

A hand in a white robe is pulling a blue patterned curtain to the left, revealing a golden altar with two eagle statues. The scene is set in a temple with ornate golden columns and a bright light source behind the altar.

A Divine Design

The Jewish Temple
in History, Prophecy,
and ***YOUR LIFE***



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Prophecy, and Your Life

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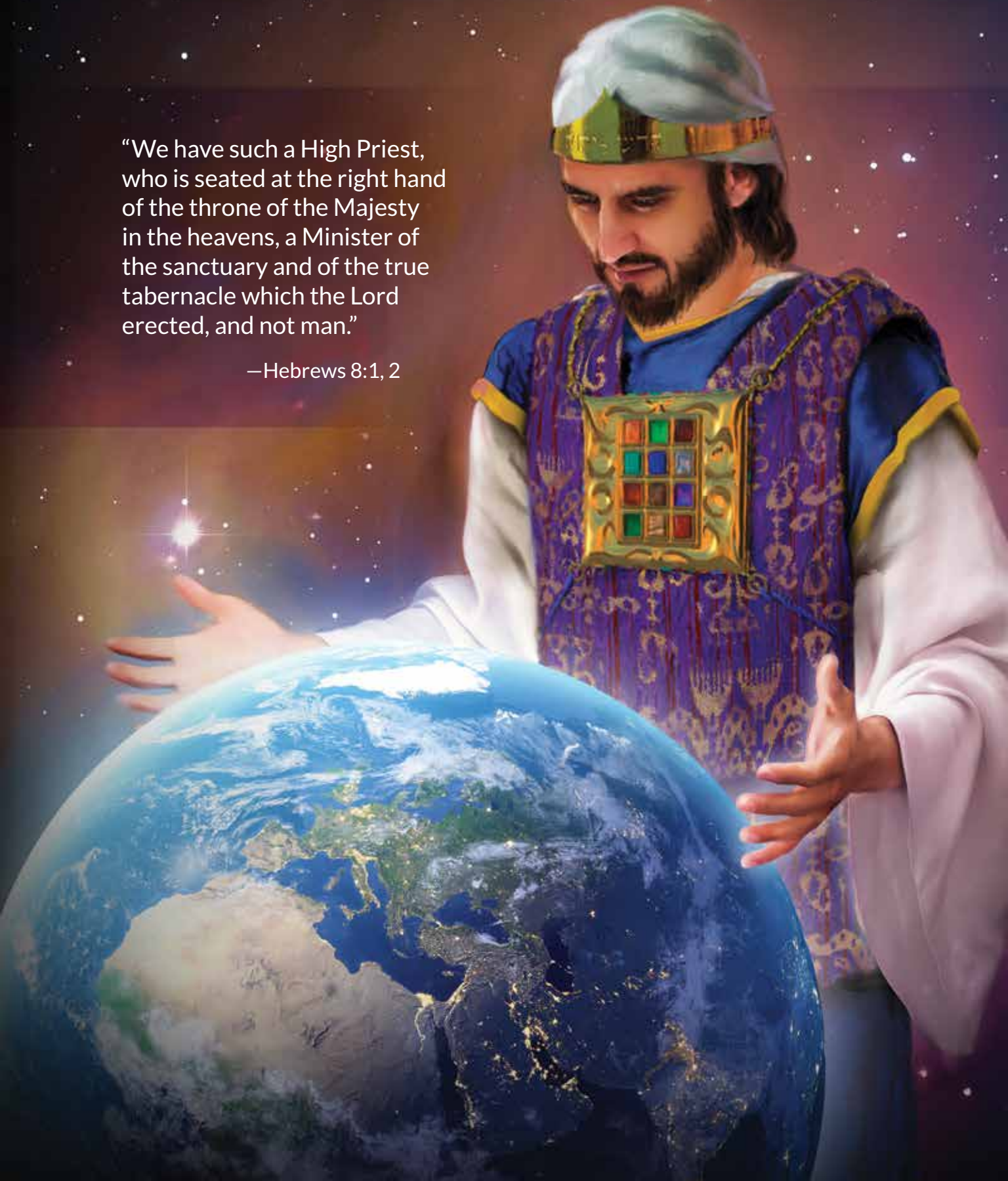


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“We have such a High Priest,
who is seated at the right hand
of the throne of the Majesty
in the heavens, a Minister of
the sanctuary and of the true
tabernacle which the Lord
erected, and not man.”

—Hebrews 8:1, 2





HEAVEN'S Command Center

When a major crisis erupts somewhere in the world, you will likely find the President of the United States in a special place: The Situation Room.

Located somewhere below the West Wing of the White House, this 5,525-square-foot conference room is a 24/7, one-stop hub of top-secret information.

Equipped with the latest communications technology, the Situation Room is an “intelligence management center” run by the National Security Council and is used to monitor major crises at home and abroad, enabling the president

and his advisors to have real-time command and control of all U.S. forces around the globe.

However, even more secure than the Situation Room is a safe-room located deep beneath the East Wing of the White House. Called the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC), this reinforced underground bunker serves as a special communications center in times of extreme crises, such as in the event of a nuclear attack.

The PEOC was constructed during World War II for Franklin D. Roosevelt as an evacuation point for any life-threatening attack to the Commander in Chief. During the September 11 attacks, for instance, high-ranking government leaders were evacuated from their offices to the PEOC, which had been built to withstand a direct hit by a nuclear warhead.

Cosmic Crisis

Did you know that the government of heaven once came under attack, endangering the security of the entire universe? Through the influence of the most powerful angel, named Lucifer, a rebellion was triggered against God’s kingdom, exploding like a nuclear chain reaction and threatening to destroy the perfect harmony of heaven.

This cosmic war eventually spilled out onto the earth, where Lucifer—now identified as Satan, the adversary—lured the first humans to join his revolt against heaven.

However, God was not caught off guard.

From the “Situation Room” of the universe, the Creator mobilized operations to save humanity from the life-threatening deceptions of the devil and to put an end to evil, pain, and death forever.

The central issue of this conflict is sin, which the Bible defines as the spirit of lawlessness and the breaking of God’s law (1 John 3:4). Sin, which separates people from





“

War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

—Revelation 12:7-9

”

God (Isaiah 59:2) and leads to death (Romans 6:23), must be conquered in order to save Planet Earth and its people from eternal destruction.

The Bible reveals that ever since sin entered the universe, God's principal focus has been to remove the catastrophic blight from His creation. Seated upon His throne in the supreme operations center of heaven, He works to save all humanity—that includes you! This center, which is located in the very nucleus of the universe, is called the heavenly “sanctuary” (Hebrews 8:2), the ultimate “temple” (Revelation 7:15).

