation.

I. Sanctuaries of Salvation

Buildings have always been of major interest to man, whether these structures are mud huts or towering skyscrapers. The first recorded group venture after the Flood was a project to build "a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven" (Gen. 11:4).

Men have made buildings for various purposes—for residences, offices and manufacturing, education, entertainment, or worship. Among the notable man-made buildings are: the ancient Egyptian temple of Amon in Thebes, the largest temple known to have ever existed; the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, with

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a floor area of more than 90 acres; and the Sears Building in Chicago, piercing skyward 1,454 feet.

One of the most beautiful buildings in the world today is the Taj Mahal in northern India, built in the seventeenth century by the Indian ruler Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The Persian name Taj Mahal means "crown of palaces." Twenty thousand workers labored about 20 years to fashion its exquisite white marble domes and towers, jeweled inlays, and carved-stone screen of alabaster. This vision of Oriental beauty and grandeur stands in a garden setting, with its loveliness mirrored by a long reflecting pool.

Centuries ago God said to Moses, Israel's leader, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Ex. 25:8). At first Israel's desert sanctuary consisted of a carefully crafted tent-tabernacle. A little more than 400 years later this was replaced by a permanent temple erected in Jerusalem. This temple, built by Solomon—Israel's third king—was "garnished with precious stones, surrounded by spacious courts with magnificent approaches, and lined with carved cedar and burnished gold."¹

However, about 400 years after its dedication the temple was razed by the Babylonian invaders under Nebuchadnezzar. The returning exiles under Zerubbabel built another temple. Though the second temple was less magnificent than the original, it was still standing in 20 B.C., when Herod the Great began to rebuild and embellish it.

The sanctuaries of Israel were unique among early edifices. They were not built as residences for a priestly cast or for commerce and trade. They were not conceived to bring renown to the architects or the skilled craftsmen who erected them. Nor were they built to perpetuate the memory of some wealthy magnate. Lovely as the Taj Mahal is, it is but a tomb, a sad witness in stone to the fragile nature of human existence.

But Israel's sanctuaries were sanctuaries of *salvation*. By means of these sacred structures and their accompanying rituals, the God of love—man's Creator—determined to disclose to the world the good news of His way out of the darkness and despair of the human predicament.

"Mine house," He declared, "shall be called an house of prayer for all people" (Isa. 56:7). He intended that the nations of earth would seek saving truth at His temple, and that they would say to one another, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths" (Isa. 2:3).

II. Sanctuary Foundations

Fully one-third of the book of Exodus is devoted to the organization and construction of the Israelite

sanctuary. But Israel's national worship is not to be thought of as being an entirely new and different system. Rather, *it was a flowering or an elaboration of the ancient religion of the patriarchs.*

Two observations confirm this view:

1. Israel at Sinai entered into a covenant relationship with the same God who had made a covenant with their immediate forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 17:7-8; Ex. 6:2-8; 19:3-6), and who was earlier worshiped by their ancestors, such as Shem, his father Noah, and the preceding godly line who traced their lineage back to Adam (Gen. 5, 11).

2. The Israelite sanctuary *preserved the basic sacrifice of the patriarchal worship.* It is significant that the only sacrifice discussed in detail in the book of Exodus (other than the rituals dealing with the consecration of the priests) is the morning and evening sacrifice, more commonly known as "the continual burnt offering." (See Ex. 29:38-42.) This offering was the foundational sacrifice in the Israelite sanctuary system, and the large altar located in the court apparently derived its name from it (Ex. 30:28). The burnt offering was the common sacrifice of the patriarchs. Noah made a burnt offering from every type of clean bird and animal after his release from the ark (Gen. 8:20). Abraham was commanded to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, but eventually was able to offer a ram for "a burnt offering in the stead of his son" (Gen. 22:2-13). Job offered burnt offerings in behalf of his family; his friends also offered burnt offerings for themselves (Job 1:5, 42:8).

Thus, one important aspect of the morning and evening sacrifice—the "continual burnt offering"—made by the priests in the ancient sanctuaries of Israel was that it locked their tabernacle-temple system of worship into the religious life of Israel's forebears. The basic sacrifice of the patriarchs became the central sacrifice of the Israelite ritual.

In view of these links between patriarchal and Israelite worship, the latter may be viewed as an example of unfolding revelation. In the sanctuary we find a progression in the worship forms that in turn disclosed more fully the purpose and plan of God for the salvation of sinners.

We may infer, therefore, that God saw it was time for His people to be given further insights into the nature of the Deity, the sin problem, and the means by which He would effect reconciliation with man. New light does not nullify old light. The essentials of sacrifice and mediation seen in the patriarchal age in the form of victim and father-priest would now be elaborated upon in a new context—the tabernacle-temple sanctuary, the dwelling place of God (Ex. 25:8, 29:45-46).

Although the two apartments (holy and Most Holy) of Solomon's temple were twice the size of those in the Mosaic tabernacle, and although there

were ten lampstands and ten tables, organized groups of Levitical musicians, and a total organization of all personnel related to the sanctuary, there appears to have been no change in the basic ritual as set forth in the Mosaic directives (1 Kings 5-8; 2 Chron. 2-7; cf. 1 Chron. 22-26, 28, 29). The same seems to have been true of the subsequent temple built by Zerubbabel and rebuilt and embellished by Herod. After the revelations at Sinai, there was no further elaboration by God of the sanctuary forms and rites.

It is significant then, that the New Testament book of Hebrews does not view the sanctuary in Jerusalem in apostolic times as presenting the quintessence of the Hebrew faith. Such would have been the case if the worship conducted in Herod's temple had been considered the end-product of an evolutionary development in Israel's religion.

Instead, for spiritual meaning and understanding, the book of Hebrews centers on the tabernacle constructed in the wilderness. This is to be expected, since the bulk of the data pertaining to the Israelite sanctuary is found in the books of Moses. But it also implies that the Bible writer saw no basic change in the spiritual teaching of the Old Testament religion, whether in patriarchal, tabernacle, or later temple phases. In fact, he asserts that the same God who spoke in Old Testament times to "the fathers" now speaks "unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). *The religion of the Old and New Testaments is essentially one.*

III. The Sanctuary and its Vertical Dimensions

The Biblical records do not present Moses as the originator of the tabernacle and its rituals. In five different references the plan is described as having been divinely revealed to him on Mount Sinai (Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4). "And let them make me a sanctuary, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:8, 9, 40).

The Hebrew verb *ra'ah*, "to see," appears in all five references, and is conjugated in the causative verbal forms of the Hebrew language so that the passages just cited could be rendered, "According to all that I cause you to see" and "which you were caused to see in the mountain."

The causative form suggests that Moses was taken into a state of vision. It was normal for God to speak face to face with Moses (Num. 12:6-8), but on this occasion God apparently revealed the data concerning the building of the tabernacle and the organization of the priesthood by a vision.

This view is strengthened by the language of Num-

bers 8:4. This passage says in part, "according unto the *pattern* which the Lord *had shewed Moses*, so made he the candlestick." The Hebrew word that is here translated "pattern" is *mar'eh*, which competent lexicographers suggest should be translated in this instance as "vision." The statement would thus read, "according unto the *vision* which the Lord had shewed Moses . . ."

The Hebrew word, however, that receives the major emphasis in the divine instructions is *tabnîth*. God's initial command in Exodus 25:9, 40 reads literally, "According to all which I am causing you to see—the *pattern (tabnîth)* of the tabernacle, and the *pattern (tabnîth)* of all its articles, and thus you shall do." "And see and make by their *pattern (tabnîth)* which you were caused to see in the mountain."

Tabnîth, a feminine noun deriving from the verb *banah*, "to build," occurs 20 times in the Hebrew Bible. The term can carry the meaning of a three-dimensional model, shape, or form. For example, the "great altar" that certain of the tribes of Israel built on the banks of the Jordan is referred to as "the *pattern (tabnîth)* of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made" which stood in the courtyard of the tabernacle. (See Joshua 22:10, 28, 29.) Obviously the *tabnîth*-altar erected on the banks of the Jordan was a three-dimensional model. The golden calf worshiped at Sinai is designated in a similar manner. (Ps. 106:20; "similitude" = *tabnîth*.)

The word *tabnîth* can also mean a set of written instructions or specifications. For example, David entrusted to Solomon

the pattern [*tabnîth*] of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, and the pattern [*tabnîth*] of all that he had by the spirit of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things (1 Chron. 28:11, 12).

It is evident that David's plans were *written* specifications, rather than three-dimensional models, for he says, "All this . . . the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern" (verse 19).

In his vision Moses received verbal specifications for the tabernacle, which he recorded (Ex. 25 ff.). However, it may be inferred from the usage of *tabnîth* that he was also shown some kind of three-dimensional model of the proposed sanctuary. Ellen White confirms this in a very early statement, "He [God] presented before Moses a miniature model of the heavenly sanctuary."²

The important question, however, is not whether Moses was shown a three-dimensional model or simply architectural plans. The basic question is whether the term *tabnîth* signifies only a concept or idea in the mind of God, or whether it represents a

higher reality with objective existence, namely, a heavenly sanctuary, the primary dwelling place of the Deity.

