

Behold the Lamb!

What it Means to be a Christian

Lesson 10. The Judgement

“. . . for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:10-12.

Most people on earth have the idea that there will be some kind of judgement. Few though realize that at least part of it is going on now. Fewer still really have a clear idea about how it works. The most common idea of most Christians and even many occult religions, is that we go to judgement when we die. But the Bible shows that to be wrong, because it teaches that all who die, sleep unconscious in their graves until Jesus comes and resurrects the righteous and takes them to heaven at His Second Coming. The big problem with that is, how does He know who the righteous are if there has not been a judgement before He comes? The fact is, there will have been one, in fact, the Bible teaches it is taking place right now.

The Investigative Judgement.

We need to look at some what the Bible says about judgement to get the whole picture.

1: Both the righteous and the wicked will be judged.

“I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.” Ecclesiastes 3:17.

2. All must appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:10.

3. All things are looked at in the judgement.

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:14.

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Matthew 12:36.

“To him that ordereth his conversation [behavior] aright will I shew the salvation of God.” Psalm 50:23.

4. All those who claim to have accepted Jesus get judged first.

“For 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? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” 1 Peter 4:17, 18.

“The house of God, which is the church of the living God.” 1 Timothy 3:15.

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5. Jesus, our Redeemer, does the judging.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” John 5:22, 26, 27.

God has given Jesus, authority to execute judgment, “because He is the Son of man.” It would not be fair for unfallen beings or angels to judge us, they do not know what it is like to be a human struggling with sin! But because Jesus experienced the very worst of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal fairly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save, this is why the Father appointed our Savior, the Son of man, to execute the judgment.

The world has been given over to Christ. Through Him has come every blessing from God to the fallen race. He was the Redeemer for the people who lived before He was born on earth, the same as those who lived after He came to earth. As soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour. He has given light and life to all, and according to the measure of light given, each is to be judged. We are not judged for something we never knew or had any chance to know. He who has given the light, He who has followed the soul with tender entreaty, seeking to win it from sin to holiness, is both its advocate [defender] and judge.

6. The judgment for all who have ever entered Christ’s service takes place before He comes, because when Jesus comes He brings His reward with Him.

“And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:12.

Jesus told a parable in **Matthew 22** that illustrates this special judgement. It is about a marriage supper given by a king for his son. It talks about how the king ends up inviting anyone, good or bad, to come to the wedding. Each guest was sent a special wedding garment for them to wear, as the king knew these people had nothing good enough for a King’s supper.

The Investigative judgement is shown in these verses: **“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.” Matthew 22:11, 12.**

Before the wedding begins, the King, representing God the Father, inspects the guests to see if all are clothed with the wedding garment. This man had not bothered to put on the garment, he figured his own clothes were good enough. But when questioned by the King, he had no excuse.

“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 22:13.

7. In the parable, wearing that robe determined whether one was accepted or cast out. This ‘robe’ is the pure righteousness of Christ.

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"This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. **"All our righteousness are as filthy rags."** **Isaiah 64:6.** Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be **"the transgression of the law."** **1 John 3:5, 4.** But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, **"I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart."** **Psalm 40:8.** When on earth, He said to His disciples, **"I have kept My Father's commandments."** **John 15:10.**

"By His perfect obedience, He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah." Christ's Object Lessons 311.

Jesus lived a perfect life and then died to pay for our sins. His death allows our sins to be forgiven, but His righteous Life must be received to cover our sinfulness. Our 'good works' will not do, because we are told:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses [good deeds] are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."
Isaiah 64:6.

If our good deeds are like filthy rags, what must our sins look like? Horrible thought! But the man in the story thought his own good deeds were good enough. He made a terrible mistake in this idea. So we must have on this special wedding garment given to us when we accept Jesus.

When anyone has at some time chosen to belong to Jesus, their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. But for our names to remain there, we must continue to depend on Jesus, both His death on the cross, and His perfect life, the robe of His righteousness, given to us for our salvation, in place of our own.

8. The question is asked concerning this judgement, compared to the text that says we must all 'stand in the judgement', as it seems, because the Investigative Judgement is done while the righteous are still alive on the earth or asleep in their graves, and when Jesus comes He has His reward with Him already, to imply that no one will stand literally before God and answer for the wrong things they did. We need to investigate this further!