What does the Bible uncover about this sanctuary? Why did God command the Israelites to build a model of this divine design on the earth? What are the meanings behind the sacrifices and services of the earthly sanctuary? How does the message of the sanctuary relate to end-time Bible prophecy? Must the Hebrew sanctuary be rebuilt in Jerusalem to usher in the Antichrist? And in what way does the Bible sanctuary relate to the saving work of Christ in your life today?

All these questions and more will be answered! Your eyes are about to be opened to one of the greatest—yet often neglected—Bible secrets: the truth about a situation room in heaven where the leader of the universe, God, is working day and night to save your life.

Sanctuaries IN TIME

During the Cold War era, a cavernous hideaway was blasted out of solid greenstone near Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania. It was equipped with two underground reservoirs, a power plant, food supplies, and several buildings to accommodate hundreds of wartime staff.



The U.S. government created this sprawling “underground Pentagon,” known as the Raven Rock Mountain Complex, to provide the Department of Defense an offsite location to regroup in the event that a nuclear weapon destroyed the Pentagon, the nation’s military headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. In the event of a catastrophic attack, officials could be quickly shuttled to this “alternate seat of government” and resume operations to defend the United States.

Some 3,500 years earlier, halfway around the planet, God commanded Moses, the leader of the Hebrew people, to build a temple in the wilderness. The blueprint that God gave him was based on the sanctuary in heaven, patterned after His seat of government—though on a smaller scale.

But the Lord didn’t need an earthly hideaway because the sanctuary in heaven was at risk of being destroyed. No. Instead, this temple was designed to host the presence of God and to reveal His plan of salvation through a three-dimensional panorama. You see, the wilderness sanctuary and the other Hebrew temples that followed reveal the Lord’s desire to remove the barrier between God and humanity caused by sin so that He might once again draw close to us.

What did this first earthly sanctuary look like? How was it made? Did God really dwell in a building? What furniture was placed inside it? And what services were held within?

Let’s find out ...

This chapter will provide you with an overview of the temple on earth. The next chapter will explain the deeper significance of the sanctuary and its services.

The Wilderness Tabernacle

After God freed the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt, He did not immediately take them into the Promised Land. Instead, He first led them into the wilderness, to Mount Sinai, where they temporarily settled. Why? These former captives had lost much of their knowledge about God and needed to learn about His plans for them to be a great nation—a nation that would help to reveal His love for the world and help save humanity from sin and death.

While the Hebrews lived on these desert plains, Moses often walked up the mountain to meet with God and to receive messages for the people. One day, the Lord said, “Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering” (Exodus 25:2). The people were to bring precious metals, fine linens, animal skins, oils, spices, incense, and precious stones for this purpose:

“Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (v. 8).

And just as God gave Noah a blueprint for building the ark, He also gave Moses a divine design for building a sanctuary on earth. “According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it” (v. 9). This earthly structure was a simplified miniature patterned after “the copies of the things in the heavens”—that is, God’s sanctuary in heaven. (See Hebrews 9:23, 24.)

A Heartfelt Response

Unfortunately, the people rebelled against God soon after Moses had received this blueprint, so the tabernacle was not immediately built. But eventually, the people happily responded to God’s request, bringing in the large amounts of gold, silver, and other expensive materials necessary to build this earthly dwelling place for the Lord’s presence.

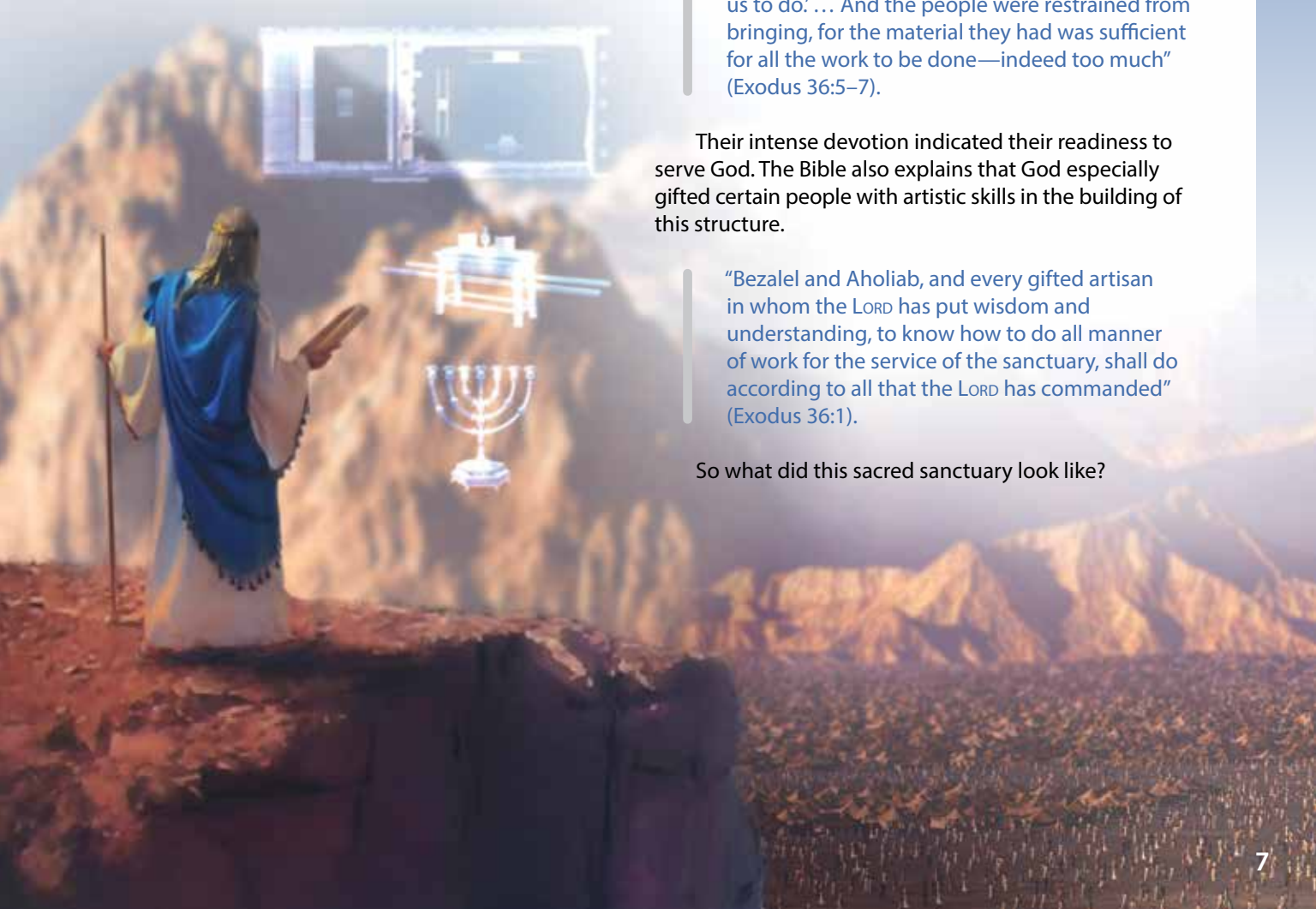
When the builders assessed all the materials being brought for the project, they were amazed:

“The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded us to do.’ . . . And the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too much” (Exodus 36:5–7).