The fact that Moses was put into a state of vision suggests that he saw more than a model. A vision would not have been necessary to simply transmit verbal instructions or display a model. For example, Moses was not taken into vision in order to receive the copy of the Decalogue on tables of stone—a law which he had heard with his normal hearing when God proclaimed it from the heights of Sinai. But if Moses was to be shown the heavenly dwelling place of God, he could only see it through a vision in such manner as God chose to represent it to his mind.

Twentieth-century archeological research has shed new light on Near Eastern thought patterns concerning heavenly-earthly relationships. The ancients saw a mythical analogical relation between the two worlds. To their thinking, Earth was simply a microcosm of the heavenly realm. Lands, rivers, and especially temples were believed to have heavenly counterparts. Although some modern scholars reject the concept that the *tabnîth* model shown to Moses reflected a heavenly reality, that is, a heavenly sanctuary, there is general recognition that it did, since this concept was so common in the prevailing culture. The earthly sanctuary was thus understood to be the counterpart of the heavenly dwelling place of God.

The Biblical evidence fully supports the view that the people of Israel were aware of the vertical dimension or link between God's heavenly abode and His earthly dwelling in the tabernacle/temple sanctuary. Some of the evidence supporting this is as follows:

1. God is often depicted as descending to earth from heaven (His permanent dwelling place) for various purposes (Gen. 11:5; 18:21; Ex. 19:11, 18, 20). When God commands the making of a sanctuary so that He could “dwell among them” (Heb. *shakan*, literally, “to tent”), the picture (in human terminology) is of God coming from His permanent home “to encamp” in a somewhat temporary manner with His people in a second dwelling.

2. While they were still on their journey from Egypt, God instructed the Israelites regarding proper worship when they would be settled in Canaan. At certain times of the year they were to assemble at the place the Lord would choose for the location of His sanctuary (Deut. 26:2). At those times they were to offer their sacrifices and rejoice before the Lord. The Lord even suggests the nature of their prayers. One line of that prayer says, “Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel” (verse 15). There was no confusion to the Hebrew mind. God was in His heavenly sanctuary dwelling and His presence was also revealed by the Shekinah glory in its counterpart, the earthly sanctuary.

3. At the building of the temple, God promised

Solomon, “I will dwell (Heb. *shakan*) among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel” (1 Kings 6:13). Later Solomon would pray, “I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever” (1 Kings 8:13).

Nevertheless, in his dedicatory prayer the king freely acknowledges the heavenly dwelling place of the Deity. “When they shall pray toward this place . . . hear thou *in heaven thy dwelling place*: and when thou hearest, forgive” (1 Kings 8:30; see also verses 39, 43, 49).

In one psalm David can pray, “But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple” (Ps. 5:7). In another psalm he affirms, “The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven” (Ps. 11:4).

4. The cherubim, depicted as three-dimensional figures on the ark and as two-dimensional figures worked into the fabric of the tabernacle's inner curtains and the veil of the Most Holy Place, reflect artistically in the earthly sanctuary the holy beings—the angels—who surround the throne of God in the heavenly courts.

5. The vertical linkage between God's heavenly sanctuary and His earthly sanctuary is definitely affirmed by the book of Hebrews. The earthly sanctuary is described as “the patterns” or copies of the heavenly reality, and its holy places were characterized as “figures of the true” (Heb. 9:23-24). It is asserted that the priests in the Israelite sanctuary served “the example [copy] and shadow” of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:4-5). Thus the earthly sanctuary is viewed in connection with the heavenly dwelling in a relationship of copy to original, of shadow to substance.

In support of this vertical line between the earthly and heavenly dwelling places of God and the typical significance of the former, the writer of Hebrews cites Exodus 25:40. (See Heb. 8:5.) He thus indicates that in his inspired understanding the *tabnîth* model shown to Moses in the mount reflected a higher reality, the heavenly dwelling place of God.

This argumentation of the book of Hebrews is confirmed by the apostle John's visions of the heavenly sanctuary. In one passage, as he speaks of the heavenly temple or sanctuary, he employs the descriptive phraseology of the ancient sanctuary. “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened” (Rev. 15:5). In that heavenly temple he saw represented to him “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne” (Rev. 4:5), probably to be understood as analogous to the seven-branched candlestick or lampstand. On two other occasions he sees “the golden altar [of incense] which was before the throne” (Rev. 8:3),

and “the ark of his testament” (Rev. 11:19).

The Biblical evidence regarding the vertical link between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries may now be summarized: (1) Moses made the original earthly sanctuary according to a model and specifications given to him by God. (2) Israel understood that the sanctuary in their midst was a counterpart of the heavenly dwelling place of God—the heavenly temple. (3) The book of Hebrews affirms that the earthly sanctuary was a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary. (4) The apostle John testifies that he saw in vision “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven.”³

Excursus: What Is the Nature of the Heavenly Sanctuary?

Over the years there has been a good deal of useless debate among some Seventh-day Adventists over the nature of the heavenly sanctuary. Mrs. White predicted that:

In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established. The enemy will bring in false theories, *such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary*. This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?⁴

What meaning did Mrs. White intend to convey by her statement that one of the false theories proposed in the end-time to distract God’s people from the truth would be “the doctrine that there is no sanctuary?” Did she mean an open denial of a literal building in heaven? Or did she mean a denial of the great truths of salvation—truths that pertained to Christ’s atoning death and priestly ministry in heaven?

The key to her meaning is found in the context of what was happening in the Adventist Church when this statement was published in the *Review and Herald*, May 25, 1905. At that time the pantheistic teachings of Dr. John H. Kellogg were being promulgated. Elder William Spicer, later to become a president of the General Conference, records an interview he had with Dr. Kellogg in 1902.

“Where is God?” I was asked [by Kellogg]. I would naturally say, He is in heaven; there the Bible pictures the throne of God, all the heavenly beings at His command as messengers between heaven and earth. But I was told that God was in the grass and plants and in the trees. . . .

“Where is heaven?” I was asked. I had my idea of the center of the universe, with heaven and the throne of God in the midst, but disclaimed any attempt to fix the center of the universe astronomically. But I was urged to understand that heaven is where God is, and God is everywhere—in the grass, in the trees, in all creation. There was no place in this scheme of things for angels going between heaven and earth, for heaven was here and everywhere. *The cleansing of the sanctuary that we taught about was not something in a faraway heaven. “The sin is here . . . [Dr. Kellogg said, pointing to his heart], and here is the sanctuary to be cleansed.”*

Dr. Kellogg’s statement plainly indicates what Ellen White had in mind when she said there would be those who would teach that “there is no sanctuary.” Ellen White was not only speaking about whether there was such a thing as a literal building in heaven, but about the bold denial of Christ’s actual priestly mediatorial ministry in heaven before God in which He pleads the merits of His sinless life and atoning death in behalf of penitent sinners.

By teaching that the individual was the sanctuary, Dr. Kellogg—and others who later espoused similar ideologies—turned the important truth of Christ’s priesthood on its head, shifting the focus away from the Saviour to the human being. The atoning sacrifice of Christ on earth and His priestly mediation in heaven are *the central features* of the salvation process. By denying the Saviour’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, Dr. Kellogg struck at foundational matters; hence, the seriousness of his denial of the sanctuary doctrine.

However, in seeking a correct understanding of the nature of Christ’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, we must be careful lest we press the matter of literal language too far. We can hardly expect a one-to-one correspondence between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. According to Genesis 1:26, 27, humankind was made “in the image of God,” but obviously man is not exactly like God, although he reflects his Creator in some aspects. In like manner the earthly sanctuaries only faintly reflect the glories of the celestial abode of Deity.

The matchless splendor of the earthly tabernacle reflected to human vision the glories of that heavenly temple where Christ our forerunner ministers for us before the throne of God. The abiding-place of the King of kings, where thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him (Daniel 7:10); that temple, filled with the glory of the eternal throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration, could find, in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands, but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory. Yet important truths concerning the heavenly sanctuary and the great work there carried forward for man’s redemption, were taught by the earthly sanctuary and its services.⁶

We must remember that when we speak about heaven and the heavenly sanctuary, we are describing celestial realities that are far beyond human comprehension. Hence, in order to communicate to us about heavenly things, God must do so through representations of those realities in human terms. The heavenly sanctuary and its activities are thus represented to the prophets in the forms of earthly types. For example, Jesus is depicted as “a Lamb as it had been slain” standing in the midst of the throne (Rev. 5:6). The Holy Spirit in His multiple roles is represented by “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne” (Rev. 4:5). The intercession of the Saviour is represented by an angel at the golden altar of incense mingling the smoke of the incense with the prayers of

God's people as they pray to Him (Rev. 8:3, 4).

It is clear from just these few examples that the importance of the celestial reality we call the heavenly sanctuary was not vested in its structures, but in what these things represent in the ongoing reality of the plan of salvation. Note further the significance Ellen White saw in the ark, the piece of furniture in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary.

