

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

3.2. THE SANCTUARY

1. THE SANCTUARY

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.” Exodus 25:8, 9.

In its construction this sanctuary was made of upright boards, covered with gold, with a roof of various materials to protect it from the elements. It was divided into two apartments, separated by a curtain, called the second veil. A similar veil, or curtain, constituted the door of the first apartment.

The furnishings of the sanctuary consisted of a golden candlestick, with seven bowls, or lamps, a table of show bread, and an altar of incense in the first apartment. In the second apartment was the Ark of the Covenant. This ark contained the two tables of stone, on which was written the law of God. The top of the ark constituted the mercy seat. On either end of the mercy seat was there the image of an angel. Here, under their overspreading wings, was manifested the holy Shekinah, representing the presence of Jehovah.

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.” Hebrews 9:1-4.

Surrounding the tabernacle was a court which was enclosed by hangings or curtains. In this stood the altar of burnt offering. Upon this altar were offered the sacrifices made by fire, and upon the horns of the altar the blood of the victims was sprinkled.

“No language can describe the glory of the scene presented within the sanctuary, the gold-plated walls reflecting the light from the golden candlestick, the brilliant hues of the richly embroidered curtains with their shining angels, the table, and the altar of incense, glittering with gold; beyond the second veil the sacred ark, with its mystic cherubim, and above it the holy Shekinah, the visible manifestation of Jehovah's presence; all but a dim reflection of the glories of the temple of God in heaven, the great center of the work for man's redemption.

“A period of about half a year was occupied in the building of the tabernacle. When it was completed, Moses examined all the work of the builders, comparing it with the pattern shown him in the mount, and the directions he had received from God. “As the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it; and Moses blessed them.”

“With eager interest the multitudes of Israel crowded around to look upon the sacred structure. While they were contemplating the scene with reverent satisfaction, the pillar of cloud floated over the sanctuary, and descending, enveloped it. “And the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. There was a revealing of the divine majesty, and for a time even Moses could not enter. With deep emotion, the people beheld the token that the work of their hands was accepted. There were no loud demonstrations

of rejoicing. A solemn awe rested upon all. But the gladness of their hearts welled up in tears of joy, and they murmured low, earnest words of gratitude that God had condescended to abide with them." Patriarchs and Prophets, 349, 350,

2. THE DAILY SERVICE OF THE SANCTUARY

"Now this is that which thou shall offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shall offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shall offer at even." Exodus 29:38, 39.

The daily service of the sanctuary consisted of a burnt offering morning and evening for the entire nation, and the burning of incense upon the altar of incense and such offerings as individuals brought in repentance for their sins. These offerings were to be without blemish, typifying Christ, the perfect Sacrifice, to whom the penitent in faith looked forward.

The first four chapters of Leviticus show us, the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the sanctuary, and placed his hand on its head, confessing over it his sins. He then took the life of this offering. The blood, in some instances, was taken by the priest, carried into the sanctuary, and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the mercy seat. In some offerings the blood was not carried into the sanctuary, but the flesh of the offering was eaten by the priest. This service involved a confession that the penitent had violated the law of God contained in the ark, and a plea for mercy and divine grace from God, whose presence was represented by the holy Shekinah.

By these services the sins were symbolically transferred from the person to the sanctuary, either by the blood of the animal or by his flesh. This daily transfer of sins defiled the sanctuary and necessitated its cleansing, not from physical impurity, but from sin. The cleansing was a yearly service, performed on the tenth day of the seventh month, and was for the purpose of removing the sins from the sanctuary.

"Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation to Jehovah, and their constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ. God expressly directed that every offering presented for the service of the sanctuary should be "without blemish." The priests were to examine all animals brought as a sacrifice, and were to reject every one in which a defect was discovered. Only an offering "without blemish" could be a symbol of His perfect purity Who was to offer Himself as "a Lamb without blemish and without spot." The apostle Paul points to these sacrifices as an illustration of what the followers of Christ are to become. He says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." We are to give ourselves to the service of God, and we should seek to make the offering as nearly perfect as possible. God will not be pleased with anything less than the best we can offer." Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 352, 353.