Their intense devotion indicated their readiness to serve God. The Bible also explains that God especially gifted certain people with artistic skills in the building of this structure.

“Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded” (Exodus 36:1).

So what did this sacred sanctuary look like?



The Tabernacle and Courtyard

The wilderness sanctuary was constructed as a portable building because the Hebrews would spend many years as nomads traveling to the Promised Land.

This tent structure was a rectangle, built to be about 55 feet long, 18 feet wide, and 18 feet tall. The hard, dense acacia wood found in the area around Mount Sinai was used for much of the building and furniture. For the walls, boards overlaid in gold were placed in silver bases. Layers of curtains made of fine linen, goat hair, ram skins, and badger skins formed the roof, giving the building protection from the elements.

The inner tent was divided into two rooms: the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. A heavy, elaborately woven curtain separated these two rooms from each other; it was hung from four gold-covered pillars and was made with rich colors—blue, purple, and scarlet—and embroidered with pictures of cherubim. It was designed to be a stunning representation of the real ministering angels who serve God in the heavenly sanctuary.

Around the perimeter of the sanctuary were curtains that created a 150-foot-long by 75-foot-wide courtyard, which prevented people and animals from accidentally wandering into the sacred space. The curtains were placed low enough so that people could see the sanctuary, but entry was permitted only by a single door, a curtained gate at the east end.

Courtyard Furnishings

When entering the sanctuary courtyard, the first article of furniture an Israelite encountered was the altar of burnt offering. This bronze-covered, hollow square was about seven-and-a-half feet in length and width and about four-and-a-half feet high. It was built with a grate on which to burn animal sacrifices, and utensils were made to assist the priests in their work. A curved horn jutted out from each corner of the altar, and blood from the sacrifices was smeared on them.

The next article of courtyard furniture was the laver, which was situated between the altar and the inner tent. This large, polished-bronze basin held water and was





used by the priests to wash themselves before serving at the altar or in the tabernacle.

Holy Place Furnishings

The entrance into the sanctuary was a thick curtain made of blue, purple, and scarlet thread. It hung from five pillars made from acacia wood plated with gold and set in five bronze bases. It brought priests into the room called the Holy Place.

In the Holy Place were three articles of furniture. To the north side was the table of showbread ("presence bread"). It was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold and was about three feet long, one-and-a-half feet wide, and two-and-a-quarter feet tall. At its top were two borders of gold molding shaped like crowns. God instructed Moses, "You shall set the showbread on the table before Me always" (Exodus 25:30).

On the south side of the Holy Place stood a large menorah, a seven-branch lamp made of solid gold. It had gold cups to hold the olive oil and wicks that were "to burn continually" (Exodus 27:20); its seven branches were beautifully decorated with flowers. The lampstand weighed about 75 pounds and provided light in the enclosed room.

Located in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was the altar of incense. It was also made of acacia wood covered in gold. This upright, rectangular piece of furniture was about one-and-a-half feet in width and depth and stood about three feet high. As with the table of showbread, the altar of incense had gold molding shaped like crowns around the top edge, and like the altar of burnt offering, its corners were topped with four horns. Incense was burned daily on this small altar before the Lord, whose presence was behind the veil in the Most Holy Place.

Most Holy Place Furnishing

Behind the separating curtain was the most sacred space in the tabernacle, called the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place. This inner sanctum was the primary place the presence of God appeared. The Most Holy Place was a square room approximately 18 feet in height, depth, and width. It was entered into only once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement.

Only one piece of furniture was found in the Most Holy Place: the ark of the covenant. This chest was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold inside and out. It was about three-and-three-quarters feet long and two-and-a-quarter feet in height and depth. A solid gold lid was made for the top and was called the mercy seat.

Mounted on each side of the chest were figures of two golden angels, winged cherubim looking





down toward the mercy seat, where the presence of God appeared and spoke to the high priest. These represented two actual angels stationed beside the throne of God in heaven. (See Isaiah 6:1, 2.)

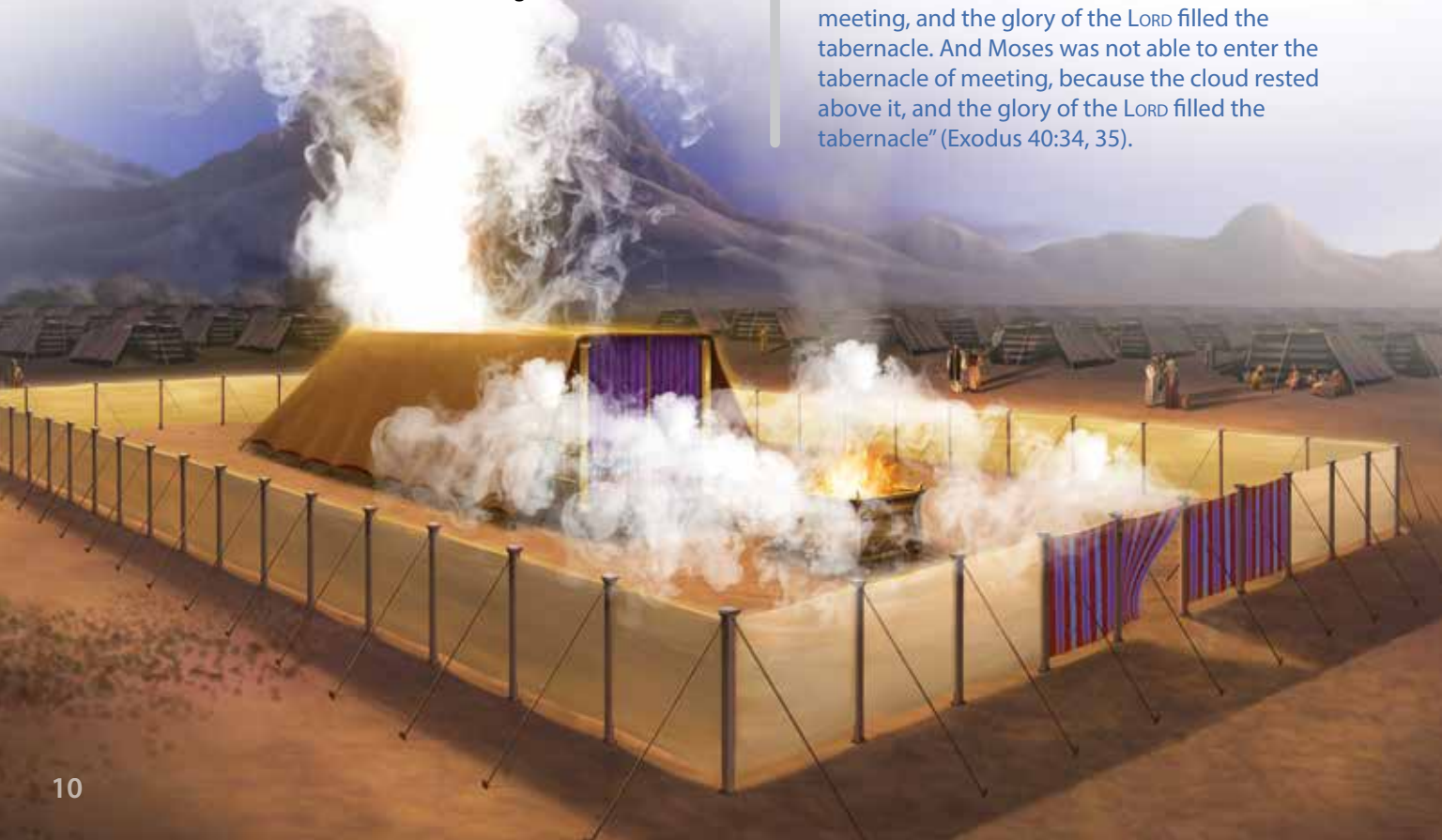
Gold rings were attached to the sides of the ark through which long poles were slid for the purpose of lifting and carrying the ark.