In the temple in heaven, the dwelling-place of God, His throne is established in righteousness and judgment. In the most holy place is His law, the great rule of right by which all mankind are tested. The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy-seat, before which Christ pleads His blood in the sinner's behalf. *Thus is represented the union of justice and mercy in the plan of human redemption. . . .* The cherubim of the earthly sanctuary, looking reverently down upon the mercy-seat, represent the interest with which the heavenly host contemplate the work of redemption. This is the mystery of mercy into which angels desire to look,—that God can be just while He justifies the repenting sinner, and renews His intercourse with the fallen race.⁷

Mercy and justice are abstract terms. The plan of salvation is a statement, we might say, of abstract truths. The earthly sanctuaries of Israel were constructed and provided with certain furnishings and rituals that portrayed in a visible, concrete manner the various facets and aspects of the plan. They give us a *pictorial representation* of salvation realities.

The altar depicted the great atoning, substitutionary death of our Lord. The two apartments with their

rituals were not designed to teach us that the heavenly reality has two rooms or areas (though it might), but to teach us about the two great phases of Christ's priestly ministry in behalf of penitent sinners. The "structure" of either the earthly or the heavenly sanctuary reality is not the real essence of the sanctuary doctrine as taught by Seventh-day Adventists. It is what the structures represent or teach about the great moral controversy between Christ and Satan and the plan of salvation that really counts. The structures were designed to teach us spiritual truths. Let us not miss the truths for the medium!

IV. Principles of Interpretation (General and Specific)

A. General Approach

The chief problem in the study of the Israelite sanctuary is the sparseness of available data to interpret its meaning. Old Testament writers made no attempt to spell out its symbolism, apparently assuming that it was understood. There are, however, various emphases within the Old Testament accounts that give insights into the significance of the sanctuary to ancient Israel. One of these is provided by the movement and sequence of events within the book of Exodus.

The first cluster of events pertains to the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian slavery by the mighty acts of God, climaxing in Moses' song of triumph (chapters 1-15). The second cluster of events involves God's gracious leading and care of Israel in the wilderness, leading at last to Sinai and the establishment of the people as a nation in covenant relationship with Him (chapters 16-24). The third and final emphasis in the book relates to the building of the tabernacle as a suitable dwelling place for God in the midst of Israel (chapters 25-31, 35-40).

When Moses ascended the mountain to receive the tables of the law and the instructions to build the tabernacle, the watching Israelites observed that a great cloud of fiery glory covered the mountain. "The glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, . . . And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Ex. 24:16, 17). After the erection and dedication of the tabernacle the same cloud moved off the heights of Sinai and "covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Ex. 40:34).

This visible action indicated that the covenant-keeping God had entered into habitation with His people.

The movement of the book of Exodus, like a grand orchestral symphony, comes to its finale with God dwelling in visible union with His redeemed people. The migration from Egypt has moved toward this

Picture Removed

Above: The interior of the Mosaic tabernacle, showing the holy place and Most Holy Place with their furnishings. Below: The exterior of the tabernacle and courtyard.

end. God Himself states this as the reason for the divine mission to rescue Israel from slavery: "I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God" (Ex. 29:45, 46).

The significance of the divine purpose is further heightened when we recall that the sin of Adam and Eve had fractured the relationship between God and man. The assertion of their independence had resulted in their banishment from Eden, estrangement from God, and the dissolving of their former intimate fellowship with Him.

Here the Lord is promising to dwell among His people again:

I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright (Lev. 26:11-13).

Thus we see that first there was the miraculous deliverance from slavery, and then the establishment of an intimate fellowship between God and His redeemed ones. The visible sanctuary system thus served to call Israel's attention to God's endeavors to effect a reconciliation with human beings.

The Scriptures make it clear that God intended ancient Israel to catch the spiritual overtones that accompanied His physical acts of mercy. For example, God's gracious act in supplying manna was designed to teach Israel more than the simple fact of His care. Moses interpreted the spiritual meaning in this manner: "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live" (Deut. 8:3).

For this reason the great events of the exodus from Egypt—God's marvelous deliverance from slavery—were commemorated in the Israelite sanctuary rituals by the festivals of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Ex. 12:24-28, 34, 39; Deut. 16:3; Lev. 23:40-43).

Exodus history was transformed into human experience again and again as generations of Israelites relived the events through which their fathers passed and contemplated their significance. Some no doubt caught the deeper import of the Exodus—spiritual deliverance from the slavery of sin through union with God and the freedom that resulted from living in harmony with His will. The historical Exodus experience became the pattern for the saving acts of God. Ultimately the redeemed—home at last—will cause the vaults of heaven to ring with the trium-

phant notes of "the song of Moses, . . . and the song of the Lamb" (Rev. 15:3).

The Israelite sanctuary was intended to emphasize visibly a thrilling truth—the presence of the living God was among His people in a unique and intimate way!

Israel's religious debacle at Sinai (Ex. 32-34) was partly a result of the nation's desire to have a constant visual token of the presence of the God whom they worshiped. The sanctuaries of Israel served to give them that assurance. Although God cannot be comprehended by man or confined to man-made sanctuaries, He may be said to dwell within such buildings by means of the revelations of Himself that He gives either to the senses or the inner spirit of the worshiper, or both. In the tabernacle with its cloud of glory, God revealed Himself to the worshiping Israelites both sensibly (they could see the cloud) and spiritually (as the Spirit impressed their hearts).

And yet there was a certain incompleteness and inadequacy. Although God was present, no face-to-face communion with Israel could take place. There was still a barrier. God could be approached by animal blood and incense—but only through the mediation of a special person, the priest. Hangings and walls excluded the common person from the inner apartments, and even the high priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place but once a year.

The inadequacy of the sanctuary service to provide free and open union with the Deity must have suggested to the spiritual-minded Israelite that God intended something better to come; indeed, something better would have to come if the presence of God was ever to be realized in a direct and open manner.

B. Specific Approach

Confusion about the purpose and meaning of the Israelite sanctuary and its significance for Christian experience has resulted from the employment of wrong principles of interpretation. As we have noted earlier, the Old Testament writers make no attempt to explain the sanctuary symbolism. Therefore, the subject has become a fruitful field for fertile imaginations to develop a variety of fanciful concepts.

One person will argue that the sanctuary was obviously intended to teach the incarnation of the Son of God, asserting that the holy place portrays His humanity, and the Most Holy Place, His deity. Another—reflecting Kellogg and A. T. Jones, whom he influenced—will teach that the sanctuary represents the Christian himself: The court stands for his body; the holy place represents his conscious mind; and the Most Holy Place symbolized his subconscious mind. And from this model a whole scenario of end-time events is created. Although the Bible does compare the Christian to a temple, the Scrip-

tures do not attempt to impose the significance of the sanctuary service upon the individual. Rather, this service relates to the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary in the presence of God.

Other persons assume that the sanctuary represents stages of Christian experience: The court stands for justification; the holy place, for sanctification; and the Most Holy Place, for perfection. These interpretations of the sanctuary symbolism—and other ideas that could be added—have one thing in common: no direct Biblical support for their suppositions. It is easy to read into symbols a wide range of ideas. However, in order to be sure of the true import of the sanctuary rituals, we must derive sound principles of interpretation from the Scriptures themselves.

Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel's message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work.⁸

The Central Subject of the Sanctuary System

We have noted above that the establishment of the sanctuary in Israel emphasized the restoration of the fellowship and communion between God and His people that had been interrupted by the entrance of sin. This is a work of grace in which the sanctuary and its rituals were to have a teaching function.

The writer to the Hebrews is very forthright about this teaching function of the ancient tabernacle-sanctuary. Early in his epistle he warns his Jewish-Christian hearers against following in the footsteps of their unbelieving ancestors in the exodus from Egypt (Heb. 3:7-19). He continues with these words:

Let us [Jewish-Christians] therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us [Jewish-Christians] was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [the Jews in the exodus]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it (Heb. 4:1, 2).

This is an important insight. The gospel—the good news of salvation from sin through a divine Redeemer, or in broader terms, God's plan of salvation—is the same whether before or after the cross. It has the same God, the same moral law (the Ten Commandments) that expresses His will, the same sin problem, and the same Redeemer, “for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). The only difference between the patriarchs' and Israel's religion and Biblical Christianity is that the former portrayed the plan of salvation in symbols, whereas the latter teaches the reality of God's saving event in history.

Thus it is clearly evident from this statement in Hebrews that *the overall subject of the Israelite sanctuary ritual is the gospel or plan of salvation*. The substitutionary sacrifices of animals and the mediation of their blood portrayed basic aspects of God's plan to save sinners. These two points are stressed in the book of Hebrews. The author compared (1) the blood of animal sacrifices with the better blood of Christ's sacrifice on the cross (Heb. 9:11-14), and (2) the Levitical priesthood with Christ's better priesthood (Heb. 8:1, 2). Here are pertinent statements from the pen of Ellen White on this point:

The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols. *The gospel is the key that unlocks its mysteries. Through a knowledge of the plan of redemption, its truths are opened to the understanding.*⁹

The types of the Jewish economy are made plain by the gospel.¹⁰

The sanctuary in heaven . . . opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin.¹¹

From the creation and fall of man to the present time, there has been a continual unfolding of the plan of God for the redemption, through Christ, of the fallen race. The tabernacle and temple of God on earth were patterned after the original in heaven. *Around the sanctuary and its solemn services mystically gathered the grand truths which were to be developed through succeeding generations.*¹²

Two Keys to Guide in Sanctuary Interpretation

The question naturally arises, What relationship do the sanctuary rituals have to this large subject of the plan of salvation? The Bible suggests two keys that can assist us in correctly interpreting sanctuary symbolism.

