

Surprising Facts Series

17. God Drew the Plans!

Three-thousand five hundred years ago in a desert east of Egypt, God gave Moses full instructions for constructing a building called the sanctuary, which would serve as a dwelling place for God. This sanctuary and its services were to demonstrate the plan of salvation to about two million slaves who had just been freed. One thousand years later, an angel told the prophet Daniel that the date for the judgment to begin in heaven was revealed in the sanctuary and its services. Further, the book of Revelation reveals that God's end-time people will announce to the world that the heavenly judgment has begun. All these points will become clear as you continue your study of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14:6-14. In this lesson, you will explore the sanctuary and discover its meaning. An exciting experience awaits you!

1. What did God ask Moses to build?

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." Exodus 25:8.

Answer: The Lord asked Moses to erect a sanctuary, a special building that would serve as a dwelling place for the great God of heaven.

A Brief Description of the Sanctuary The sanctuary was an elegant, tent type structure (15' x 45' based on an 18-inch cubit) where the supernatural presence of God dwelt and special services were conducted. The walls were made of upright acacia (wooden) boards, set in silver sockets and overlaid with gold (Exodus 26:15-19, 29). The roof was made of four layers of coverings: linen, goat's hair, ram's skin, and badger skin [or seal skin] (Exodus 26:1, 6-14). It had two rooms: the holy place and the most holy place. A thick, heavy veil or curtain separated the rooms. The courtyard, the area around the sanctuary, was 75'x 150' (Exodus 27:18). It was fenced with fine linen cloth supported by 60 pillars of brass (Exodus 27:9-16).

2. What did God expect His people to learn from the sanctuary?

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?" Psalm 17:13.

Answer: God's way, or plan of salvation, is revealed in the earthly sanctuary. The Bible teaches that everything in the sanctuary or connected with its service was a symbol of something Jesus would do in saving us. This means we cannot fully comprehend the plan of salvation until we understand the symbolism connected with the sanctuary. Thus, this lesson has great importance..

3. From what source did Moses obtain the blueprints for the sanctuary? Of what was the building a copy?

"Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, 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."

"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." Hebrews 8:1, 2, 5.

Answer: The sanctuary blueprints and full specifications for its construction were given to Moses by God. They were a copy of the original sanctuary in heaven, which was the pattern for Moses' sanctuary. The sanctuary and its services were to demonstrate the plan of salvation.

4. What furniture was in the Courtyard?

Answer: A. The altar of burnt offerings where animals were sacrificed was located in the courtyard, just inside its entrance (Exodus 27:1-8). This altar represented the cross of Christ. The animal represented Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice. **"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."** (John 1:29).

B. The laver, located between the altar and the entrance of the sanctuary, was a large washbasin made of brass. Here priests washed their hands and feet before offering a sacrifice or entering the sanctuary (Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8). The water represented cleansing from sin, or the new birth. **"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" Titus 3:5.**

5. What furniture was in the Holy Place?

Answer: A. The table of shewbread (Exodus 25:23-30) represented Jesus, the living bread. **"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."** John 6:51.

B. The seven-branch candlestick (Exodus 25:31-40) represented Jesus, the light of the world (John 9:5; 1:9). The oil represented the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1-6); **"And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God."** Revelation 4:5.

C. The altar of incense (Exodus 30:7, 8) represented the prayers of God's people. **"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."** Revelation 5:8.

6. What furniture was in the Most Holy Place?

Answer: The Ark of the Covenant, [an 'ark' is a box or chest] the only piece of furniture in the most holy place (Exodus 25:10-22), was a box or chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Standing atop the chest were two angels made of solid gold. Between these angels was the Mercy Seat (Exodus 25:17-22), where the supernatural presence of God dwelt. This symbolized God's throne in heaven, which is likewise located between two angels. **"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."** Psalm 80:1. The mercy seat represents God's throne in heaven, which is also located between two angels.

