



Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8).

A wise father wanted to explain a complex building concept to his young son and needed a way to make his ideas easily understood. Therefore, he took his son into his younger sister's playroom. Using her sandbox plus some cardboard and building blocks, he was able to clearly explain the complex building ideas so that his son could fully understand.

God knew that for humans to understand the heavenly sanctuary and Christ's ministry there for us, He needed to simplify the mysteries of salvation. Our heavenly Father desired us to fully comprehend those eternal truths. Therefore, He used a desert “sandbox,” as it were, by which we could “visualize and touch” an example of the true heavenly sanctuary, which we could not see or touch. Its message of redemption, grace, and love provides us with a beautiful picture of a caring God.

Preview

The ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is as essential for salvation as His death on the cross. Christ's once-for-all death on the cross for our sins completed the atonement. Now He is making the benefits of His sacrifice available to us. He is applying His blood to our individual records so that each of us will be judged righteous and ready for everlasting life. This is the message and meaning of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Both are necessary if humanity is to receive eternal life.

The message of the sanctuary illustrates three phases of Christ's ministry: first, His substitutionary sacrifice; second, His priestly mediation; and third, the final judgment. For all these, God used symbols to make it plain.

Points to Ponder

1. The heavenly sanctuary is understood by a study of the earthly sanctuary. Why?
Earth's sanctuary was a miniature of heaven's, and we understand the unseen by the seen.
2. The sanctuary demonstrates God's plan to remove sin from the individual and the universe. Why?
Each sacrifice was a symbol of Christ's sacrifice. Penitent sinners learn that they need a substitute to pay for their sins.
3. The sanctuary had two basic services—a daily and a yearly. Why?
The daily services symbolized God's plan to constantly provide intercession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration to the repentant sinner. Constant access to God was symbolized in the morning and evening sacrifices. The yearly service on the Day of Atonement was a time of judgment, during which the records of sins were removed. Also symbolized at this time was Satan, the originator of sin, paying for his crime against God's government.

4. The time of the heavenly judgment hour was prophesied. Why?
God desired mankind to know when the final work of Christ's heavenly ministry would begin in the heavenly sanctuary.
5. At the conclusion of heaven's judgment, everyone who has ever lived on earth will have had his eternal destiny fixed. Why?
Because probation will have closed, and there is no second chance. God brings the reign of sin to an end and rewards everyone according to their record.

Nuts & Bolts

1. The sanctuary built by Moses on earth was an example, in all its detail, of the heavenly sanctuary.
Read Hebrews 9:1-7.
Hebrews 8:2: "A minister of the _____, and of the true _____, which the Lord _____, and not _____."
2. All the services in the earthly sanctuary represented those in the heavenly sanctuary.
Hebrews 11:11, 12: "But _____ being come an _____ of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect _____, not made with hands... but by His own _____ He entered in once into the _____, having obtained eternal _____ for us."
3. Since the earthly sanctuary and its services give us an insight into the role of the heavenly sanctuary, we need to compare the daily services and the yearly service.
Earthly sanctuary: daily—took place in the courtyard and in the Holy Place every day.
 - a. The animal sacrificed symbolized Jesus as our Substitute. "The Lord hath laid on Him the _____ of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).
 - b. The priest also symbolized Jesus. If the sacrifice atoned for our sins, why was a priest necessary? There was need for mediation between sinners and a holy God. "For there is one _____, and one _____ between God and men, the man _____" (1 Timothy 2:5).
Heavenly sanctuary: daily—represented by Christ's mediatorial work after He ascended to heaven. "He ever liveth to make _____ for them" (Hebrews 7:25).
Earthly sanctuary: yearly—took place once a year in the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. In the earthly sanctuary on the great Day of Atonement, two goats were used. The Lord's goat represented _____. Azazel, or the scapegoat, represented _____.

Heavenly sanctuary: yearly—illustrates the three phases of God's final judgment:

- a. _____ premillennial judgment (taking place now);
- b. _____ judgment (will take place during the thousand years);
- c. _____ judgment (will take place at the end of the thousand years).

4. These services in the earthly sanctuary allow us to understand what Jesus is doing for us in the heavenly sanctuary.

Hebrews 8:1: "We have such an _____, who is set on the _____ of the _____ in the heavens."