1. *The Israelite sanctuary is described as a parable.* Speaking of the function of the tabernacle-temple sanctuary in pre-Christian times, the writer to the Hebrews says, “Which was a *figure [parabolē]* for the time then present . . . until the time of reformation [Christ's first advent]” (Heb. 9:9-10).

The Greek word translated in the King James Version as “figure” is *parabolē* from which we derive our English term, *parable*. God designed the sanctuary system to function as a great ritual parable to illustrate the basic truths of the plan of salvation. Therefore, in interpreting the sanctuary symbolism, it is important for us to understand the nature of a parable.

A parable is literally what is “placed beside something.” We place a parable—perhaps a story—beside an abstract truth in order to illustrate that truth, clarify it, and thereby fasten that truth in the mind more effectively. Usually parables or illustrations are told to clarify one fundamental point. Unlike an allegory, the details of a parable do not have significance. They simply round out the story and serve to contribute to the major point being made. Furthermore, the parable-illustration must itself be

understood in terms of the truth it is designed to portray.

The Hebrew sanctuary parable is a complex parable designed to illustrate several clear-cut truths that make up the plan of salvation. But we must let Scripture point out these truths so that we do not get lost in the myriad details of the ritual parable that have no real significance in spiritual terms but serve only to round out the ritual "story."

Since the sanctuary parable was given to illustrate the gospel or plan of salvation, its symbols must clearly then be studied in the light of the Bible statements that deal with various aspects of that plan. Thus, the sanctuary symbolism will illustrate and illumine the plan; but in turn it will also be illumined and clarified by the truths of that plan presented throughout the Bible.

2. *The Israelite sanctuary is described as a shadow-type.* God's instructions and legislation governing the sanctuary and its system of rituals may be summed up as "the ceremonial law." As a body of instruction it is referred to as "the law having a *shadow* [Gk. *skia*] of good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). The priests in the sanctuary were said to "serve unto the example [copy] and *shadow* [Gk. *skia*] of heavenly things [that is, the heavenly sanctuary and the priestly ministry of Christ]" (Heb. 8:5).

The term *skia* means a "shadow" or, as in these passages, it carries the idea of "foreshadowing." We generally designate these ritual "shadows" as *types*. A dictionary definition of *type* is "a person or thing regarded as the symbol of someone or something that is yet to appear." Types are, therefore, like prophecies. Instead of being embodied in words, the sanctuary shadow-types were prophecies embodied in rituals which *foreshadowed*—"foretold"—the coming death of Jesus and His priestly ministry in heaven.

Here again, shadow-types can be subject to a variety of interpretations, but we may be guarded from misapplications of both sanctuary symbols and types if we study them in the clear light of the plan of salvation as taught throughout the Scriptures. There is a two-way exchange here: The symbols and types help us understand salvation truth, and, conversely, salvation truth helps us understand the significance of the symbols and types. If we follow this procedure, we will find that the symbols and types of the Israelite sanctuary system do not teach anything that is not taught in the Scriptures regarding the plan of salvation.

Could a person then find salvation in Christ without a knowledge of the Hebrew sanctuary? Of course. Why then study these ancient symbols? We could answer this by asking another question. Could an individual make a living with only an eighth-grade or a high-school education? Yes. Why then should

we encourage him to go to college or vocational school? Simply because further education can greatly enrich and enhance his life and happiness. Likewise, the study of God's salvation truths cast in the form of parable and type can greatly enrich our insights and understanding of the plan of salvation and the great God who proposed it at infinite cost to Himself.

A careful, reflective study of the Hebrew sanctuary system will lead the Christian to a more intelligent faith and will focus his attention upon the living Christ in heaven. In the heavenly sanctuary he will recognize the command center for the plan of redemption. It is there that his Lord ministers the merits of His sinless life and atoning death and guides the destiny of the church and the world. There as an anchor for his soul is Jesus Christ, his High Priest, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God. He lives "to make intercession" in their behalf (Heb. 7:25).

V. Three-point Focus of the Sanctuary Parable

The plan of salvation was laid by the Godhead "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:3-14). When Adam and Eve toppled the human family into the treacherous currents of sin, no calloused or surprised Godhead speculated on the pros and cons of rescue or questioned the cost. "The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam."¹³ Before time began, the rescue operation had been carefully devised by a loving and concerned Godhead. Grounded in grace (2 Tim. 1:9), the plan was a divine secret (Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7), locked deep in the heart of the Deity until the terrible possibility of transgression and rebellion by free moral agents became a reality.

The central provision of that plan was and is the atoning, substitutionary death of God the Son who by His incarnation adopted our humanity and as the God-man became the representative Head of the human family. As the "second Adam" (Rom. 5:14, last part), He could rightfully bear the liabilities—the sins—of His human children and expiate them by His death. Peter pointed to this provision in these words:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you (1 Pet. 1:18-20).

From a survey of the Scriptures we may infer the four basic goals of the plan envisions: (1) To clear the character of God from Satan's charges, (2) To secure the loyalty of the unfallen universe to God's authority, (3) To accomplish the salvation of sinful human beings who will respond to its offer, (4) To destroy

Satan, his associate evil angels, impenitent sinners, and all the effects of sin, thereby bringing moral harmony once again to the universe.

It is important to note in this brief statement about the plan of salvation that *all* facets of it (and not merely final judgment) are carried out for the sake of—that is, for the understanding of—the created intelligent beings under God’s government. Being omniscient, God knows the nature of sin and rebellion against His will and what will be the results. But He has permitted sin to rise and the plan of salvation to operate that He might draw His creation into agreement with His judgment on sin and the principle of self-centeredness on which it rests.

Angels desire to study intently the issues and God’s resolution of those issues (see 1 Peter 1:10-12). Principalities and powers in heavenly places are gaining insights into the mind and wisdom of God as they see the gospel at work in the church (Eph. 3:8-11). They follow the career of Satan as well (Rev. 12:9, 10, 12), and they will be present at the judgment (Dan. 7:9, 10).

The sanctuary parable has three basic emphases that illustrate the steps the Godhead has taken to resolve the sin problem so as to achieve the four major objectives noted above. These main thrusts of the parable are (1) substitutionary sacrifice, (2) priestly mediation, and (3) final judgment. We now move to a discussion of these three areas of concern as they relate to both the types of the ancient sanctuary and the Antitype or reality realized in Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice and High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

A. Substitutionary Sacrifice

One thing that strikes a modern reader as strange is the Old Testament’s heavy emphasis upon sacrificial blood. In addition to the public morning and evening ritual, other sacrifices represented different emphases in the Israelites’ approach to God, such as worship, confession of sin, dedication, cleansings from ritual defilement, and expressions of thanksgiving. But all sacrifices had one thing in common: the shedding of blood.

What did shed blood signify? God explained the matter to Israel:

The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. . . . For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: . . . for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof (Lev. 17:11, 14).

The passage is clear. The blood of the sacrifice symbolized its life. Shed blood simply meant a life given—a life laid down. Since the blood of the sacrifice was shed and mediated by the priest in behalf of the worshiper, it is clear that God intended by these acts to foreshadow the substitutionary atoning death

of the coming Redeemer. As the writer to the Hebrews affirms, “Without shedding of blood is no remission [that is, forgiveness]” (Heb. 9:22).

Thus every sacrifice, whether offered in the public daily or yearly rituals or as a private offering, foreshadowed Calvary and the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Every dying victim was a type of Christ, which lesson was impressed on mind and heart in the most solemn, sacred ceremony, and explained definitely by the priests. Sacrifices were explicitly planned by God Himself to teach this great and momentous truth, that through the blood of Christ alone there is forgiveness of sins.¹⁴

The sacrifices of the ancient altar and the cross that they foreshadowed were intended to teach God’s people a number of interrelated truths about the death of the Redeemer.

1. Through every dying victim the penitent sinner was reminded that he lived in a moral universe, that justice and judgment are foundational to the divine government as well as mercy and truth. (See Ps. 89:14.) In the government of God, sin and rebellion cannot be winked at or ignored. The universe is secure only if God is just. The penalty for sin must be enforced. Imagine the instability of any nation whose judicial system ceased to punish transgressors! The apostle Paul declares that the death of Christ, who bore the penalty of the world’s sin upon Himself, has shown God’s justice in dealing with the sin problem (Rom. 3:25-26).

Through disobedience Adam fell. The law of God had been broken. The divine government had been dishonored, and justice demanded that the penalty of transgression be paid.¹⁵

Had God pardoned Adam’s sin without an atonement, sin would have been immortalized, and would have been perpetuated with a boldness that would have been without restraint.¹⁶

Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man’s stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon.¹⁷

At the cross justice was satisfied.¹⁸

2. In every dying victim was seen God’s judgment on sin. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). A holy God cannot take transgression lightly, for sin is a deep-seated rebellion against all that is good, noble, and true. Sin must be eradicated if there is again to be harmony in the universe. The principle of self-seeking or self-centeredness is incompatible with the outgoing principle of self-sacrificing love. Because they cannot exist in harmony, God’s judgment on sin is separation and death.

