

The ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary

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**What does Jesus
do in the Heavenly
Sanctuary?**



Belief #24 - The ministry of Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary

- **Key texts**
- Daniel 8:11,13-14
- Daniel 7:9-14,24-27
- Leviticus 16
- Hebrews 9:23-28



The earthly and heavenly sanctuary

- The earthly sanctuary is the center of the worship system of the people of God
- The earthly sanctuary is a model of the Celestial Sanctuary given for His people and not because God needed a temple
- Although it is not a unique doctrine of Adventism, the depth of understanding of the symbols of the sanctuary and the ministry of Christ is distinctive.



ORIGIN OF THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

- ▶ The epistle to the Hebrews appeals to the worship of the sanctuary, the New Testament is a continuation and progress of that worship (Hebrews. 1:1,2 and John 4:21-24) which is a call to worship with the spiritual faculties of the mind.
- ▶ The Israelites struggled to worship without something visible (Egyptian idolatrous influence) in that sense they were more backward than the patriarchs because the patriarchal worship was more spiritual than the worship in the desert.
- ▶ If the desert worship had been spiritual, perhaps there would have been no need for the Tabernacle or other temples and when Christ arrived, it would have been easy for them to understand and accept it.

ORIGIN OF THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY

- ▶ ¿What did God show Moses? Exo. 25:40
- ▶ The term **TARNTH**: model, shape, according to written specifications.
- ▶ Does the Celestial Sanctuary represent a greater reality with objective existence?
- ▶ For some interpreters there is no original model, it is only a symbolic representation of the plan of salvation.
- ▶ Ancient Jewish interpreters believed that the Sanctuary was a duplicate.
- ▶ Others consider that the Earthly Sanctuary was a counterpart of the Celestial Sanctuary - difficulties of the earthly Sanctuary:
 - ▶ 1- It was dismountable,
 - ▶ 2- There were things in it that couldn't be in the heavenly.

The High Priesthood of Christ

- The original priesthood was instituted since the time of the patriarchs (Adan) as representatives of the family in worship
- Christ, ascended in glory after offering himself as a sacrifice and took the role of our priest in the heavenly sanctuary
- The ministry of Christ in heaven has two parts, justification and atonement



THE SANCTUARY AND THE PRIESTHOOD

- The priest had a variety of tasks:
- 1- He conveyed God's will through the Urim and Thummim. (Exo 28:30; 1 Sam 28:6)
- 2- They were also teachers. (Deut 33:8-10, Lev 10:11)
- 3- They were medical officers. (Lev 13, 14)
- 4- They served as judges. (Deut 17:8-13)
- 5- They officiated in favor of the penitent.

THE SANCTUARY AND THE PRIESTHOOD

- The High Priest, although he was not a politician, had a princely appearance:
- A) He was anointed as a king. (Exo 30:30; 1 Sam 9:16)
- B) His clothing was very colorful.
- C) His death marked the end of an era. (Num 35:25,28)
- D) He officiated for life and the position was hereditary.

The intercessory ministry of Christ

- The intercession of Christ before the Father in heaven was his promise to his followers - (Rom 8:34)
- That ministry allows us to approach God clean and with a mediator capable of expediting our orders (although it is not necessary)
- Without a constant application of the blood of Christ for our sins after our baptism we would miss the opportunity to enter the presence of God



Christ's intercession

- "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. (GC 489.1).
- Just as the atoning death of Christ reconciled the world with God, so also his mediation or the application of the merits of his life without sin and his death in our replacement makes for the believer reconciliation with God become a personal reality.

Christ's intercession

- With his ascension shortly after his resurrection death, Christ began his ministry as our High Priest and Intercessor.
- The repentant sinner has immediate and constant access to God through the priestly ministry of Christ with intercessor and mediator (Ephe. 2.18; Heb. 4.16). As Lord and Savior, Christ assumes our sins and we are forgiven, he is both the Substitute of the believer and his Guarantor.

Christ's intercession

- Due to His love for Christ, God forgives the repentant sinner, imputes on him the righteous character and obedience of his Son. And if the believer remains in Christ, our Lord imparts spiritual grace through the Holy Spirit so that he matures spiritually and develops the virtues and grace that reflect the divine character. The ministry in the Holy Place produces justification and sanctification.

The day of the atonement

- The rites and ceremonies of the earthly sanctuary were parables or symbols of the plan of salvation
- The most sacred day of the sanctuary ceremony is key in the prophecy of Christ's ministry, both earthly and heavenly
- The different parts of this ceremony have meaning for our days.



The Day of Atonement

- **Preparation of the High priest and the ceremony**
- On the third day of the seventh month, the high priest moved from his house in Jerusalem to the premises of the Temple. There, he dedicated the week to praying and meditating, and also to reviewing the ritual of the Day of Atonement, in order not to make a mistake.
- One of the oldest priests was also with the high priest during that time, instructing and helping him.
- The night before the Day of Atonement, the high priest was not allowed to sleep, so as not to be contaminated.
- M.L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary and its service* 166.