Inside the ark was placed a great treasure, the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God. Later, the rod of the high priest Aaron was placed inside the ark, along with a small pot of manna, the bread with which God miraculously fed the Israelites. The "book of the law," a scroll containing detailed civil

and ceremonial laws, was placed "beside the ark of the covenant" (Deuteronomy 31:26).

About six months after God met with Moses, the construction of the tabernacle was completed. Moses carefully inspected it to ensure that it followed the pattern he had received from the Lord. The book of Exodus then concludes with the shining cloud of God's presence descending onto the temple, showing His blessing and approval:

"Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34, 35).



The High Priest Garments

The Lord selected the tribe of Levi to serve in the sanctuary, a sign of honor for their faithfulness—in contrast to the many other Hebrews who had fallen into idolatry and had worshiped the golden calf. (See Exodus chapter 32.) Initially, Moses' brother Aaron served as high priest and Aaron's sons served as priests, while the rest of their tribe assisted in caring for the tabernacle.

The priests wore special garments made of white linen, woven in one piece. Just as Moses removed his sandals when encountering God at the burning bush, so the priests removed their sandals when serving in the sanctuary. Careful washing before entering the sanctuary indicated the importance of removing all outside defilement before approaching the holy presence of the Lord.

Along with the white linen garment, the high priest also wore additional garments, some of the most beautiful craftsmanship of the time. He wore a robe of blue, woven in one piece with golden bells and pomegranates decorating the lower edge. Over the robe was placed a sleeveless, shorter "ephod" with two gold-embroidered shoulder straps set with two onyx stones, on which were written the names of the 12 tribes of Israel. The ephod was also belted with a sash made of the same material.

The most sacred and exquisite part of the high priest's clothing was a breastplate that hung from the shoulders by a cord of blue. Twelve stones were mounted on this vestment, also inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes. God explained, "Aaron shall bear



THE Body AND THE Church

Jesus and many New Testament writers used the temple and its themes as a teaching tool for various and important spiritual truths that remain to this day.

Your Body Is a Temple. God wants His people to treat their bodies with the same care that the priests were supposed to have when caring for His earthly tabernacle, keeping it from all sin and defilement. “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20). See also 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.



Christ’s Body Is a Temple. Jesus also linked His body to the temple. He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:19–22).



The Church Is a Temple. The Scriptures explain that as the ancient temple was to be a vehicle to teach the plan of salvation, the body of Christ, the church, is to serve in that capacity as the sanctuary in the world today. “Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually” (1 Corinthians 12:27). “You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:19–22). See also 1 Peter 2:5.



the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually” (Exodus 28:29).

Finally, the high priest wore a white turban or crown with a golden placard on the front engraved with the words “Holiness to the LORD.”

Daily and Yearly Services

Two primary services made up the work of the sanctuary—a daily service and a yearly service.

The daily service consisted of a morning and evening burnt offering of a year-old lamb, symbolizing the daily commitment of Israel to the Lord. Each sacrificial lamb was to “be without blemish” (Exodus 12:5), representing the perfect Messiah who would be anointed in His prime



to be the Lamb of God. The daily service also involved the offering of incense on the golden altar and other offerings for individual sins and special feasts.

The yearly service, called the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), was the final and most sacred service of the ceremonial year. On this day only was the high priest permitted, once per year, to enter the Most Holy Place. Great care and preparation took place before the high priest could stand in the presence of God before the mercy seat. The people waiting outside the sanctuary earnestly prayed for a divine blessing on the work of the high priest.

Other Temple Structures



The Temple of Solomon.

Long after the Israelites had settled in the Promised Land, King David desired to build a more imposing, permanent, and magnificent sanctuary structure. But because David was a man

of war, God chose his son Solomon to build it. (See 1 Chronicles 28:1–6.) It was much larger and more elaborately decorated. The pieces of furniture were also larger and more numerous. This temple stood for about 400 years and was eventually destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.



The Temple of Ezekiel. This temple was never built but was rather described in vision by the prophet Ezekiel. (See Ezekiel chapters 40–42.) It was intended to be built after God's people returned from Babylonian

captivity, but it never fully materialized because they never met God's requirements. Interestingly, archaeologists have uncovered several gates in ancient Judean cities that match the gates described in Ezekiel's vision.



The Temple of Zerubbabel. After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews who returned to Jerusalem built a humbler version of Solomon's temple. (See Ezra chapters 4, 5.) They were met with resistance by nearby enemies, but Zerubbabel, the governor, eventually succeeded in erecting a

new building of lesser quality than Solomon's. Moreover, the Most Holy Place was empty, for the ark of the covenant was—according to some sources—hidden away in a cave near Jerusalem, not to be found. This temple, sometimes referred to as the Second Temple, stood for about 500 years until the time of Herod.