3. Every dying victim foreshadowed Calvary’s great Substitute. “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).

4. Every dying victim foreshadowed the great

truth that it is God, and not man, who provides the atoning sacrifice. *The Godhead take their judgment on sin upon themselves.* "God hath set forth [Christ Jesus] to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). "For he [God] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed."¹⁹

5. Every dying victim illustrated the truth that forgiveness, and the resulting reconciliation with God, could be received by faith alone. (Compare Rom. 4:4-8; Heb. 9:15.) Any spiritually minded Israelite knew that it was "not possible" for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Heb. 10:4). True forgiveness and acceptance could be had only through faith in what the sacrifice symbolized—the coming Redeemer.

A corollary to the principle of substitution taught in every sacrifice is the transference of accountability. The class of sacrifices commonly designated "sin offerings" stressed this concept. (See Lev. 4.) The penitent sinner laid his hand upon the head of the offering and confessed his wrongs. In some instances the blood of the sin offering was placed on the horns of the golden altar and sprinkled on the inner veil (Lev. 4:6, 7, 17, 18). In other instances, the blood was placed on the horns of the altar in the court, and the priest ate part of the flesh (Lev. 6:25, 26, 30).

The following rule was established: If the blood was sprinkled within the sanctuary, the flesh of the sacrifice was not eaten; if the blood was not thus administered, then a portion of the sacrificial flesh was eaten by the priest. The participants understood that either rite represented a transference of accountability from the penitent sinner to the sanctuary and its priesthood.

On one occasion, when there had been a failure to carry out the prescribed ritual of a certain sin offering, Moses asked the priests, "Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord?" (Lev. 10:17). This indicates that sins confessed on the head of a sin offering were understood by Moses to be transferred in figure from the penitent to the sacrifice and in turn to the priesthood. The confessed sins of Israel were specified as being removed from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, which offers further evidence of this principle of transference (Lev. 16:20-22).

In this ritual parable *the sanctuary assumed the penitent's guilt and accountability*—for the time

being at least—when the penitent offered a sin offering, confessing his errors. He went away forgiven, assured of God's acceptance. So, in the antitypical experience, when a sinner is drawn in penitence by the Holy Spirit to accept Christ as his Saviour and Lord, *Christ assumes his sins and accountability.*²⁰ He is freely forgiven. Christ is the believer's Surety as well as his Substitute.

The student of the Hebrew sanctuary is soon impressed with the fact that there is a good deal of overlap in the ritual. However, each facet adds another insight to this remarkable portrayal of the plan of salvation. We mentioned near the beginning of this article that the main patriarchal offering—the burnt offering—was retained as the central and foundational sacrifice in the sanctuary service. It was offered morning and evening on the great altar, but it was arranged in such a manner as to be continuously burning 24 hours a day (Ex. 29:38-42; Lev. 6:9, 12, 13).

The continuously burning sacrifice of the daily public offering assured the penitent Israelite of the constant availability of God's forgiving grace through the merits of the coming Redeemer. Regardless of time—night or day—he might in faith look to this sacrifice offered for him. If he were sick, lived at a distance from Jerusalem, or in a foreign land, his faith could still reach out to the promise symbolized in the continual burnt offering.

This daily public offering teaches us likewise that forgiveness and acceptance with God through the merits of Christ are always available—only a prayer away. The divine business of salvation is never closed at five p.m. or on holidays!

As the writer to the Hebrews has pointed out, the sacrifices of the sanctuary system were repetitive (Heb. 10:1). They could not in themselves accomplish anything. Like a story, this ritual parable of redemption was "told and retold" year after year. By contrast, the Antitype—the actual atoning death of our Lord—took place at Calvary *once for all time* (Heb. 9:26-28; 10:10-14).

On the cross the penalty for human sin was fully paid. Divine justice was satisfied. From a legal perspective, the world was restored to favor with God (Rom. 5:18). Therefore, in one sense we can speak of the atonement or reconciliation completed on the cross as foreshadowed by the sacrifices. The penitent believer can trust in this finished work of our Lord.

B. Priestly Mediation

In patriarchal worship the symbolism centered on the sacrifice. In the Israelite sanctuary the emphasis was extended to the priesthood and its handling of the sacrificial blood. Why this enlarged emphasis? Why the necessity for a priest if sin was completely

atoned for in the sacrifice? What insight into the plan of salvation did God thus seek to clarify?

In the religion of both patriarch and Israelite, the shedding of blood symbolized a life given, *a life laid down in behalf of another*. The blood “spoke” of expiation and forgiveness. But another aspect of the process of reconciliation was accentuated in the office of the priest: the need for mediation between God and man.

The ministry of a priesthood stresses the seriousness of sin, the sharp cleavage it has made between heaven and humanity, and the ugliness of the estrangement between holy Creator and sinful creature. Just as every sacrifice foreshadowed Christ’s death, so every priest foreshadowed Christ’s mediatorial ministry as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

Although the sanctuary was located in the midst of Israel, its arrangement excluded even the most spiritual Israelite from a direct approach into God’s presence. A penitent sinner might bring his sacrifice and slay it, but he could receive no forgiveness until the priest mediated in his behalf and sprinkled the blood in the appropriate place before the Lord. He needed the priest to represent him to God and apply the merits of the sacrifice.

This mediatorial ministry of the priest—this application of sacrificial blood—was also viewed by the Israelites as a form of atonement. “And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and . . . the priest shall burn [the fat] upon the altar, . . . and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev. 4:34, 35).

The English term *atonement* carries the idea of a reconciliation between two estranged parties. Just as the atoning death of Christ (in a legal sense) reconciled the world to God, just so the mediation, or application, of the merits of His sinless life and substitutionary death makes reconciliation with God, or atonement, a personal reality to the penitent believer.

The writer of Hebrews clearly indicates that the Levitical priesthood foreshadowed the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ in the presence of God. The focus is on the living Christ “who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2).

Furthermore, the sanctuary in heaven is seen not simply as the dwelling place of Deity, but as the great center of redemptive activity because of Christ’s priestly ministry. For “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” (Heb.

7:25). “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. . . . Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:15, 16).

Our Lord’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary can be seen more clearly by examining the Israelite sanctuary “parable” that prefigured it (compare Heb. 8:4, 5). On earth the priests engaged in two distinctive divisions of ministry—a daily and a yearly—each characterized by certain specific rituals. The daily service and ministry related to the holy place, whereas the yearly related to the Most Holy Place as well.

Holy Place: The priestly ministry carried on in connection with this first apartment of the sanctuary (earthly or heavenly) may be characterized as a ministry of forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration. It was a continuous ministry. Access to God was always available through the priest. The odor of continuously burning incense (Ex. 30:8) arose from the golden altar. There was the never-failing light of the golden candlestick (Ex. 27:20), and the bread was always present before the Lord on the golden table (Ex. 25:30). These typical persons and articles foreshadowed various facets of Christ’s unceasing priestly ministry in the presence of God for us. We should survey their meaning in brief:

The earthly priest foreshadowed the truth of the penitent’s immediate and continual access to God through the priestly ministry of Christ (Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25; 9:24; 10:19-22). His work represented that of Christ, who applies the merits of His sinless life and atoning death to those who seek reconciliation with God (Rom. 8:34). As our Advocate, Jesus does not plead our innocence; rather, He pleads the benefits of His atonement (1 John 2:1, 2).

While probation lasts, divine forgiveness through Christ (typified by the ever-burning sacrifice) is ever available—both at the beginning of the Christian experience and along the way (Acts 5:31; 1 John 1:7). The golden altar of incense underscored again the continual intercession of Christ in behalf of those who are drawn to God (Heb. 7:25; 9:24). The seven-branched candlestick or lampstand denotes the continual operation of the Holy Spirit who is mediated to us through Christ (Rev. 4:5; Titus 3:4-6). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about conviction, conversion, and transformation of heart. It is His activity that brings about character growth and the restoration of the “image of God” within (John 16:8; 3:3-8; Gal. 5:22, 23; Col. 3:10). The bread symbolized spiritual food, which is provided through Christ’s mediatorial work for the believer’s growth and maturation (Matt. 6:11).

It will be observed that the first apartment ministry in both the type and Antitype is primarily *individual-*

centered. Provision is made through Christ's priestly ministry for the sinner's forgiveness and reconciliation to God (Heb. 7:25). For Christ's sake God forgives the repentant sinner, imputes to him the righteous character and obedience of His Son, pardons his sins, and records his name in the book of life as one of His children (Eph. 4:32; 1 John 1:9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:24; Luke 10:20). And as the believer abides in Christ, spiritual grace is mediated to him by our Lord through the Holy Spirit so that he matures spiritually and develops the virtues and graces that reflect the divine character (2 Pet. 3:18, Gal. 5:22, 23).

It can easily be seen from this brief survey that the daily priestly ministry, in connection with the first apartment in both the type and Antitype, really represents the experience of the believer in terms of his justification and sanctification. This is the objective of this facet of Christ's priestly ministry of forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration. Though He will assume another aspect of ministry typified by the rituals related to the second apartment, He never ceases the kind of ministry discussed above until probation closes.

C. Final Judgment

Most Holy Place: The yearly service—the second distinctive division of priestly ministry in the sanctuary parable—occurred only one day each year. Known as the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), it was a most solemn time, to be observed with fasting, prayer, and confession (Lev. 23:28-32).