The Day of Atonement

- On the day of atonement the high priest entered the Sanctuary: With a calf for atonement and a holocaust ram. This offering was for himself and for his family.
- He washed his body and dressed in simple linen.
- He took two male goats from the congregation and casted lots over them: One for Jehovah and another for Azazel.
- A day of holy convocation. (Lev. 23:27)

The Day of Atonement

- *Ritual of Incense and Blood (Ex 28.11-19).*
- *Aaron first took his calf, and offered it in purification for his sin and for that of the priesthood.*
- *He burned the incense and it covered the propitiatory.*
- *The blood of the calf was sprinkled seven times towards the propitiatory.*
- *He slaughtered the goat in atonement and spread it over the Propitiatory and in front of it.*
- *He did the same on the tabernacle of meeting (holy place), undoubtedly towards the altar of incense*

The Day of Atonement

- With the blood of the calf and the goat, he went to the altar of the holocausts and also sprinkled it, to purify and sanctify it "from the impurities of the children of Israel.
- With the blood of the goat male he entered the Most Holy Place, he sprinkled it towards the propitiatory, thus purifying it from the sins accumulated during the year.
- He would walk out backwards, towards the atrium, where the goat male Azazel was.

The Day of Atonement

- **The expulsion of the live goat male (v.20-22).**
- The rite of the living goat male was a rite of expulsion, and had nothing to do with the purification of the sanctuary.
- By imposing hands, the burden of sins that had been stored in the Sanctuary for a year was transferred to the goat Azazel. No grace was conferred with that laying on of hands.

The Day of Atonement

- The high priest, when purifying the sanctuary with the blood of the goat, carried on himself the impurity of the sanctuary, and deposited it on the head of the living goat. His bloody hands were put on the head of the goat, as a testimony that the sins of the sanctuary fell on the head of the prince of evil.
- The animal was sent to the desert by the hand of a man destined for that.

The Day of Atonement

- **Final washing of the participants of the ritual (v.23-28).**
- The high priest returned to the meeting tabernacle to remove the incenser, take off his linen clothes, wash again, and put on "his dresses".
- The holocaust of the priesthood and the holocaust of the people were sacrificed.
- The people followed the sound of the priest's bells throughout the sanctuary with intense attention.

The Day of Atonement

- His ministry of intercession before God had been accepted. Then the affliction of that day was replaced by joy.
- Within this context of rejoice and final gratitude of the feast, the high priest offered his atoning holocaust and that of the people, and extending his hands, he blessed him (Lev 9:23; No. 6:22-27).

The Day of Atonement

- The man who took the goat to Azazel, washed his dresses, bathed and then entered the camp (v. 26).
- The remains of the two immolated animals that comprised "their skin, their flesh and their excrement," were taken out of the camp" to be burned.
- The one who burned them washed his clothes, bathed, and then entered the camp.

The Day of Atonement

- Everyone who had come into contact with the animals of the ritual should now be washed with water. This ablution of the body indicated that they, who had been purified, were then contaminated with the animals that carried the impurity.
- With this final ablution, unique in the entire book of Leviticus, it was illustrated that the eradication of sin had been complete. No one carried anyone's sin anymore (Lev 10:17; 17:16)

The Day of Atonement

- A day of affliction and total fasting.
- Our salvation is always obtained under the condition of repentance and perseverance. God forgives, but forgiveness is not unconditional or independent of the future behavior of the sinner. Let us note as Ezekiel expresses it: "If the righteous depart from his righteousness and commits evil, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked did, will he live? None of the justices he did will be taken into account; for his rebellion with which he transgressed, and for the sin he committed, for that he will die" (Ezekiel 18:24).

The Day of Atonement

- **Cut off from the people (Leviticus 23: 29, 30)**
- The day of atonement, being a trial day, demanded a sentence on those who did not comply with the stipulations. In Lev. 23: 29, 30 it reads: "He who does not fast on that day, will be cut off from his people. He who does some work on that day, I will destroy him from among his people." Those who did not afflict their souls, confessed their sins and thus appropriated the benefits of atonement were cut off from the people.

The investigative judgment

- Understanding God's justice, it is impossible to ignore the need for a judgment in which each one will give accounts
- This understanding is unique of Adventism and is based on the understanding of the sanctuary and the prophecies
- It is of great importance for salvation since it distinguishes between true believers and those who are not.



Christ's intercession

In 1844 Christ presented himself before the Elder of Days and began the final phase of his high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary

What is the judgment for?

To declare those who persevere and those who are removed from the book of life. God doesn't need a trial to know who is saved or not but because the lie of evil exists, God publicly proclaims judgement for the sake of the intelligence of the universe.