7. What was inside the ark?

Answer: The Ten Commandments, which God wrote on tables of stone with His own finger, and which His people will always obey, were inside the ark. **“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Revelation 14:12, “And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.**

5 And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.” Deuteronomy 10:4, 5. But the mercy seat was above them, which showed that as long as God's people confessed and forsook sin, **“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Proverbs 28:13,** mercy would be extended to them through the blood which was sprinkled on the mercy seat by the priest (Leviticus 16:15, 16). The blood of the animal represents Jesus' blood that was shed for us to bring us forgiveness of sin. **“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:28;** (Hebrews 9:22). The Ten Commandments were inside the ark. They represent God's character, which He implants within His people.

8. Why did animals need to be sacrificed in the Old Testament sanctuary services?

“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” Hebrews 9:22. “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:28.

Answer: The sacrificing of animals was necessary to help people understand that without the shedding of Jesus' blood, their sins could never be forgiven. The ugly, shocking truth is that the punishment for sin is eternal death. **“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.** Since all of us have sinned, all of us should die. When Adam and Eve sinned, they would have died at once except for Jesus, who stepped forward and offered to give His perfect life as a sacrifice to pay the death penalty for all people. **“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8.**

After sin, God required the sinner to bring an animal sacrifice (Genesis 4:3-7). The sinner was to kill the animal with his own hand (Leviticus 1:4, 5). It was bloody and shocking. And it indelibly impressed the sinner with the solemn reality of sin's awful consequences (eternal death) and the desperate need of a Saviour and a substitute.

Without a Saviour, no one has any hope for salvation. The sacrificial system taught, through the symbol of the slain animal, that God would give His Son to die for their sins. **“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;” 1 Corinthians 15:3.** Jesus would become not only their Saviour, but also their substitute. **“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 9:28.** When John the Baptist met Jesus, he said, **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29.** In the Old Testament, people looked forward to the cross for salvation. We

look backward to Calvary for salvation. There is no other source of salvation. **“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.** The animals sacrificed represented Jesus, who sacrificed His life for all people

9. How were animals sacrificed in the sanctuary service, and with what meaning?

"And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." "And he shall kill it on the side of the altar northward." Leviticus 1:4,11.

Answer: When a sinner brought a sacrificial animal to the door of the courtyard, a priest handed him a knife and a basin. The sinner laid his hands on the animal's head and confessed his sins. This symbolized the transfer of sin from the sinner to the animal. At that point, the sinner was considered innocent and the animal guilty. Since the animal was now symbolically guilty, it had to pay sin's wage, death. By slaying the animal with his own hand, the sinner was thus graphically taught that sin caused the innocent animal's death and that his sin would cause the death of innocent Jesus. Animal sacrifices taught the shocking truth that sin would cost the death of Jesus.

10. When a sacrificial animal was offered for the entire congregation, what did the priest do with the blood? What does this symbolize?

"And the priest that is anointed shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation: And the priest shall dip his finger in some of the blood, and sprinkle it seven times before the Lord, even before the vail." Leviticus 4:16, 17.

Answer: When a sacrifice was offered for the sins of the entire congregation, the blood was taken by the priest, who represented Jesus, **“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;” Hebrews 3:1,** into the sanctuary and sprinkled before the veil which separated the two rooms. The presence of God dwelt on the other side of the veil. Thus, the sins of the people were removed and symbolically transferred to the sanctuary. This ministry of the blood by the priest foreshadowed Jesus' present blood-ministry for us in heaven. After Jesus died on the cross as our sacrifice for sin, He arose and went to heaven as our Priest to minister His blood in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrews 9:11, 12). The blood ministered by the earthly priest represents Jesus applying His blood to our record of sins in the sanctuary above, showing that they are forgiven when we confess them in His name. **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9.**

11. Based on the sanctuary services, in what two major capacities does Jesus serve His people? What fantastic benefits do we receive from His loving ministry?

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in

time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16.

Answer: Jesus serves as the sacrifice for our sins and as our heavenly Priest. Jesus' death as our sacrificial lamb and substitute, and His continual powerful ministry as our heavenly Priest, accomplish two incredible miracles for us:

A. A complete life change called the new birth, with all the sins of the past forgiven. **"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:3-6; "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" Romans 3:25.**

B. Power to live right in the present and future. **"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2:14; "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philippians 2:13.**

These two miracles make a person righteous, which means a right relationship exists between the person and God. There is no possible way for a person to become righteous by works (his own efforts), because righteousness requires miracles which only Jesus can accomplish. **"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."** Acts 4:12. A person becomes righteous by trusting Jesus to do for him what he cannot do for himself.