The Day of Atonement ritual is the only one in the Israelite sanctuary that directly involved the ministry of the high priest in the Most Holy Place. It should be noted that this second apartment ministry was primarily *sanctuary-centered*. "And when he [the high priest] hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, [in this chapter *holy place* refers to the second apartment], and the tabernacle of the congregation [first apartment], and the altar [in the court], he shall bring the live goat" (Lev. 16:20).

The daily ritual involved the cleansing of the individual; the yearly involved the cleansing of the sanctuary (with the individual being indirectly involved). The Day of Atonement ritual looked beyond Calvary, although it was made possible by Calvary. It looked beyond the salvation of the individual to the final resolution of the sin problem; that is, it encompassed in its symbolism the final eradication and banishment of sin and Satan from the universe.

The Day of Atonement was the set time for the removal of the sins that had been figuratively transferred from penitent sinners to the sanctuary through the blood or flesh of the sacrifices offered throughout the previous year (Lev. 16:15-22). This final disposition of sin in the sanctuary parable left

the sanctuary and camp ritually clean and clearly foreshadowed the final judgment. This fact is evident because the final judgment, in the plan of salvation, eradicates sin, the devil, and all the effects of transgression from the earth and the universe. It may be said, therefore, that the Day of Atonement ritual foreshadowed the final application of the merits of Christ to banish the presence of sin for all eternity and to accomplish the full reconciliation of the universe into one harmonious government under God.

Final judgment completes God's eternal purpose: "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:10).

The distinctive feature of the Day of Atonement ritual centered on two goats—the "Lord's goat" and the "scapegoat" (the word translates the Hebrew term, *azazel*, and was coined to refer to the goat that "escaped" into the wilderness).

A special sprinkling of the blood of the Lord's goat in the two apartments and court of the sanctuary led to the priestly act of transferring all the sins to the head of the live goat (scapegoat) which was then banished into the wilderness, with both goat and sin forever removed from the camp (Lev. 16:15-22).

As far back as the second century A.D., some Christians held that both the scapegoat and the Lord's goat in this ritual symbolized Christ (Epistle of Barnabas, 7:6 ff.). However, three facts suggest a different identification for the scapegoat:

1. The scapegoat was not slain as a sacrifice. It could not, therefore, have been used as a means of bringing forgiveness. For "without shedding of blood," there is no remission or forgiveness of sin (Heb. 9:22).

2. The sanctuary was entirely cleansed by the blood of the Lord's goat before the scapegoat was introduced into the ritual (Lev. 16:20).

3. The passage treats the scapegoat as a personal being, the opposite of, and opposed to, God. The passage describing the selection of these goats by lot reads literally, "One lot to/for Yahweh and one lot to/for Azazel" (Lev. 16:8). Since *Yahweh* is the name for a personal Being, in this case God, it is reasonable to infer that *Azazel* also designates a personal being, the enemy of God. Therefore, in the setting of the sanctuary parable, it is more consistent to see the Lord's goat as a symbol of Christ and the scapegoat, that is, *Azazel*, as a symbol of Satan.

Thus, the Day of Atonement ritual of the scapegoat points beyond Calvary, beyond the simple forgiveness of sin through faith in Christ. The significance of this year-end ritual was its foreshadowing of the final resolution of the sin problem and

the banishment of sin and Satan. The doctrinal views of many Christians do not provide any resolution of the sin issue. They believe that their salvation is fully accomplished at the cross and that they escape the human predicament by death, entering heaven at that time by virtue of their saved immortal souls. The popular idea is that the devils will stoke the fires of hell and eternally torment the lost. Christ dies but Satan and sin live on!

But in the rituals of the Day of Atonement Seventh-day Adventists see portrayed the deliberate and rational movements of the Deity to resolve the rebellion of sin and, in a just way, punish the originator and those who have joined with him. In the final judgment foreshadowed in this particular ritual, the *ultimate effects* of Calvary will be seen. (Compare Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8.)

The throne of God, represented by the sanctuary, and those persons who have placed their trust in Him through the merits of Christ, will be cleared. Full accountability for sin will be rolled back upon Satan, its originator and instigator. Satan, his followers, and all the effects of sin, will be banished from the universe by destruction. Atonement by judgment will, therefore, bring about a fully reconciled and harmonious universe (Eph. 1:10). This is the objective and end result of the second and final phase of Christ's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. We may, therefore, call Christ's second phase of priestly ministry (as represented by the second apartment, the Most Holy Place) a *ministry of judgment and vindication*.

The total concept of final judgment is enfolded within the typical Day of Atonement ritual just as an oak is enfolded within an acorn. This can be easily seen by examining Figure 1. The three parts of the typical sequence—(1) the removal of sin from the sanctuary, (2) the banishment of the scapegoat to the wilderness, and (3) the clean camp—are analogous to the three phases of final judgment as explained elsewhere in the Scriptures.

The removal of sin from the sanctuary relates to the great pre-Advent judgment in heaven prior to Christ's return (Dan. 7-9, 12). This investigative phase focuses on the names recorded in the Book of Life just as the Day of Atonement focused on the removal of the confessed sins of the penitent from the sanctuary. False believers will be sifted out; the faith of true believers and their union with Christ will be reaffirmed before the loyal universe, and the records of their sins will be blotted out.

The banishment of the scapegoat to the wilderness is analogous to Satan's millennial imprisonment on this ruined earth as a second phase of final judgment takes place in heaven (Rev. 20:4; 1 Cor. 6:1-3). We may term this aspect a "review" phase of final judgment. Such a "review" will benefit the redeemed, giving them an opportunity to understand more fully the issues in the great moral controversy that has wracked the universe for so long. It will satisfy all their questions regarding the fairness and mercy of God.

Finally, the clean sanctuary and camp is analogous to the results of the executive phase of final judgment in which impenitent sinners will also be led to understand the issues, the rightness of God, and the true nature of their rebellion. The executive judgment

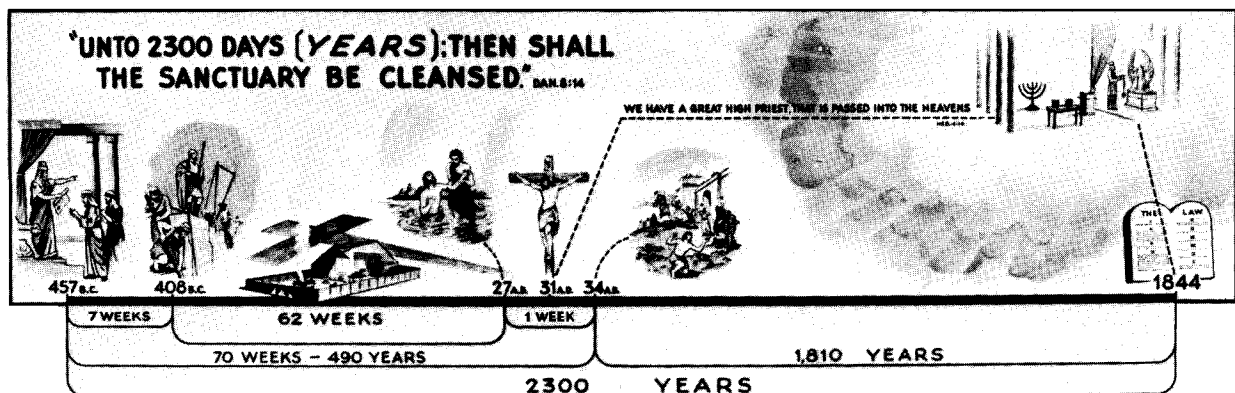
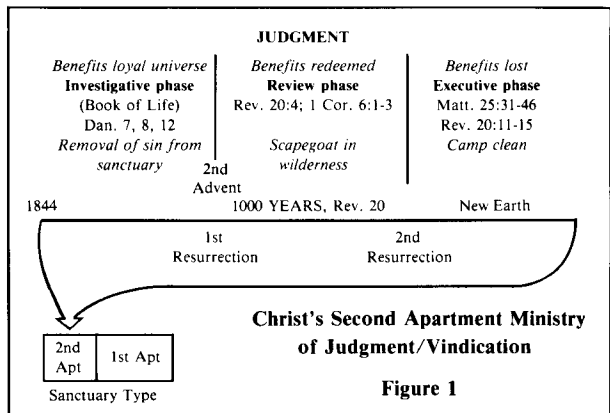


Figure 2. Daniel 8-9 Time Detail.

phase results in the just punishment and final destruction of the impenitent and a cleansing of the earth by fire (Rev. 20:11-15; Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Pet. 3:7-13).

The plan of salvation has been laid so carefully, so comprehensively and fairly that the universe of intelligent beings—whether loyal and unfallen, redeemed, or lost—will ultimately confess in the final judgment that God is right and true in all His dealings, and that Satan and his accusations and those who have joined in with his rebellion—angel or human—are wrong. “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11).

VI. The Heavenly Sanctuary and Prophecy

Through the illuminating insights of Bible prophecy, particularly the prophecies of Daniel 7-9 and 12, those important saving acts of God registered on the grid of the sanctuary parable come alive with a *time dynamic*.

The “70 weeks” of the prophecy recorded in Daniel 9:24-27 accurately foretold the time for the appearance of the Messiah. Furthermore, this basic prophecy focused on two important facets of His mission: His atoning death and His entrance into the heavenly sanctuary in priestly ministry. (See Figure 2.)