The shows that for those who have chosen to give their hearts to Him, Jesus stands as our representative, and pleads His blood for us. He answers for us before the Father. But, yes, we still do in a way stand right now before God to answer for our sins. The righteous who are now asleep in their graves, answered during their lives.

Part of the Holy Spirit's job is to convict of sin, and He impresses our mind and convicts us of the sins in our life. Often this comes to us as we read the Word of God and the Holy Spirit impresses us. As we see these things, we go to Jesus and confess them, pleading to be forgiven

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and that sin blotted out and removed from our lives. He then pleads His blood before the Father and we are forgiven. That sin is placed as it were 'Under the Blood of the Lamb' and will not come against us again, unless we turn from the Lord and leave Him altogether. Of those who follow Him, He says,

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:28, 29.

"I the Lord . . . will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." Isaiah 41:13. More precious in the Saviour's sight than the whole world is the soul who gives himself to Jesus. Christ would have passed through the agony of Calvary that one soul might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His children choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast." Youth's Instructor May 1, 1902.

In this way, the 'wedding garment' of Christ's righteousness is given to us and when the Father, [the King in the story] looks at us, all He sees is the character and righteousness of Jesus.

This putting away and confessing of sins is a work that must be done now, before probation closes, while Jesus is still there in the Heavenly Sanctuary pleading His blood for our forgiveness and cleansing, and offering the robe of His righteousness for all who ask for it. Here is an important verse:

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." 1 Timothy 5:24.

The sins of the righteous, those who have chosen to give their hearts to Jesus, are being brought to our mind now, by the Holy Spirit, during our lives on this earth, and must be dealt with now! But those who do not give their hearts to the Lord and choose to serve Him, their sins remain on them, and will 'follow after'. Jesus cannot present their names before the Father and plead His blood for them! They are lost, their names will be blotted out of the Book of Life. After the millennium they are raised and at that time, all their sins will come to their minds and they will know why they are lost. Like the man in the story, they will have no excuse.

Once probation closes, Jesus stops pleading His blood and no one can be saved then. That is why we need to get rid of sin now; while Jesus is there to deal with it as we confess and seek forgiveness and freedom from those sins. The day we live in is a time to pray and search our hearts, asking the Lord to show us anything we need to confess, repent of, and get out of our lives in the power that Jesus gives us as we ask for it!

9. More about the Special Garment of Christ's righteousness:

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. 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." Revelation 3:4, 5;

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made

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them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7:13, 14.

This character examination is performed by God in the heavenly sanctuary. When His investigation is completed, everyone’s destiny will be sealed. Jesus will no longer plead for sinners. He will then announce:

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” Revelation 22:11, 12.

10. This is the message that is to arouse the world today.

“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.” Revelation 14:7.

Paul spoke of “judgment to come. The message for today is that “judgment is come;” And finally when Jesus comes, “He hath judged.” (Revelation 19:2).

This ‘investigative judgment’, which evaluates the lives of all who have ever professed faith in Christ, is completed before Jesus comes. It should not be confused with the judgment of the wicked by Christ and His saints, which occurs during the millennium; or the final judgment and punishment of the wicked, which takes place at the end of the 1000 years.

11. What did Jesus say we were to “rejoice” over?

“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” Luke 10:19, 20.

The good deeds of God’s children are also recorded.

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name.” Malachi 3:16.

12. In the judgment, the books of record are opened.

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:9, 10.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12.

More about the Books:

“But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and

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doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” Ezekiel 18:24.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” Exodus 32:33.

“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.” Psalm 69:28.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:15.

“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.” Revelation 3:5.

13. When the work of the Investigative Judgement, the cleansing the heavenly sanctuary, is finished, probation for all will close and plagues be sent on the wicked in the earth, while the righteous living are protected by God.

“And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from His power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. 16:1 “And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.” Revelation 15:5-16:1.

“And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.” Daniel 12:1.

How the Old Testament shows this End-time Work of Christ.

No one in the world’s history has ever earned salvation by his own works. In both Old and New Testaments, people were saved by the grace of God and the merits of Jesus. Those who lived before the cross were saved on the same terms as were people in New Testament times.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16.

“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them.” Hebrews 4:2.

“For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16.

“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.