The Temple of Herod. During the reign of Herod the Great (circa 73–4 BC), a Roman client king of Judea, the Second Temple was refurbished and expanded. Considered a masterpiece of Herod's grand construction projects, the expansion was built on the Temple Mount, a plaza that

covered 144,000 square meters—the equivalent of 29 American football fields.

In AD 70, Roman legions under the command of Titus besieged and captured Jerusalem. They destroyed the city and the Second Temple, as Jesus had predicted.



Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.'

—Matthew 24:1, 2

The Meaning and Purpose of the Sanctuary

When God commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, it wasn't to create an alternate location for heaven's government. Instead, the Lord was reaching down to reveal the way of salvation, a way in which sin could be removed and humanity could be reunited with the Creator. But how did the sanctuary and its services make known this plan? What are the deeper meanings behind this earthly representation of heaven's reality? In the next section, you'll find out more about how the temple and its services detail and magnify God's plan to save humanity.



THE Ultimate SACRIFICE

He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for sacrificing his life for others.

On September 3, 1950, in the heat of combat during the Korean War, Master Sergeant Travis Watkins and thirty of his soldiers were surrounded by enemy combatants after being separated from other U.S. armed forces.

With crucial supplies running low, Watkins first set up a perimeter and then crossed over into enemy lines to search for food and ammunition. He was shot three times fending off an enemy advance, but he kept on fighting.

Watkins was later attacked and shot a fourth time, which paralyzed him from the waist down. But he refused to quit, engaging in combat and even refusing food and water so more of his soldiers could survive. Ultimately, the master sergeant ordered his men to retreat while staying behind so that he could provide cover for their escape. Travis Watkins laid down his life so that others might live.

While soldiers like Watkins garner our admiration for their heroic wartime deeds, the Bible lifts our eyes to another battle and to a hero

who made the ultimate sacrifice to rescue untold millions. The Bible says that this war began in heaven, but that it eventually spilled over onto Planet Earth. The forces of evil, led by Satan, now seek to conquer the entire human race. (See Revelation 12.)

But a rescue operation had already been set in motion, an operation designed to overcome evil and put an end to sin and human suffering for good. The headquarters for this rescue effort is the heavenly sanctuary, the Lord's command center.

In the heat of this conflict between good and evil, the Son of God willingly entered onto the deadly battlefield to rescue humanity. Jesus boldly stepped into the line of fire to save people from the devil's siege, and He paid the ultimate price.

God vividly outlined Jesus' work through the divine design of the earthly sanctuary, a model of the one in heaven, and its two ceremonies—a daily ritual and another that occurred once a year. Through these services, we can better understand two important phases in Christ's lifesaving service. In the first phase,



we'll see how Christ walked through the gates of hell to save the human race.

In this chapter, we'll focus on the daily rituals of the courtyard and the Holy Place, where we discover a ceremony that began with a sacrifice.

The Sacrificial Services

Several types of services were conducted in the sanctuary. Three main sacrificial offerings were presented: 1) burnt offerings, which expressed worship and dedication; 2) sin offerings, which represented confession and reconciliation for sins; and 3) peace offerings, which expressed gratitude, goodwill, and the fulfillment of vows.

Offerings were made either on behalf of the entire congregation or for individuals. An animal was typically offered as a sacrifice, unblemished and "clean," according to God's instructions. Usually, the animal was a lamb, goat, or bull,



but if a family was especially poor, it could bring a pigeon, turtledove, or even flour.

Twice a day, every day of the year, a priest offered a morning and evening burnt offering of a year-old lamb on behalf of the entire congregation. These sacrifices symbolized Israel's commitment to God and their dependence upon the future sacrifice of a promised Messiah, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Only a lamb without defects was accepted for this sacrifice, representing

"the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19).

As for sin offerings, there were several variations of the ritual. When an Israelite sinned, that individual, or the head of the person's household, would bring a sacrificial offering—often a lamb—to the sanctuary, where he would meet the priest at the door of the tabernacle. He would then lay his hands on the head of the animal and confess the sins, symbolically transferring the guilt to the animal. He would then, by his own hand, cut the throat of the animal. At this point, the priest would capture some of the blood and apply it to each of the four horns of the altar of sacrifice. The priest would then butcher the animal and take the fat to be burned on the altar of sacrifice; this fat represented sin (Psalm 37:20), which was consumed by the fire. By the application of the blood upon the horns of the altar (Leviticus 17:11), the priest made atonement for the sinner; the sin was forgiven. This ritual signified the individual's willing repentance of sin, as well as the necessity of bloodshed—death—for the atonement.

For some sin offerings, the high priest would take some of the animal blood into the Holy Place and sprinkle the blood before the veil, where, just on the other side, sat the ark of the covenant—which held the Ten Commandments, the law that had been transgressed. This act reinforced the



For other sacrifices, such as the Passover, the flesh of the animal might be eaten by the priests or the people. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53).





truth that the sins were transferred from the guilty party to the sanctuary. For the time being, the sanctuary stored the guilt of the sinners.

Law and Grace United

The sanctuary service reveals just how deeply God loves the human race and just how seriously He takes the destructive nature of sin. But what is sin? The Bible defines it as rebellion against God’s law. “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). The Israelites well knew the importance of God’s law; not only did He speak it to them from Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1–21), but He also engraved it with His own finger on two tablets of stone, which were placed inside the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place.

The Israelites also well knew the consequence of breaking God’s law. Sin separates us from God, the One who gives life. “Your iniquities have separated you from your God” (Isaiah 59:2); “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Who has sinned? “All have sinned” (Romans 3:23). The sanctuary and its services revealed God’s plan to remove guilt from sinners and bring them into harmony with Him.

Humans cannot both pay the penalty for sin and gain eternal life. Thus, God provided a way for this hopeless gulf of death to be bridged—through the sacrificial death of Jesus, who “died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3). Jesus chose to be our substitute, to die in our place, for, as the ritual of the sin offering illustrates, “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

The Bible says that we can be “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood” (Romans 3:24, 25). The Greek word for “propitiation” is *hilastērion*, which refers to the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant. Above the mercy seat and between the two cherubim was the visible presence of God. Below the mercy seat and inside the ark of the covenant were the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. Between the presence of God and the law of God was the mercy seat, a bridge of grace that connected humanity with divinity—Jesus.

Through Jesus’ dying in our place, the just requirements of the law were satisfied, enabling humanity to be reunited with God. In Christ’s loving sacrifice, God’s



WHY ONLY Jesus COULD BE THE Lamb OF God

unchangeable law and compassionate grace were brought together. "Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed" (Psalm 85:10).