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city,” the angel Gabriel explained to Daniel, “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy” (Dan. 9:24).

Following historicist principles of interpretation in which a day in symbolic prophecy is equated to a year of literal time (cf. Num. 14:34; Eze. 4:6), we arrive at a period of 490 years allotted to Israel (70 weeks × 7 days = 490 days or years). This period of Jewish history—both in preparation for and in experiencing its climactic events—could have been the nation’s finest hour. The time for the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah was being spelled out.

The angel continued: “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks” (Dan. 9:25). Counting this sequence of 69 weeks, or 483 years, from the decree of Artaxerxes I in 457 B.C. (the decree that gave the fullest possible restoration to the Jewish state, according to Ezra 7:11-26) brings one down to A.D. 27—the time of the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit at His baptism and the official entrance upon His Messianic mission. (Compare Acts 10:38; John

1:32-34; Isa. 61:1, 2; cf. Luke 4:16-21.)

But the prophecy moved on to speak of the Messiah’s death. He would be “cut off, but not for himself” (Dan. 9:26). He would confirm the covenant made with Israel in the last prophetic week, but “in the midst of the week he [would] cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (verse 27).

After a short ministry of three and one-half years, our Lord was crucified. The great inner veil of the temple was torn in two at the moment of His death, signifying that the sacrifices of the ancient ritual had met their Antitype in the Saviour’s atoning death (Matt. 27:50, 51). By His supreme sacrifice at Calvary, Christ obtained the right to “make an end of sins.” There He made “reconciliation for iniquity” and brought in “everlasting righteousness” (Dan. 9:24).

The 70-week prophecy also pointed to the beginning of Christ’s priestly ministry as foretold in the last phrase of verse 24: “to anoint the most Holy.” The Hebrew phrase, so translated, is never used in the Old Testament to describe a person; rather, it is consistently used in connection with the sanctuary. Consequently, it would be more in harmony with the Scriptures to translate the phrase to read: “to anoint a most holy place” as the Revised Standard Version renders it.

When the Israelite sanctuary was first erected, it was anointed with holy oil to consecrate it for God’s service. Something analogous to this appears to be alluded to here. Since the items listed in verse 24 pertain largely to Christ’s redemptive work on earth, it is reasonable to see in this phrase a prophetic reference to the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary when, at His ascension, Christ was enthroned at the right hand of God as our High Priest and began His intercessory ministry. Indeed, this is the subject of the book of Hebrews (Heb. 8:1, 2; cf. Acts 2:33; 5:31; Rom. 8:34). Thus, the year of our Saviour’s death and resurrection becomes also the year when He began His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

But the 70-week prophecy, which focused on the appearance, death, and inauguration of Christ’s priestly ministry in heaven, is only the first part of a longer prophecy. A careful study of Daniel 8 and 9 indicates that the angel Gabriel intended his remarks in chapter 9 to be a clarification of the unexplained time period in chapter 8: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:14). Starting from the same point as the 70 weeks (457 B.C.), this longer span reaches across many centuries to A.D. 1844.

But what does the cleansing of the sanctuary signify? The answer is solemnly spelled out in the parallel prophecy of Daniel 7.

Although we have, for brevity’s sake, approached

the prophecies of Daniel in reverse, it is generally conceded that the four main lines of prophecy—chapters 2, 7, 8-9, 10-12—are parallel and that each succeeding prophecy elaborates upon the earlier ones. It may be helpful at this point, therefore, to take an overview of these chapters. Such a survey will answer the question we have just raised. The reader is invited to study the brief line chart that sketches the lines of prophecy in Daniel 2, 7-9. (See Figure 3.)

Daniel 2 and 7. The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent the same world empires denoted by the four metals of the image in Daniel 2: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. Both the ten toes of the image and the ten horns of the fourth beast represent the nations of western Europe into which Rome was divided. Two new features are added in Daniel 7 that are not found in chapter 2. The first is the rise and career of the little horn with the eyes and mouth of a man (representing the papacy). The second is the scene of the pre-Advent judgment in heaven.

After Daniel was shown human organizations struggling to gain political and religious dominion on earth, the scene dramatically shifted to heaven. Daniel saw the heavenly court convene. God the Father, described as “the Ancient of days” surrounded by myriads of holy angels, sat upon a fiery throne. “The judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Dan. 7:10). Then the attention of the prophet was drawn to “one like the Son of man” who (at the close of this judgment) was presented before the eternal Judge to be awarded rightful authority over the earth and an eternal kingdom. The one “like the Son of Man” spoken of here is none other than Jesus Christ.

Daniel 8 and 9. The new features in Daniel 8, not mentioned in either Daniel 2 or 7, are the divine announcement of the time when the heavenly court of judgment would begin its work, and the attack of the little horn upon the heavenly Prince, His sanctuary, and His people.

As Daniel viewed the desolating work of the little horn depicted in this particular vision, he heard two holy beings talking. One asked, “How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” (verse 13). The second holy personage replied that it would be 2300 days (or years), and then the sanctuary would be cleansed or restored (verse 14). This reply reveals that God has set some definite limits to the time that iniquity can prevail.

It will be immediately noted that the angel Gabriel in the subsequent verses of the chapter does not explain this time element of the 2300 days/years to Daniel; neither does he provide a starting point. It is not until the vision of Daniel 9 that Gabriel returns and supplies a beginning point for the 70-week

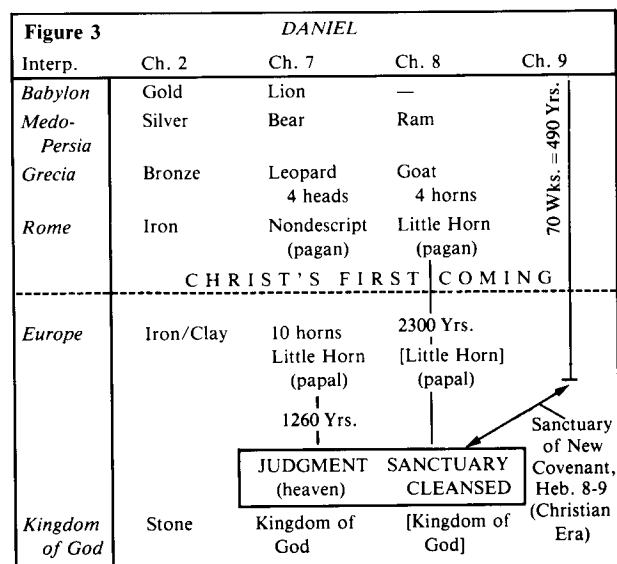
prophecy that makes up the first part of the longer 2300-year span. We have already discussed this aspect of the Daniel 8-9 visions. We now briefly survey the work of the little horn as Daniel saw its career in the vision of chapter 8.

The reader will note from Figure 3 that the little horn of the chapter 8 vision represents Rome in both its pagan and papal phases. However, the further elaboration in this vision deals more with the latter phase. The career of this Christian apostasy has directly affected Christ’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary by interposing a human priesthood along with Mary and the saints and in casting down to the ground various aspects of God’s revealed truth (verses 11, 12).

The fact that the “little horn” of Daniel 8 represents the papal phase of Rome, which functions in the Christian era (as well as its pagan phase, which is not so largely in view in chapter 8), points us beyond the temple in Jerusalem (destroyed in A.D. 70) to the heavenly sanctuary of the Christian era (Heb. 8:1, 2).

In Daniel 7 the dominion of the papal horn was brought to an end, and the saints were vindicated and given dominion with Christ as a result of the convening of the pre-Advent judgment in heaven. In Daniel 8 the career of the little horn in its papal phase of trampling upon God’s people and downgrading the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is brought to an end by the cleansing of the sanctuary, restoring the heavenly authority to its rightful state. Since both visions (Dan. 7 and 8) cover essentially the same area, we can logically conclude that the cleansing of the sanctuary in chapter 8 is the same event as the pre-Advent judgment in chapter 7. (See Figure 3.)

These two prophetic visions (Dan. 7, 8) make it clear that they focus on a phase of final judgment



that takes place at the end of the age *in heaven* prior to the second coming of Christ. In connection with this judgment, a decision is rendered in favor of God's true people (cf. Dan. 7:22, R.S.V.). The counterfeit believer has been blotted from the book of life (Ex. 32:33), and the genuine believer has been reaffirmed, with the records of his sins blotted out (Rev. 3:5).

It is at this pre-Advent judgment that the little horn of Daniel 7 and 8 (analogous in part to the scapegoat in the sanctuary parable) is judged and deposed (chapter 7:25, 26; 8:25, last part). But these prophecies have a *cosmic* dimension. Through all forms of apostasy and rebellion Satan has sought to carry on his warfare against God. A verdict of condemnation upon the little horn is ultimately a verdict of condemnation upon Satan, the real power behind the scenes. (Compare Gen. 3:14; Rev. 12:9.) Furthermore, it is in connection with this heavenly sanctuary judgment that Christ receives His universal dominion and His kingdom made up of those accounted worthy to be in it, "every one that shall be found written in the book" (Dan. 7:13, 14, 22; 12:1). In the light of Calvary and the whole sweep of the plan of salvation, Satan's charges will be shown to be false. God's character will stand unassailable, His government approved before the loyal universe.