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which

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we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Galatians 1:8.

The Old Testament itself teaches salvation through Christ. The “scriptures” spoken of in these texts are found in the Old Testament. They make it clear that the Old Testament scriptures teach the same gospel of salvation through Christ that we find in the New Testament.

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” 1 Corinthians 15:3.

“From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” 2 Timothy 3:15.

“Then he said unto them, ‘O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:25-27.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Bible presents one gospel from Genesis to Revelation, one plan of salvation for humanity. The Bible calls it “the everlasting gospel” (Revelation 14:6), the “everlasting covenant” (Psalm 105:10; Hebrews 13:20).

How People Before the Cross Showed Their Faith in Christ:

The Bible says that we are saved by grace through faith. Faith, therefore, is the means by which we take hold of God’s grace. Faith always exhibits itself in real and identifiable action. **“I will shew thee my faith by my works.” James 2:18.** Often the Lord has asked His people to express their faith through the performance of an action. Many of Christ’s miracles occurred in response to an act of faith, for example, the man at the Pool of Bethesda was told to “take up thy bed and walk.”

This principle helps us to understand the purpose of the ceremonial ordinances of the Old Testament. Performing those ceremonies did not earn salvation for the Israelites, but served only as the means whereby they were to show their faith in the Saviour who was to come.

Every sacrifice offered, every ordinance performed, was to be an expression of faith in Christ. **“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.” Hebrews 11:4. “Through faith he [Moses] kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood.” Hebrews 11:28.**

Every part of the Old Testament ritual system was designed by Christ to illustrate His own work in the plan of salvation. Every lamb that was slain pointed to Christ, the Lamb of God, who would be offered for the sins of the world. Everything the priests did pointed to Jesus, our great High Priest in the courts above.

By contemplating the meaning of the ceremonies he performed, an Israelite could understand the entire gospel of salvation. The gospel of Christ is illustrated in the Old Testament just as clearly as it is proclaimed in the New Testament.

The ceremonial system centered around the sanctuary and its services. It should not surprise us then that every major scene in the book of Revelation presents the temple in heaven where

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Christ is ministering for us.

Revelation is full of sanctuary words. Twenty-eight times in Revelation Jesus is called the "Lamb". References to sanctuary furniture such as the candlesticks, the altar of incense, and the ark of the testament are found throughout the book. Other references to the temple in heaven include:

"The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." Psalm 11:4.

"But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him." Habakkuk 2:20.

The tabernacle on earth was patterned after the temple in heaven. It had two apartments, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

By studying the plan of salvation as illustrated in the Old Testament sanctuary services, we may learn much about the great work of atonement.

The word "atonement," refers to the process whereby man is reconciled to God. To atone for something means to make up for it; to pay the cost. Jesus paid the cost of our sin. A study of the sanctuary reveals three steps in the process: sacrifice, intercession, and cleansing.

Sacrifice:

This step was symbolized in the Old Testament by the daily slaying of animals. A perfect lamb without blemish was required, and sacrificed in the courtyard. Every drop of blood that was shed in those rituals pointed to the sacrifice of Jesus for lost mankind. His death paid the full price for our redemption.

Intercession:

This step was symbolized by the daily duties performed by the priests in the holy place, or first apartment of the sanctuary. Incense was continually offered before God, mingled with the prayers of the saints. This represented Christ's priestly intercession for His people which He began after His ascension to heaven. Through Christ's first apartment ministry the sinner's guilt is pardoned, and Christ's righteousness is imparted to His people.

Cleansing:

The third step was illustrated once each year in the Old Testament ceremonies. The tenth day of the seventh month was called the Day of Atonement. It was the day on which the sanctuary was cleansed. It was considered the most solemn and significant event of the year. It was thought of as the Day of Judgement.

On that day the whole congregation appeared before the Lord that they might be made right with Him. Sins which had been brought to the sanctuary throughout the year by sin offerings, were figuratively removed from it on that day. But those who failed to humble themselves before God were cut off from the people.

On that day the high priest alone entered before God behind the veil of the Most Holy Place. With him he took the blood of a goat and a censer of coals from the altar of incense. This represented the final phase of Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary, performed in "the time

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of the end.” The work of atonement is not complete until the sanctuary is thus cleansed.