One Christian writer beautifully described what Jesus has done for you in this way:

"Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With his stripes we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5)" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25).

The daily sacrifice of a lamb in the courtyard of the sanctuary was a constant reminder of the central key in the plan of salvation—the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins. The priests offered these sacrifices as symbols of a future day when Christ would die as our substitute. His death happened "once at the end of the ages,"



What is the difference between Christ dying for us and someone else dying for us? After all, many throughout history have given up their lives for others in acts of self-sacrificing love. Why did it have to be Jesus? Couldn't a sinless angel have died for us?

Jesus never sinned. If He had, He could not have been our substitute. Scripture tells us repeatedly that the animal sacrifice in the sanctuary service must be "without blemish" (Leviticus 4:3, 23, 28). All humans, except Jesus, have sinned. Jesus alone, through His own merit, was able to be our substitute and take on the punishment of our sins.

Jesus is God. See John 1:1. He is the One who created us; He also created the law, a written mirror of His character (John 1:2, 3). God is both Lifegiver and Lawmaker and is the only one able to bestow the gift of eternal life upon a sinner. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4). An angel could not be our substitute, because like us, angels are created beings; they have no life in and of themselves.

Jesus became a man. Jesus became our substitute by becoming a human. He left the glory of heaven and took "the form of a bondservant" (Philippians 2:7). "Though He was rich, yet for [our] sakes He became poor, that [we] through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). Only Jesus fully understood the human condition. In this way, He alone could serve as our High Priest.

Christ, as a member of the Godhead and a member of the human family, is not only the executor of the law but also its originator; He has the ability and the right to grant eternal life to us. He did so, not by changing His law, but by fulfilling it (Matthew 5:17). "Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:31).

for “He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”; “Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:26–28). In Jesus, all the symbols of the sacrificial services met their literal fulfillment.



Washing Away Sin

There were other duties that took place after the steps at the altar of burnt offering and before entering the tent building.

The priests were commanded to wash their hands at the courtyard’s bronze laver, between the altar and the entry to the Holy Place, before going “into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die” (Exodus 30:20).

Why? People defiled by sin cannot live in the presence of God. To reinforce this truth, priests were to wash before entering the sanctuary of the Lord. Washing at the laver also symbolized the inner cleansing of the priests’ hearts before approaching God. The same concept is acted out through the Christian ritual of baptism, when a believer is immersed in water: The new Christian symbolically dies to their old way of life and is raised to a new walk with Jesus. “We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).



Sustained by God’s Word

There were other articles of furniture in the Holy Place that hold significant spiritual meaning for every believer today.

From the entrance of the Holy Place, the table of showbread was located to the right (north) side. It held twelve loaves of unleavened bread, which were replaced every Sabbath day. The bread was dedicated to God and was later eaten by the priests.

Bread symbolizes God’s Word, the Bible. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness to turn stones into bread, Christ responded, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4). The Bible is God’s written Word and through it, we are spiritually sustained. Just as the priests ate the showbread in the sanctuary, so the Christian needs to partake of heavenly truth through the study of God’s Word. Just as we regularly need to partake of sustenance for life, we daily eat of God’s Word of life. “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11).



A Light to the World

On the south side of the Holy Place stood the golden lampstand, featuring a main shaft and six side branches for a total of seven lamps. These lamps were fueled by pure olive oil and were the only source of light for the Holy Place. The priests were never to allow this light to go out (Exodus 27:20).

Primarily, the lampstand represented Christ, who said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Secondly, the lampstand represented God’s people, who were to reflect the light of Jesus to the world. Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14, 16). The oil in the lamp also represented the power of the Holy Spirit to illuminate the church. (See Zechariah 4:2–6; 1 Samuel 16:13.)

The Scent of Prayer

The golden altar of incense was also in the Holy Place, in front of the veil—woven of blue, purple, and scarlet material—that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. This meant that while the priests stood and burned incense on the altar during the hours of morning and evening prayer, they were veiled from the direct presence of God. Only the high priest was to go behind the veil into the Most Holy Place, and that occurred only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

The incense was to be made especially for this service as “a perpetual incense before the LORD” (Exodus 30:8). The “perpetual incense” was a reminder of how we should daily come before the Lord in prayer, offering our petitions before His throne. (See Hebrews 4:16.)

Though the altar of incense was located in the Holy Place, it was also associated with the Day of Atonement service in the Most Holy Place (see Leviticus 16:12, 13; Hebrews 9:4), where the high priest offered up prayers before God. The sweet aroma of the incense rising over



Christ IN THE Sanctuary

The sanctuary itself is closely identified with Christ. Each ritual points to His work in the salvation of humanity. Even physical aspects of the sanctuary are connected with Jesus, as revealed in the following Scriptures:



The Door into the Sanctuary.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).



Sacrificial Lamb.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29; see also 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 5:12; 1 Corinthians 5:7).



Lamp.

"Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life'" (John 8:12).



Showbread.

"Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst'" (John 6:35).



Laver and Water.

"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'" (John 7:37, 38; see also Isaiah 55:1).



Altar of Incense.

"Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25; see also Romans 8:34).



High Priest.

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:19, 20).



Shekinah Glory.

"Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him" (Matthew 17:1-3).



The Entire Temple.

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:19-21).



the veil and into the presence of God represented the fragrant merits and work of Christ, the great Mediator interceding for His people.

The Great and Heavenly High Priest

The sanctuary priesthood stood “ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins” (Hebrews 10:11). But earthly priests symbolized a greater reality, serving “the copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (8:5), and were “symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience” (9:9).

The temporary ritual of animal sacrifices was “a shadow of the good things to come” (10:1), “for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” (v. 4). It existed only “until the time of reformation” when “Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (9:10, 11). Only by the death of Jesus, the perfect “Lamb of God” can we be made right with God.

Once the majority of the Jewish leadership rejected Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord no longer recognized the temple as His “house.” (See Matthew 23:38.) At that time, “the priesthood . . . changed” (Hebrews 7:12); the services no longer held the same sacred meaning in the sight of heaven. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple was torn in two, top to bottom, signifying that

the purpose of the earthly tabernacle was finished and fulfilled by the sacrifice of Christ. (See Matthew 27:51.)

After Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for the sins of humanity, He ascended to heaven and “sat down at the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12). What is He doing now? “The forerunner has entered [the heavenly sanctuary] for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever” (6:20). Not until Christ had come to earth and been “made like His brethren” (2:17), not until He had been “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” and could “sympathize with our weaknesses”

(4:15), was He fully prepared to “be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (2:17). In Jesus’ death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, we see that He not only came as the sacrificial Lamb but also became our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary!