3. THE YEARLY SERVICE OF CLEANSING

"He shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness." Leviticus 16:16.

For this service Aaron brought two kids to the door of the tabernacle. Casting lots, one kid was chosen for the Lord and the other for Azazel, or the scapegoat. The goat on which the Lord's lot fell was then slain, and his blood was carried into the second apartment of the sanctuary, and sprinkled upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.

“Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat.” Leviticus 16:15.

“This Day of Atonement was a day of prayer and humiliation. In deep heart searching, Israel confessed their sins and sought pardon and reconciliation. It was in reality a day of judgment, for he who did not take part in this solemn work of separating from sin, was cut off from his people. Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:28, 29.

“Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed, completed the yearly round of ministrations.

“On the Day of Atonement, two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, “one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.” The goat upon which the first lot fell was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat. “And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” Leviticus 16:16.

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.” Leviticus 16:21, 22.

“Not until the goat had been thus sent away, did the people regard themselves as freed from the burden of their sins. Every man was to afflict his soul while the work of atonement was going forward. All business was laid aside, and the whole congregation of Israel spent the day in solemn humiliation before God, with prayer, fasting, and deep searching of heart.

“Important truths concerning the atonement were taught the people by this yearly service. In the sin offerings presented during the year, a substitute had been accepted in the sinner's stead; but the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin. It had only provided a means by which the sin was transferred to the sanctuary.” Patriarchs and Prophets, 355, 356.

4. THE MEANING OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE

“For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.” Hebrews 8:4-6.

The service in the earthly sanctuary was typical of (represented) the work of Christ in the heavenly temple above. The earthly tabernacle was a type of the true tabernacle pitched by God and not by man. Hebrews 8:2. The blood of the sacrificial offerings was a type of the precious blood of Christ shed for the salvation of the human family. Hebrews 9:12. The priests in the earthly sanctuary service served unto the example of heavenly things, representing the work of Christ, the great High Priest. Hebrews 8:5. And even the articles of furniture in the first and second apartments of the earthly sanctuary were typical of the same articles found in the heavenly temple. (See Revelation 4:5; 8:3; 11:19)

The daily and yearly service of the earthly sanctuary was typical of the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly temple. Hebrews 9:11, 12. In the earthly service the sins were transferred to the sanctuary in figure. In the heavenly temple they are transferred in fact, and an account is kept of them in the books of record.

The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. Sin could be forgiven in the old dispensation, even as now it is only through the blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:8-14. The sinner looked forward to a Savior to come, and expressed his faith in Christ's atoning sacrifice by the shedding of the blood of his sacrifice. Now we look back to Calvary, expressing our faith by the ordinances of baptism and communion.

"As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." He saw an angel "having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar."

"Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the "seven lamps of fire" and the "golden altar," represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, "the temple of God was opened," and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld "the ark of His testament" (Revelation 11:19), represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God.

"Moses made the earthly sanctuary "according to the fashion that he had seen." Paul declares that "the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry," when completed, were "the patterns of things in the heavens." Acts 7:44; Hebrews 9:21, 23. And John says that he saw the sanctuary in heaven. That sanctuary, in which Jesus ministers in our behalf, is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy." Patriarchs and Prophets, 356, 357.

5. CLEANSING THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE A WORK OF JUDGMENT

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these." Hebrews 9:23.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Hebrews 9:27, 28.

"The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" I Peter 4:17.

The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as in the case of the typical cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, is not from physical impurity, but a cleansing from sin. And as in the case of the earthly service, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is a work of judgment, an examination of the records of men's lives to determine who have availed themselves of the provisions of God's grace, and are thus entitled to have their sins blotted out. This work of judgment is definitely coupled by the apostle with the work of cleansing. Hebrews 9:23-28. This judgment, this accounting worthy, constitutes the closing work of Christ in His priestly ministry, and immediately precedes His Second Coming and the resurrection of His children. Hebrews 9:27, 28; Luke 20:35; Daniel 7:9-11.