Biblical Illustrations of Christ’s End-Time Cleansing Work:

At least four different figures are used in the Bible to illustrate the final, cleansing phase of Christ’s atoning ministry. They are summarized below.

1. The Day of Atonement:

Since the Old Testament feasts such as Passover and Pentecost illustrated and pointed forward to events in Christ’s work of salvation, we should also expect the Day of Atonement to point to a significant aspect of Christ’s ministry. The Biblical description of the Day of Atonement shows it as a day of cleansing from sin for the sanctuary and the people.

2. The Pre-Advent Judgment:

A second figure used in the Bible to illustrate Christ’s end-time cleansing work is that of a pre-advent judgment. That is, a judgment which Christ performs before He returns at His second coming. This event is often called the Investigative Judgment. It involves an examination of the lives of all whose names have ever been entered into the Book of Life.

3. Preparations for a Wedding:

Elsewhere in the Bible the cleansing phase of Christ’s ministry is compared to preparations made for a wedding. The wedding parables of Jesus in Matthew 22 and 25 speak of an essential preparation on the part of the those who are invited to the wedding feast. Symbolically we are each individually called to be guests at the wedding of Christ and His church.

The marriage appears in Revelation 19:7-9 just before Christ comes back to earth to receive His bride. **“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”**

The king personally inspects each guest to make sure they are each wearing the wedding garment. **“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:” Matthew 22:11.**

Revelation 19:8 tells us that this white raiment is “the righteousness of saints.” Only those who by God’s grace overcome their sins are clothed in the required garment. This preparation and inspection of character before the wedding illustrates the end-time cleansing ministry of Christ.

“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.” Revelation 3:5.

4. Refining of Gold and Silver:

A fourth Biblical description of Christ’s end-time cleansing work is found in Malachi 3 where the Lord comes to His temple and sits **“as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.”**

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It is encouraging to know that Jesus not only examines our lives, but also works to cleanse us of the sins which may beset us. The strongest influences of heaven are working to help us separate ourselves from sin's destroying hold. God is on our side. He wants us to obtain the victory. It has been said that there are three votes which determine each person's eternal destiny. Satan always votes against you. God always votes for you. The deciding vote is left to you.

Where We Stand Today:

We now live in the period of Christ's ministry which the Bible depicts in the above four ways. The cleansing of the sanctuary is going on today. It began, according to prophecy, at the end of the "2300 days" of Daniel 8:14. The first "seventy weeks" of that prophecy pointed to the time of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary. The remaining 1810 years of the prophecy point to the time when the cleansing of the sanctuary would begin: the autumn of 1844.

How We Show the Date, October 22, 1844.

We see that every ceremony which God gave to Israel had a meaning, illustrating some aspect of Christ's ministry. The first-month feasts, also known as spring festivals (Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Wavesheaf Offering, and Pentecost), all pointed to events connected with Christ's sacrifice and intercessory ministry. The seventh-month feasts, or autumn festivals (Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles), pointed to events connected with the final phase of the atonement and the removing of sin from the universe.

Christ's fulfillment of the events to which each of the spring festivals pointed took place on the very date of the corresponding ceremonial service in the Jewish calendar. In other words, He actually died on Passover day, was raised on the day of the wave sheaf offering, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. We therefore know that He would begin the work which the Day of Atonement pointed to, on that date of the Jewish calendar in 1844, which was October 22.

The Misunderstanding in 1844 which caused the Great Disappointment:

The people had been studying the prophecy of Daniel 8:14. **"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."** They calculated the time and they thought it pointed to the second coming of Jesus to this earth. They prayed much and got their hearts ready to meet Him. In fact their efforts were so earnest that the Bible records the year before this, 1843, as a 'Blessed year'!

"Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Daniel 12:12.

Briefly, this 1335 day/years starts from 508, because when the continual desolation, is taken out of the way, that starts this time prophecy. So we add 1335 to 508, which brings us to 1843. There was going to be a blessing in that year.

In the Great Advent Awakening in the early 1800s, William Miller and others were studying Daniel's prophecies, and they started believing that sometime around 1843 or later 1844, something was going to happen called the Cleansing of the Sanctuary. They thought it was the Second Coming of Jesus. But they experienced a great disappointment when, after calculating

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the exact day of October 22, 1844, and preparing their hearts to meet Him, He did not come to earth. Their disappointed expectations for Christ's return in 1844 were the result of a misunderstanding as to what was the sanctuary to be cleansed. Later they learned of the work of Christ in the heavenly Sanctuary that had started on that very day.