We now have “a High Priest over the house of God” (10:21) and are invited to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (v. 22).

Because of Christ’s perfect sacrifice, the earthly priesthood passed away. Now, through our heavenly High Priest, we may “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:16).

The daily service in the earthly sanctuary symbolized Christ’s sacrifice on the cross for the sins of every person in the world. In our next section, we’ll look at the yearly service, called the Day of Atonement. It’s a ceremony that moves beyond the salvation of individuals to the ultimate elimination of all sin from the universe.



SANCTUARY: Exodus and Salvation

The sanctuary and its services were designed by God to be a reminder to Israel of how He had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. But it also serves as a reminder of how God saves the human race from the bondage of sin.

The apostle Paul taught that everything the Israelites experienced in the wilderness symbolically illustrates how God desires to save all people. "All these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). The Hebrews' burden of hard labor under the king of Egypt is an allegory of our bondage to sin under Satan. And like Moses liberated the Jewish people from their bondage, Jesus came to liberate us from slavery to sin, to make our burden light, and to give us rest (Matthew 11:28–30).

Notice in the design of the sanctuary these intentional parallels to the plan of salvation:



The Door. The wilderness tabernacle was accessible by only one door, by which a person could enter the sanctuary and approach the presence of God. Likewise, Jesus says, "I am the door" (John 10:9). There is only one door of salvation through which we can approach God: Jesus. He alone is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).



The Altar. After entering the tabernacle, the next thing a person would see was the altar, the place of sacrifice. The journey of the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land began with a sacrifice: the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:3–11). Likewise, our journey to heaven begins by accepting Jesus as the sacrificed Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.



The Laver. After the altar was the laver, where priests would wash. After departing Egypt, the Hebrews passed through the Red Sea. The apostle Paul said this was a symbol of baptism: "All our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1, 2). Likewise, we must be born of the Water and Spirit of Christ if we would enter into the heavenly Promised Land (John 3:5).



Moreover, after the Exodus, God led the children of Israel through the wilderness for forty years. During the daytime, He appeared in a vortex of cloud, which guarded the people from the scorching sun. At night He was within a column of fire, which gave light and warmth to the camp. "The LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people" (Exodus 13:21, 22; see also Deuteronomy 31:15). Likewise, after Jesus was baptized,

the Holy Spirit came upon Him and led Him into the wilderness, where He remained for forty days. Thus, the pillar of fire is a symbol of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which every believer needs to guide, guard, and illuminate our lives. See Luke 3:16.

The Holy Furniture

Next, within the Holy Place, were three articles of furniture, which, among other purposes, highlight vital spiritual disciplines for believers today.



The showbread on the *table of showbread* was consumed by the priests and represents the Word of God. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). It is vital for our spiritual growth to read the Bible every day. See Matthew 6:11.



The smoke of the *altar of incense* floated over into the Most Holy Place and represents the prayers of believers (Revelation 8:3). Prayer is communion with God, a process by which a Christian grows in faith.



The *seven-lamp candlestick* lit the Holy Place. Christ said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 8:12). Likewise, believers must let their light shine as a witness for Christ to the world by being good examples and by sharing the gospel. See Matthew 5:14–16.



The Ark of the Covenant

Finally, within the Most Holy Place was the ark of the covenant, also called the ark of the testimony. This contained the Ten Commandment tablets, the Hebrews' sacred national treasure—their divine Magna Carta. The stone tables and the words inscribed on them were a symbol of Christ, who is our Rock (Ephesians 2:20) and the Word incarnate (John 1:1). "That Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

One word encapsulates
the essence of the
sanctuary:

Jesus

Jesus is our
HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 8:1

Jesus is our

LAMB

John 1:36

Jesus is the

DOOR

John 10:9

Jesus is the

LIVING WATER

John 4:14

Jesus is the

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12

Jesus is the

BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:48

Jesus is the

INTERCESSOR

Hebrews 7:25

Jesus is the

**WORD,
THE ROCK OF AGES**

John 1:1; Ephesians 2:20



THE Final CLEANSING

Exposure to the high-level radioactive waste of nuclear power plants can kill you in minutes. Significant doses of this ionizing radiation damages DNA, hindering cells from replicating and growing normally. Unfortunately, this dangerous material doesn't go away overnight; plutonium, for instance, has a half-life of 24,000 years.

The amount of this life-destroying material increases by about 12,000 metric tons each year, and where to put it all has become a major world crisis. While scientists have suggested a variety of solutions, no one solution is without risk. Some have suggested sending it into space, but a rocket loaded with radioactive material blowing up in the atmosphere would be disastrous. Thus, for now, most believe that burying it underground is humanity's best bet.

Sin is something like radioactive waste, but worse. Every human since the Creation has been infected by the deadly toxin of sin. God's plan is to remove it from the universe forever, and He has symbolized this process through the daily service of the earthly tabernacle.

Through the shed blood of an animal sacrifice, sin was symbolically removed from the sinner and transferred to the sanctuary.

But what happened to all the sins now placed in God's temple? Like storing radioactive waste deep underground, it might be temporarily out of sight, but it's still a threat.

In this section, you will learn how God's plan goes beyond temporarily removing sin from the sinner. You will discover how the Lord will, someday, permanently purify the universe from sin. No lethal trace will remain—not anywhere.

The Day of Atonement

Once a year, a special service was conducted in the earthly sanctuary to cleanse it from sin. Known as the Day of Atonement, this annual festival was used to illustrate God's final steps to cleanse sin from the universe.

The ceremony occurred in autumn and involved the high priest's entering into the Most Holy Place. So important was this solemn ritual that God warned Moses,

“Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the [Most] Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat” (Leviticus 16:2).

The sanctuary cleansing called for two offerings: “He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat” (vv. 7, 8).

The Lord's goat was sacrificed, and some of its blood was brought into the Most Holy Place “inside the veil” and sprinkled directly “on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat” (v. 15) in God's presence. In so doing, the blood, which represented the blood of Christ, satisfied the consequences of the broken law, a copy of which was located underneath the mercy seat.

The high priest then reverently backed out of the Most Holy Place till he entered the courtyard, where he placed some of the blood on the horns of the altar, thereby completing his task in making atonement for the people.

The Scapegoat

But what was the purpose of the second goat, *Azazel*, called “the scapegoat”?

When the high priest came out of the tabernacle, he symbolically bore upon himself all the sins that had polluted the sanctuary. At this point, he had already “made an end of atoning for the Holy Place[s], the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar” (v. 20). Now he approached the scapegoat.

“Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man” (v. 21).