Christ's intercession

- The non-fallen beings of creation are not omniscient; they cannot read the heart. "For this reason, judgment is needed - before the second coming of Christ - to separate the true from the false and prove to the interested universe, the justice of God who saves the sincere believer. The question develops between God and the universe, not between God and his faithful children. It requires that the books of records be opened and that the true nature of those who have professed the faith and whose names have been entered into the book of life be revealed." Holbrook, *Light in the Shadows*", p. 35, 375.

Christ's intercession

- Atonement through the final judgment in its three phases:
 - - INVESTIGATIVE - Pre-advent.
 - - INDICATIVE - Where a sentence is pronounced during the millennium.
 - - EXECUTIVE OR RETRIBUTIVE - On the occasion of the third coming of Christ.

Christ's intercession

- “... Atonement through judgment will allow the emergence of a harmonious and fully reconciled universe (Eph 1:10). This is the objective that will fulfill the second and final phase of the priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary” Holbrook, Sanctuary of Salvation. P. 16
- This judgment will produce God's final vindication before the universe. Treiver, Day of Atonement, 30, 367.

The biblical basis for investigative judgment

- Starting from Daniel 7 we understand that during the time of the small horn (The papal power) there would be a judgment. This is not a judgment in the second coming clearly because Daniel during the trial continues to hear the blasphemous words of the small horn
- Vs. 11-13 detail that the judgment lasts until the second coming of Christ. The entry of Christ to the throne room of the Elder in the most holy place links the prophecy of the purification of the sanctuary with the investigative judgment prior to said purification. This distinction is reiterated in the explanation given to Daniel later in the chapter in v. 22 and 26

The biblical basis for investigative judgment

- Knowing that we cannot base a doctrine on a single passage, we look at the parable of Matthew 22 for greater understanding. Although this parable is repeated by Christ in Luke, only Matthew includes the details of the investigative judgment that only a Jewish audience would understand (Luke was not for a Jewish audience)
- The greater violence shown in this parable signals that the Lamb's dinner is representative of the world's final judgments. However, at this dinner before the delicacy, the King approaches the guests to inspect them.
- Christ's Object Lessons p.310

By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples.

It is while men are still dwelling upon the earth that the work of investigative judgment takes place in the courts of heaven. The lives of all His professed followers pass in review before God. All are examined according to the record of the books of heaven, and according to his deeds the destiny of each is forever fixed”

–Ellen White

Details of the investigative judgment

- This judgment, as read previously, is to prove before the universe what God already knows, that is, those who have truly accepted the gift of Christ versus those who only pretend.
- In order for the universe to confirm the divine verdict, an investigative comparison of the 4 books of heaven is made: Three books of men 1) The book of life 2) The book of records GC 483 3) The book of death GC 660 y one divine book 4) Book of the statutes Early Writings p.52
- Comparing all the acts of men with the book of statutes and then verifying that sins have been forgiven by Christ, it is shown who has been covered with the clothes of justice of Christ and can enter the kingdom.

General Summary

- The earthly sanctuary is the center of the worship system of the people of God - Exo 29:42-46
- The earthly sanctuary is a model of the Heavenly Sanctuary - Exo 25:8-9
- The rites and ceremonies of the earthly sanctuary were parables or symbols of the plan of salvation - Heb 8:5
- Christ is our priest in the heavenly sanctuary - Heb 4:14-15
- The ministry of Christ in heaven has two parts, justification and atonement - Heb 9:6-9

Misconceptions and deceit

Christ has already finished his ministry.

- Based on Hebrews 9:12 or misrepresenting the words of Christ on the cross when he said "finished is" it can be misconstrued to try to say that Christ has already finished his ministry
- The purpose of limiting the ministry of Christ is to sustain the immutability of the believer's salvation. If Christ constantly intercedes for our sins then we must remain close to Him to find forgiveness and our salvation then depends on our closeness to Him. This obviously requires commitment and that's why they try to deny the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.
- Answer: Heb 4:14-16 / 9:24 Christ is ministering now

The sanctuary is for the OT

- This is a mistake based on the ignorance of biblical truth. Following the current of many Christians of the second and third century who sought to separate Christianity from all vestiges of their Jewish origin, not only Sabbath but also the truth of the sanctuary was banished.
- Since the book of Hebrews is something so contradictory for these detractors of the OT, they resort to inventing a complex lie that the book of Hebrews is an allegory and they take only the passages that suit them to reject the sanctuary and everything that has to do with the Jews.
- Answer: Heb 10:19-22 / Rev 11:19 / 15:5-6 The Sanctuary continues to have relevance in the NT

There is no sanctuary in heaven.