The prophet Daniel had also misunderstood the same thing. Daniel received the vision of the 2300-day prophecy in 551 B.C. But Gabriel did not provide a full explanation of the prophecy until the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, which was 538 B.C. During those 13 years Daniel held a misunderstanding as to which sanctuary was to be cleansed. His concern was for the temple in Jerusalem which he hoped would soon be restored. He certainly did not want to see it lay in ruins for 2300 years. That was the reason for his great anxiety and earnest prayer.

William Miller began preaching on the 2300-day prophecy in the year 1831. Until 1844 people incorrectly thought that the sanctuary to be cleansed was the earth. Just like Daniel, for 13 years they misunderstood which sanctuary was to be cleansed!

Just because God may withhold the full light of truth from His people for a time does not mean that He is not leading them. He has a reason for all that He does, and He unfolds His secrets as He sees best. Our duty is to walk in the light as He reveals it, and He will guide us into all truth.

The Close of Probation

The wedding parable in Matthew 25 shows that salvation is offered for a limited time only. In the parable, those who were prepared for the bridegroom "went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." After the door was shut no one else was allowed in. They were too late.

Jesus compared His coming to the days of Noah. For 120 years people had opportunity to respond to Noah's invitation. But once the door of the ark was shut, no one else could enter.

Jesus is now inviting all who will respond, to allow Him to cleanse them from sin. He is now pleading the merits of His own sacrifice on behalf of all who will choose it. But when His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is finished and everyone on earth has either cooperated with or rejected His atoning work, He will then leave the sanctuary. His work of intercession ceases.

Those who during the time of probation have made an entire consecration of their lives to Him are at that time sealed from the power of Satan. They will sin no more. But those who spurned God's grace while Jesus pleaded, will find no mediator when probation ends. They chose to retain their sins, and their decision cannot be reversed.

"And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." Revelation 15:5-8.

This describes the scene after Jesus leaves the temple. The sanctuary is empty; its activities have ended. The wrath of God is now poured out upon the unrepentant. The plagues which

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then will fall upon the world as described in Revelation 16. But those who had made the Lord their refuge will have His protection during the time of trouble.

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” Isaiah 26:20.

“He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” Isaiah 33:16.

The beautiful Psalm 91 also describes the protection to be enjoyed by the righteous during that time. Take time to read and memorize these texts so they will be in your heart to strengthen and encourage you in the days ahead.

“Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” Psalm 91:8-10.

“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.” Psalm 91:14-16.

The Old Testament sanctuary services illustrated Christ’s work in the plan of salvation, and just as the ceremonial Passover service illustrated Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, so the ceremonial “Day of Atonement” illustrated the great atonement our High Priest is now making for us in the heavenly sanctuary.

Many young people have a sad attitude these days that God is a monster just out to take away from them all the things they enjoy and make them suffer in some way for enjoying them. People often resent what the Bible says needs to change in their lives. They feel that being a Christian is taking away from them the things they want most in life, habits that seem like ‘best friends’ to them. So they feel angry and resentful when anyone tries to point them to salvation.

But the truth is, anything that the Lord in His Word tells us is not right or good, will never make us truly happy always. It may seem happy and enjoyable for the moment, because we do not have anything better to enjoy in its place. When we can realize that the very God of the universe wants to be our friend forever, and in fact Jesus loves us so much and wants this for us so much that He suffered horribly and died just to make it possible for you to have it, how does some temporary sinful ‘pleasure’ match up to being able to enjoy the wonders of the entire universe forever?

Sinful indulgence and so-called pleasures always leave us feeling sorry sooner or later. Often the guilt and regret become so terrible that people take their own lives! Or else they do it slowly by drinking alcohol or taking some harmful substance to ‘turn off their brains’ so they don’t feel the regret and guilt. But one can’t enjoy much at all with a damaged and turned off brain. Sinful indulgence in harmful things, bad habits, junk-foods, mind-altering substances, selfish actions, can never keep us, our minds, or our bodies strong and feeling good forever!

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Psalm 16:11.