A judgment is not necessary for the information of the divine Being, but that the many created intelligences taking part in that judgment and inhabiting the universe may know that God is just, and that no mistakes have been made. It is followed by that acclaim of praise foretold in Revelation 15:3: 'Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints.'

During this judgment scene, both the righteous and the wicked dead are still in their graves. The record of each one's life, however, is in the books of heaven, and by that record their characters and deeds are well known. Christ is there to appear in behalf of those who have chosen Him as their advocate. I John 2:1. He presents His blood, as He appeals for their sins to be blotted from the books of record. As the place of judgment is in heaven, where God's throne is, and as Christ is present in person, it follows that the work of judgment is also in heaven. All are judged by the record of their lives, and thus answer for the deeds done in the body. This work will not only decide forever the cases of the dead, but will also close the probation of all who are living, after which Christ will come to take to Himself those who have been found loyal to Him.

6. THE JUDGMENT-HOUR MESSAGE

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, 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.

“And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Revelation 14:6-13.

We are already living in the hours of God's investigative judgment which began at the close of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14, October 22, in the year 1844. At that time Christ began His priestly ministry in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. Accompanying this work of judgment there goes to the world a judgment hour message as contained in the scripture quoted above.

There are three phases of the judgment mentioned in the Scriptures, the investigative judgment, preceding the Second Advent. The judgment of the lost world and the wicked angels by Christ and the saints during the one thousand years following the second advent; and the executive judgment, or punishment of the wicked, at the close of this period.

The investigative judgment takes place in heaven before Christ comes, in order to ascertain who are worthy to be raised in the first resurrection, at His coming, and who among the living are to be changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump. It is necessary for this to take place before the second advent, as there will be no time for such a work between the coming of Christ and the raising of the righteous dead. The executive judgment on the wicked occurs after their cases have been examined by the saints during the thousand years. Revelation 20:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 6:1-3. The investigative judgment is that which is announced to the world by the angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7. We are now living in this judgment hour.

7. DWELLING IN GOD'S HOLY HILL

"LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." Psalm 15.

"When we listen to a reproach against our brother, we take up that reproach. To the question, "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" the psalmist answered, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor."

"What a world of gossip would be prevented if every man would remember that those who tell him the faults of others, will as freely publish his faults at a favorable opportunity. We should endeavor to think well of all men, especially our brethren, until compelled to think otherwise. We should not hastily credit evil reports. These are often the result of envy or misunderstanding, or they may proceed from exaggeration or a partial disclosure of facts. Jealousy and suspicion, once allowed a place, will sow themselves broadcast, like thistledown.

"Should a brother go astray, then is the time to show your real interest in him. Go to him kindly, pray with him, and for him, remembering the infinite price which Christ has paid for his redemption. In this way you may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. A glance, a word, even an intonation of the voice, may be vital with falsehood, sinking like a barbed arrow into some heart, inflicting an incurable wound. Thus a doubt, a reproach, may be cast upon one by whom God would accomplish a good work, and his influence is blighted, his usefulness destroyed.

"Among some species of animals, if one of their number is wounded, and falls, he is at once set upon and torn in pieces by his fellows. The same cruel spirit is indulged by men and women who bear the name of Christians. They manifest a pharisaical zeal to stone others less guilty than themselves. There are some who point to others' faults and failures to divert attention from their own, or to gain credit for great zeal for God and the church." Testimonies 5, 58, 59.

"Today is the accepted time; Today, if you will hear His voice,
Yield to the call of love divine, Make Jesus your eternal choice.

Forsake the world, nor longer stay, With shrinking souls that fear the cost,
For danger ever attends delay, And "he who hesitates is lost."

No heights of penance, wealth, or fame, Must first be won, to seek His face;
But all who ask in faith may claim The boundless treasures of His grace.

Then trust Him now, and shun with fear The paths by the transgressor trod;
Today make all your record clear, Don't run a sin account with God." Leon A. Smith.