This is what is meant by the biblical term "righteousness by faith." I ask Jesus to become the ruler of my life and trust Him to work the needed miracles as I cooperate fully with Him. This righteousness, which is miraculously accomplished for me and in me by Jesus, is the only true righteousness that exists. Every other kind is a counterfeit. As our sacrifice, Jesus brings us a completely transformed life with all sins forgiven. As our High Priest, Jesus gives us the power to live right in the present and in the future.

12. What six sublime promises does the Bible give us about the righteousness offered to us through Jesus?

A. He will cover our past sins and count us as guiltless. **"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Isaiah 44:22; "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9.**

B. We were created in God's image in the beginning (Genesis 1:26, 27). Jesus promises to restore us to God's image. **"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29.**

C. Jesus gives us the desire to live right and then grants us His power to actually accomplish it

“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Philippians 2:13.

D. Jesus, by His miracles, will cause us to happily do only the things that please God. **“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20, 21; “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” John 15:11.**

E. He removes the death sentence from us by crediting us for His sinless life and atoning death. **“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21.**

F. Jesus assumes responsibility for keeping us faithful until He returns to take us to heaven. **“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” Philippians 1:6; “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” Jude 1:24.** Jesus is ready to fulfill all these glorious promises in your life. Are you ready? Kneel down now and ask Him to take control of your life. He will not fail you. Jesus, by His miracles, will cause us happily to do only the things that please God.

13. Does a person have any role at all to play in becoming righteous by faith?

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 7:21.

Answer: Yes, Jesus says we must do His Father's will. In Old Testament days, a person who truly had been converted kept bringing lambs to sacrifice, indicating his sorrow for sin and his whole-hearted desire to let the Lord totally lead in his life.

Today, though we cannot work the miracles needed to become righteous, we must daily recommit to Jesus inviting Him to control our lives so those miracles can take place. **“I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31,** We must be willing to be obedient and to follow where Jesus leads. **“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.” John 12:26; “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” Isaiah 1:18-20).**

Sin causes us to want to have our own way, **“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.” Isaiah 53:6,** and, thus, rebel against the Lord as Satan did in the beginning. **“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the**

sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Isaiah 14:12-14. Permitting Jesus to rule our lives is sometimes as wrenchingly difficult as having an eye plucked out or an arm torn off. **“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”** Matthew 5:29, 30, because sin is addictive and can be overcome only by God's miraculous power. **“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”** Mark 10:27.

Many believe that Jesus will take all who profess salvation to heaven, regardless of their conduct. But this is not so. It is a lie of Satan. A Christian must follow Jesus' lifestyle. **“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:”** 1 Peter 2:21. The powerful blood of Jesus can accomplish this for us all, **“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”** Hebrews 13:12, but only if we give Jesus full control of our lives and happily follow where He leads, even though the path may sometimes be stony and rough. **“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”** . . . **“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”** Matthew 7:13, 14, 21. Our role in salvation is to lovingly and willingly follow where Jesus leads.

14. Can you help me understand the day of atonement?

Answer: A. Once each year, the day of atonement, a solemn day of judgment took place in Israel. **“Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.”** Leviticus 23:27. All were to confess every sin. Those who refused were that very day cut off forever from the camp of Israel. **“For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.”** Leviticus 23:29.

B. Two goats were selected: One, the Lord's goat; the other, the scapegoat, representing Satan. **“And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat.”** Leviticus 16:8. The Lord's goat was slain and offered for the sins of the people. **“And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.”** Leviticus 16:9. But on this day the blood was taken into the Most Holy Place and sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat. **“And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.”** Leviticus 16:14. Only on this special judgment day did the high priest enter the Most Holy Place to meet God at the mercy seat.