5. Since the sanctuary explains God's plan for the removal of sin from the individual and the universe, it must also deal with a time to investigate guilt and a time to pronounce its judgment. When was this to begin?

Daniel 8:14: "Unto two thousand three hundred days, and then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Ezra 6:4 says: one prophetic day equals _____.

Therefore Daniel 8:14 indicates 2300 prophetic years.

- a. When did the 2300 day/year date begin? _____ B.C.
- b. When did the seventy (90) weeks end? _____ A.D.

6. What times occur within this prophecy that point to Christ's redemption of humanity?

Daniel 9:26, 27: "And after threescore and two weeks shall _____ be cut off, but not for _____; in the midst of the _____ he shall cause the _____ and _____ to cease." Christ's death on the cross abolished all of the sacrificial system, for He was Himself the ultimate sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world.

To mark the end of the earthly sacrificial system even as Jesus died on the cross, a unique event took place in the temple in Jerusalem at the very moment Jesus died. "Behold, the _____ of the _____ was rent in _____ from the _____ to the _____; and the _____ did _____, and the rocks rent" (Matthew 27:51).

7. Since the 2300-year prophecy ended in 1844, what event was to begin for Jesus?

Daniel 7:9: "I beheld till the _____ were cast down, and the _____ of Days did sit... Ten thousand times ten thousand _____ before Him; the _____ was set, and the _____ were opened." Christ began the final phase of His high-priestly ministry, called the pre-advent investigative judgment.

8. When this judgment ends and Christ proclaims, "It is finished," what solemn announcement is uttered?

Revelation 22:11, 12: "He that is unjust, let him be _____ still... he that is holy, let him be _____ still."

9. What did Christ's death make available for the Christian?

Hebrews 7:25: "He is able also to _____ them to the _____ that come unto God by him."

Hebrews 4:16: "Let us therefore _____ boldly unto the throne of _____, that we may obtain _____, and find _____ to help in time of _____."

His death on the cross paid our debt of sin, and His ministry in heaven applies its full benefits of the atonement for salvation.

10. This judgment-hour message is repeated in Revelation 14:6.

a. Whom does it call everyone to worship? _____

b. What special time frame is mentioned? "The hour of his _____ is _____"
(Revelation 14:6, 7).

11. What criteria will God use in the investigative judgment?

Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For God shall bring _____ into _____, with every secret _____, whether it be _____, or whether it be _____."

12. What response is the Holy Spirit calling for you to make today?

2 Corinthians 6:2: "Behold, now is the _____; behold now is the _____ of _____."

Words to Remember

Substitutionary: Someone acting or serving in place of another.

Mediator: A go-between to bring about an agreement of peace between two parties.

Atonement: An act that brings reconciliation between two estranged persons—such as Christ's death that made peace between God and sinners.

Reconciliation: To bring about harmony between two parties by doing away with the hostility between them.

Restoration: To bring back to the original condition.

The Difference Between

Old Covenant: An attempt by Israel to fulfill the covenant they made with God by their own strength. They sought salvation in their works, and failed in their covenant relationship.

New Covenant: The covenant, fulfillment of which was made possible by the blood of Christ. Salvation is an act of God's grace, and the power to obey God is given to those who accept Jesus in faith.

The Lord's goat: The goat whose blood was taken to the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place as the final act of atonement in the sanctuary. It symbolizes Christ paying for our sins.

Scapegoat or Azazel: The goat that represents Satan and was left in the wilderness as a symbol of the banishment of sin and Satan.

I Truly Believe

Think carefully about each statement below. Check the statements you truly believe.

- I believe the ministry of Christ in heaven reveals a God of love.
- I believe Christ's death on the cross was symbolized by the death of sacrifices in the earthly sanctuary and reveals that sin can only be forgiven by God's Substitute, Jesus, who died for my sins.
- I believe Christ desires me to know the power of forgiveness and to be safe in the gift of His righteousness that makes me accepted.
- I believe that when God's pre-advent judgment ends, Jesus will come the second time, and this world will come to an end.

My Prayer

Dear Father,

I thank You for the truth of the sanctuary. Help me to understand fully Your love, justice, mercy, and righteousness as revealed in the ministry of Christ. Teach me Your plans for victory over sin, and help me prepare for a life with You in eternity. Amen.