- It is considered a continuation of the previous lie that the sanctuary is only from the OT. If there was a heavenly sanctuary then it wouldn't be just Jewish. In addition, denying the existence of a heavenly sanctuary can also deny the existence of a law or covenant associated with said sanctuary and the underlying judgment.
- Most of Christianity today believe this lie out of ignorance. They do not believe in a heavenly sanctuary because they have never heard in their churches that it exists.
- Answer: Exodus 25:9,40 / Ps 11:4 / Miq 1:2-3 / Revel 7:15 Too many mentions of a heavenly Temple to be an allegory

Doctrine of the Sanctuary

- Sister White wrote in Review and Herald, May 25, 1905 (para 28): "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."
- Even within the same church there are those who think so. There are infidels inside the church. Being part of it does not guarantee loyalty. During the Exodus, many who were not Israelites came out with them. Most of them failed in their attempt to become Israelites and made Israel fall.

Doctrine of the Sanctuary

- That current arises at the beginning of the twentieth century with the spiritualist interpretation of the Bible; more recently Alden Thompson our theologian tried to reconcile high criticism and interpret "the contradictions of the Bible."
- The SDA administration responded to Alden Thompson, with a 1,000 page document.
- Desmond Ford, questioned the interpretation of Daniel's prophecy regarding the purification of the Sanctuary.

Doctrine of the Sanctuary

- **Implications of the doctrine that there is no sanctuary?**
- If there is no sanctuary in heaven, there is no High Priest who ministers, and our place in the religious world is not justified, since the Sanctuary is the recognized basis of the Adventist faith.
Le Roy E. Froom (Ministry Magazine Jan-Feb 1984)
- Satan hates the truth of the Sanctuary, he knows that it is the most important truth that heaven has for today.

Doctrine of the Sanctuary

- “The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill.”
- GC 488.2

- “The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It 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. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them. **The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross.**
- **GC 488.3**

Doctrine of the Sanctuary

- **In the doctrine of the sanctuary there are three positions:**
- **Literalist** - the Heavenly Sanctuary is equal to the earthly sanctuary, but larger.
- **Spiritualist** - There is no sanctuary, God does not need material things, He is Spirit. Heaven is the center of His government (Defines heaven as space not as a place)
- **Realists** - Accept the biblical testimony, but interpret it, postulating that there is a sanctuary but the size and shape are not important, when studying the Celestial Sanctuary. More than structure we must think about its functions.

The book of Daniel and Revelation are sealed.

- This is a mistake that has not been listed until now although all previous doctrines are affected by this lie. However n other belief depends as much on these two books as this one and therefore it is vital to refute this falsehood.
- The enemy uses the weapon of the supposed complexity and darkness of prophecy to distance those who need the light from the Scriptures from the study of these prophecies. Others blindly trust the criteria of their leaders who knowing the truths that are inside these books purposely prohibit or discourage their study
- Answer: Daniel 12:4 / Rev 10 / Heb 4:12

Eventually there will be no more forgiveness of sins

- This is another mistake born in a certain way within the Adventist church. For our unique interpretation of the investigative judgment and the absolute termination of the sanctuary service described in Leviticus 16, it has been misunderstood that Christ ceased his intercessor service at some point in the judgment.
- This is a legalistic error that indirectly supports the idea that we can live without sin by our own strength. While Mrs White often points out that the disciples of Christ must fight to achieve perfection, she never insinuates that we can achieve it by our own forces or that we will dispense with the intercession of Christ in favor of our sins at any point. (EGW SDA Bible Commentary Vol 7)
- Answer: Heb 7:25 / 9:24-28 (clarifier)

The end of the time of probation

- Understanding the all encompassing of Christ's ministry, we know that grace does not end but the opportunity to repent does. We see this in all the parables of Christ about the kingdom. There comes a point where accounts are asked for, the harvest begins and the door is closed.
- This event can come in three ways to believers: 1) In their death 2) When committing the unforgivable sin 3) When Christ comes
- There are those who citing writings of Uriah Smith and other Adventist pioneers even Mrs. White (in her early days) support a theology of the closed door prior to the second coming, but the same pioneers repeatedly denied these interpretations.
- This is a very controversial issue and can be misinterpreted out of ignorance since God only knows when the opportunity is closed.

The investigative judgment is an Adventist invention

- This is a highly aggressive accusation against Adventism. The sharpest arguments within this lie unfortunately come from ex-Adventists who out of frustration against the church have chosen to attack this very important doctrine
- Supported mainly by the alleged non-existence of such language within the Bible, they say that the Adventists invented this judgment to keep people under fear. In response to the biblical evidence of a pro-advent judgment, they deny the prophetic interpretation and appeal to God's love as if He were not able to judge or punish his creatures.
- Answer: Daniel 7 / Revelation 19 and 20 - The judgment is true

**Will you believe, teach and defend the truth
of Christ's ministry in the heavenly
sanctuary?**