Thus, the prophecies of Daniel 7-9 in conjunction with the sanctuary parable testify to the solemn fact that since 1844 the human family has been living in the antitypical day of atonement prefigured in the earthly sanctuary. Christ is performing the last phase of His priestly ministry in the sanctuary of heaven, interceding for those whose trust is rooted in Him.

The years of human probation are slipping away. No one knows just when the divine voice will say, "It is enough. It is finished." But just now, while mercy lingers, a distinctive message from heaven calls "every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" to attention: "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" (Rev. 14:6, 7).

VII. The Sanctuary and Assurance

How does the pre-Advent judgment—this atonement by judgment—depicted in Daniel 7-9 affect the believer who is resting in the merits of his Lord and who believes the promise of God: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:12). Does he stand in jeopardy because of a final judgment of humankind by God? Not at all.

The believer who is in genuine union with Christ has nothing to fear from the judgment. He has a High Priest who is his Intercessor (Rom. 8:34); he has a Lawyer to represent him. "We have an advo-

cate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

If a genuine believer in union with Christ has nothing to fear in the judgment, why is he brought into court at all? The wider picture of the universal proportions of the great moral controversy helps us to understand the matter. The reason for the judgment is simply this: *Salvation by faith requires an investigative judgment of all who profess faith in Christ.*

There are only two ways that salvation can be achieved apart from human works: either by faith or decree. Some Christians hold that salvation is obtained by decree of God. If God predestines a person to be saved, then he cannot resist the gospel when it comes to him, neither can he fall away from it after accepting it. Ultimately, there is no need for a judgment for such a person, since his destiny is fixed before his birth. Others, who start this process a bit later, argue that once a person accepts Christ as his personal Saviour and Lord, he cannot fall away. Christians with this kind of mind-set naturally find an "investigative" phase of judgment difficult to grasp and accept. For such persons, the concept of final judgment can mean nothing more than an "awards" day.

However, if salvation is truly obtained by faith in the merits of Christ, the evidence for that faith and commitment must be demonstrated to an interested universe. Assurance must be given to unfallen beings that God will accept only genuine believers into His eternal kingdom. The books of record must be opened for impartial inspection.

Obviously, the judgment is not for the benefit of the omniscient Deity. Sin arose as a creature's challenge to God, a defiance of His authority. God could have destroyed Satan and his angels at once and settled the sin problem instantly. But the plan of salvation was instituted so that all created beings may be drawn willingly into agreement with God's view of sin because they love Him and trust Him. Ultimately, all created intelligences will openly acknowledge the rightness of God and the wrongness of Satan in this whole controversy (Rom. 14:11).

Three classes of humankind are involved in the sin situation: (1) the wicked, who persistently reject the authority of God; (2) the genuine believers, who accept the authority of God and, as penitents, trust in the merits of Christ for salvation; and (3) the false believers, who appear as genuine followers of God, but are not.

The universe can see clearly where the first class stands in relationship to God. But who is the genuine believer, and who is not? Both classes are listed in the book of life. The church contains wheat and tares; the gospel net brings in both good and bad (Matt. 13). The gospel invitation is extended to all.

As Jesus said, “So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests” (Matt. 22:10).

So a judgment is needed—*before* the second coming of Christ—to sift the true from the false and to demonstrate to the interested universe God’s justice in saving the sincere believer. The issue is with God and the universe, not between God and His true child. This calls for the opening of the books of record, the disclosing of those who have professed faith and whose names have been entered into the book of life.

Jesus, our High Priest and Advocate, says, “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” (Rev. 3:5). If a believer’s life is found to be united with Christ, the Saviour will intercede for him—not only to the Father, but before the angels and the heavenly universe of intelligent beings.

Now is the time to apply the parable about the king’s inspection of the guests attending the gospel feast. Who are truly clothed in the wedding garment of Christ’s righteousness? (Matt. 22:11-14). Those who profess to be followers of God, but who are living in open disobedience to Him, whose lives are not covered by Christ’s merits, will be blotted from the book of life. (See Ex. 32:33.) The apostle Paul knew that one day his own record would come into review, and he expressed his desire to “be found in him [Christ], not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Phil. 3:9).

Notice how Ellen White describes this *sifting* aspect and the *reaffirmation* of the genuine believer before the heavenly tribunal:

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin-offering, and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary; so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ, and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded. *But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement.* The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation,—a work of judgment.²¹

In this matter of salvation and judgment the options are few: (1) When a person is saved, he is eternally saved and can never fall away and be lost. Such a position—held by many Protestants—we believe is contrary to the plain teachings of Scripture. (2) Although a person is saved and a child of God, at

death he must go through an indefinite period of suffering in Purgatory before he can enter heaven. This is a Catholic view that has no basis in Scripture. (3) A child of God who is united with Jesus Christ stands in a saved position by virtue of that union. In the pre-Advent phase of final judgment, his saving relationship with Christ is reaffirmed before the loyal universe. This is the Biblical portrayal of the doctrine held by Seventh-day Adventists.

The idea of “investigation” in this context implies an audit or review. It does not suggest that an angry God is searching the book of life hoping to find some item that will give Him the right to exclude a poor sinner from His kingdom! Such a distortion demeans and degrades the character of God.

In concluding the controversy between good and evil, God must show why it is safe to take into His eternal kingdom those who have truly become His followers. In effect, He says to the universe: Here are the records. Yes, this person is a sinner, and here is the evidence of his waywardness. But see also that he has accepted Me and laid hold of eternal life. See by the evidence of his life that he is truly in union with Me. I claim him as My own. He has faithfully endured with Me until the end. My blood covers him.

Speaking of all the genuine believers in this judgment, Ellen White thus describes Christ’s priestly ministry in their behalf: “Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying, ‘I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands.’”²²

Of course, in this last phase of priestly ministry Christ cannot make such a claim for one who is a believer in name only. (See Matt. 7:21-23.) Thus, the records serve as more than just a basis for sifting the false from the genuine; they also form the foundation for confirming and vindicating the genuine believer before the angels.

The controversy began with a questioning universe. It cannot close until that same universe is satisfied with God’s character and all His actions—that is, actions involving His plan of salvation and those who have professed to accept it. Christ’s parables of the wheat and tares, the net, and the wedding garment have their primary application in the pre-Advent heavenly court session set forth in Daniel’s prophecy. Daniel 8 and 9 also look into Daniel 7, giving us the *time dynamic* for the beginning of this last phase of Christ’s priestly ministry in behalf of His genuine followers.

The three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-14 likewise connect with Daniel’s judgment scene by portraying the religious movements on earth that seek to arouse its population to the significance of the heavenly event (“the hour of [God’s] judgment is

come”) and to extend God’s final offer of mercy.

Far from robbing the believer of his assurance in Christ, the doctrine of the sanctuary sustains it. It illustrates and clarifies to his mind the plan of salvation. His penitent heart rejoices to grasp the reality of Christ’s substitutionary death for his sins as prefigured in its sacrifices. Furthermore, his faith reaches upward to find its meaning in a *living* Christ, his priestly Advocate in the very presence of the holy God.

As he humbly walks in union with his Lord, the believer may be fully assured that Christ not only intercedes in his behalf, but in the awesome pre-Advent judgment now in session He will represent him personally and reaffirm his faith in God before the loyal universe. What greater assurance can a believer have than to know by faith that Christ is both his personal Saviour and Priest, and that His last ministry in the heavenly courts is in his behalf? “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:33, 34). □

Note: Materials in this article adapted in part from author’s previous writings: *Shadows of Hope* (Academy text published by Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California, 1974). “The Israelite Sanctuary,” *The Sanctuary and the Atonement* (Biblical Research Institute, 1981). “Sketches in the Sanctuary,” *The Adventist Review*, Dec. 4, 11, 18, 25, 1980; Jan. 1, 8, 1981. “The

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FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1917), p. 36.
- ² _____, *Spiritual Gifts* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1945), vol. IV, p. 5.
- ³ Compare _____, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1911), p. 415.
- ⁴ _____, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1946), p. 224. Italics supplied.
- ⁵ W. A. Spicer, “How the Spirit of Prophecy Met a Crisis,” Copy A, pp. 19, 20, cited by Arthur L. White in *Ellen G. White: The Early Elmshaven Years* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1981), vol. 5, pp. 289, 290. Italics supplied.
- ⁶ White, *Great Controversy*, p. 414.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 415. Italics supplied.
- ⁸ White, *Evangelism*, p. 225.
- ⁹ _____, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1941), p. 133. Italics supplied.
- ¹⁰ _____, *Education* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1903), p. 124. Italics supplied.
- ¹¹ _____, *The Great Controversy*, p. 488. Italics supplied.
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- ¹³ _____, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1940), p. 22.
- ¹⁴ _____, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1958), Book 1, p. 107.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 308.
- ¹⁶ Ellen G. White comments, *SDA Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1953), vol. 1, p. 1082.
- ¹⁷ White, *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 340.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 349.
- ¹⁹ _____, *Desire of Ages*, p. 25.
- ²⁰ Compare _____, *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 392.
- ²¹ _____, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 421, 422. Italics supplied.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 484.

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