The sprinkled blood (representing Jesus' sacrifice) was accepted by God, and the confessed sins of the people were transferred from the sanctuary to the high priest. He then transferred these confessed sins to the scapegoat, which was led into the wilderness. **“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 remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.” . . . “And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 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: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.” Leviticus 16:16, 20-22. In this manner, the sanctuary was cleansed of the sins of the people, which had been transferred there by the blood sprinkled before the veil and had been accumulating for a year.

15. Does the day of atonement symbolize or foreshadow a part of God's great plan of salvation, as did the other facets of the earthly sanctuary and its services?

"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.

Answer: Yes. That day's services pointed to the blotting out of sin by the real High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Through His shed blood applied to those written in the book of life, Christ would confirm the decisions of His people to serve Him eternally. This special judgment day, like that of Israel's Yom Kippur, foreshadowed the final atonement to be made for planet Earth. From the yearly type of the ancient day of atonement, all of humanity is assured that our faithful High Priest, Jesus, still mediates in heaven for His people and stands ready to blot out the sins of all who will exercise faith in His shed blood. The final atonement leads to the final judgment, which settles the sin question in the life of every individual, culminating in either life or death.

Momentous Events: You will discover in the next lessons how the symbolism of the earthly sanctuary and especially the Day of Atonement foreshadowed momentous events of the end time, which God will bring to pass from the heavenly sanctuary. The Date for the Judgment: In the next lesson, we will examine a crucial Bible prophecy in which God sets a date for the heavenly judgment to begin. Thrilling, indeed!

16. Are you willing to accept truth that may be new to you, as God reveals it?

Your Answer: _____

The Lord's goat represented Jesus, who would die for our sins. The scapegoat represents Satan, upon whom God will place full responsibility for sin. Israel's day of atonement was a symbol of the final judgment, which will forever settle the sin question throughout the universe.

Summary: Place a check beside the correct answers.

1. Which pieces of furniture were in the courtyard of the sanctuary?

___ The mercy seat.

___ The laver.

___ Chairs.

Altar of burnt offerings.

2. God's presence dwelt at the mercy seat.

Yes. No.

3. Which statements are not true?

The altar of burnt offerings represents the earth.

The laver represented cleansing from sin.

The table of shewbread represented the living bread.

The seven-branch candlestick represented Jesus, the light of the world.

The altar of incense represented the prayers of God's people.

4. The purpose of the sanctuary and its services was to:

Help the people understand angels.

Provide flesh food for the people.

Symbolize the plan of salvation.

5. Who drew the plans for the sanctuary?

Noah.

An angel.

Aaron.

God.

6. The Ten Commandments were inside the ark of the covenant. Yes. No.

7. The slain sacrificial animals represented:

The Holy Spirit.

Warfare.

Jesus.

8. Based on the sanctuary, in what two capacities does Jesus serve us?

King.

Sacrifice.

High Priest.

Ruler of the universe.

9. Which of the following were true of the earthly sanctuary?

It had three rooms.

It was a tent-type structure.

The Courtyard was made of brass pillars and linen cloth.

The Roof was made of Egyptian tile.

Laver was in most holy place.

10. Righteousness by faith is the only true righteousness. Yes. No.

11. Righteousness by faith comes from:

Man's works.

Being baptized.

Faith in Jesus Christ alone.

12. Who killed the sacrificial animal that a sinner brought?

God.

The priest.

The sinner.

13. Which statements are true about the righteousness Jesus offers?

It will restore us to God's image.

It is not miraculous.

Our good works are a big part of it.

It covers our past sins.

It gives us the desire to live right.

No person can ever become righteous on his own.

14. Which of the following are true regarding the Day of Atonement?

It occurred monthly.

It was a day of judgment.

It was a day of games and good fun.

It symbolized the final judgment.

The scapegoat symbolized Satan.

The blood was taken into the Most Holy Place.

15. Righteousness means a right relationship with God. Yes. No.

16. Slaying an animal helped the people realize that sin brought the death penalty upon all people.

Yes. No.

17. Are you willing to accept Christ's righteousness, which includes forgiveness, cleansing from sin, and the power to live right in the present and future? Yes. No.