All the sins that had polluted the sanctuary were now transferred onto *Azazel*, which was then led away from God’s people and into the wilderness, where it died. (Some traditions suggest that the scapegoat was tied to a tree and left for predators.) In this way, the sanctuary was cleansed from sin and prepared to serve the congregation for another year.

But who or what does the scapegoat represent? Some believe that any creature bearing sin must represent Christ, since “He bore the sin of many” (Isaiah 53:12). It is certainly true that Jesus bore our sins, but the context of Leviticus 16 and other passages show that the scapegoat could not symbolize Jesus. While Christ was sacrificed for our sins, the scapegoat was not sacrificed but, instead, led away into the wilderness. This goat did not vicariously bear the sin of the people but carried the sin away.

Moreover, the scapegoat was not slain as a sacrifice, so it could not cleanse the sanctuary or the people, since “without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22). In fact, the sanctuary was cleansed by the blood from the Lord’s goat *before* the high priest even approached the scapegoat.

The scapegoat actually represents Satan, who does not bear, nor pays for, our sins. The Lord’s goat, the one sacrificed, represents Jesus, who assumed and paid for our sins. Satan will be punished, as will



all other unrepentant sinners (Revelation 20:12–15), for his own sins, which will include responsibility for the existence of sin itself and for tempting people into sin.

Ancient Jewish scholars and early church leaders referred to the scapegoat as the devil. For instance, Origen said, “He who is called in ... Hebrew Azazel, is no other than the devil.” Irenaeus characterized him as “that fallen and yet mighty angel.”

God will hold Satan accountable for introducing sin into His perfect universe, which is what the symbolism of the transfer of sin to the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement conveys. One day, final justice will be carried out, when God removes the enemy of His people from ever tempting or harassing them again.

The Ultimate Eradication of Sin

The Day of Atonement also presents three phases of God’s judgment against sin.

The first phase deals with those who profess to be followers of God—symbolically, the congregation of Israel. When the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, he sought atonement for those waiting outside. At this sobering time, God’s people were to “afflict your souls” (Leviticus 16:31). Unrepentant sinners are actually judged at a later time; as the Scriptures explain: “For the

Where IS THE Ark OF THE Covenant TODAY?

Whatever happened to the ark of the covenant? The 1981 blockbuster film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is just one example of people’s fascination with finding this ancient Israelite treasure. Was it destroyed? Is it hidden away in a secret vault in the United States? Is it guarded by a Coptic Church in Ethiopia? Or is it still in hiding near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem?

The last time the ark is mentioned in the Bible is in 2 Chronicles 35:3, during the reign of King Josiah. The Scriptures itemize many other vessels that were captured by the Babylonians during Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of Jerusalem, but there is no mention of the ark.

Some believe, as is found in the non-canonical book 2 Maccabees, that the prophet Jeremiah was instructed by God to move the ark outside of Jerusalem before the city was destroyed and to hide it in a cave in Mount Nebo. This seems unlikely because at that time, Babylonian forces had Jerusalem completely surrounded. It is more reasonable to assume that Jeremiah, with the help of loyal priests, hid the ark in one of the many caves or tunnels that honeycombed the city. To this day, the ark’s location remains one of archeology’s greatest secrets.

But what really matters most is that the law of God is hidden within our hearts, not within a box of gold and wood.

Three Phases of the Final Judgment

1. Judgment of God's people
2. Millennium judgment in heaven
3. Execution of the judgment:
Destruction of all sin and unrepentant sinners



time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4:17).

The second phase is during the banishment of the scapegoat into the wilderness, which symbolizes the thousand-year imprisonment of Satan on the desolated earth after the second coming of Christ.

"I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:1, 2).

During this time, the saved are in heaven. The apostle John "saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them" (v. 4), and "they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years" (v. 6). This judgment by the redeemed allows them to review for themselves how God determined who was saved and who was lost. All

their questions will be answered, and God's people will be satisfied with His decisions.

The last phase of judgment revealed by the Day of Atonement is the "executive phase," when fire punishes and destroys the wicked and cleanses the earth. Just as Azazel was forever removed from the camp, so will sin be forever banished from the universe.

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the

Who Shall BRING AN **End** TO **Sacrifice** AND OFFERING IN DANIEL 9:27?

This Bible verse is hotly debated among scholars. Verse 27 says, "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." To whom does this passage refer?

Some scholars believe the book of Daniel was written by someone who merely used Daniel's name and wrote in the second century BC around the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Greek ruler. They point to this figure as the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27, since at one time Antiochus interrupted the Jewish sacrificial services. But this view relies on a denial of the divine origin of Scripture and the belief that God can see into the future. It also ignores the testimony of Jesus, who affirms the authorship of Daniel (Matthew 24:15), as well as other indicators within the prophecies in the book of Daniel.

Other scholars apply this passage far into the future, claiming it refers to the antichrist during a seven-year tribulation, when the Jewish temple will supposedly be rebuilt and its sacrifices resume. Then, according to them, halfway into this seven-year period, the antichrist will end the sacrifices.

But the best explanation for this passage is Jesus. Daniel 9:25 identifies the coming of "Messiah the Prince" 69 "weeks" after the command to rebuild Jerusalem in 457 BC; 69 prophetic weeks—that is, 483 actual years—from 457 BC is AD 27, the year in which Jesus was baptized, anointed by the Holy Spirit for His work.

The reference in verse 26 to "the prince who is to come [who] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" speaks of a Roman general named Titus, whom Christ predicted would destroy Jerusalem. Verse 27 then returns to an explanation of the work of Christ, stating that He was crucified three-and-one-half years into His ministry, "in the middle" of this prophetic "week."

Jesus also unquestionably established a covenant through His death on Calvary. In the upper room, the Bible says, "He [Jesus] took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it [the fruit of the vine], all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:27, 28).

When Christ died on the cross, the symbolic sacrificial system that pointed to Him was fulfilled. It was no longer necessary; its completion was marked when, at His death, "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). Jesus is the One described in Daniel 9:27, in fulfillment of Daniel's 70-week prophecy.



lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:11–15).

Sanctuary and Judgment

The services of the tabernacle pointed forward to the work of Christ not just on earth but also in heaven. Notice how the Bible describes Jesus' heavenly ministry:

"According to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Hebrews 9:22, 23).

The Day of Atonement looked forward to the removal of the record of sins. In essence, the work of cleansing is a work of judgment of every person who has claimed the blood of the Lamb of God. Such an investigation must happen *before* the return of Christ, since upon His return, He will "give to every one according to his work" (Revelation 22:12).

Indeed, in Scripture the language of judgment is connected to the sanctuary and both are prominent in prophecy. Books such as Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation

speaking often about the sanctuary and a future judgment.

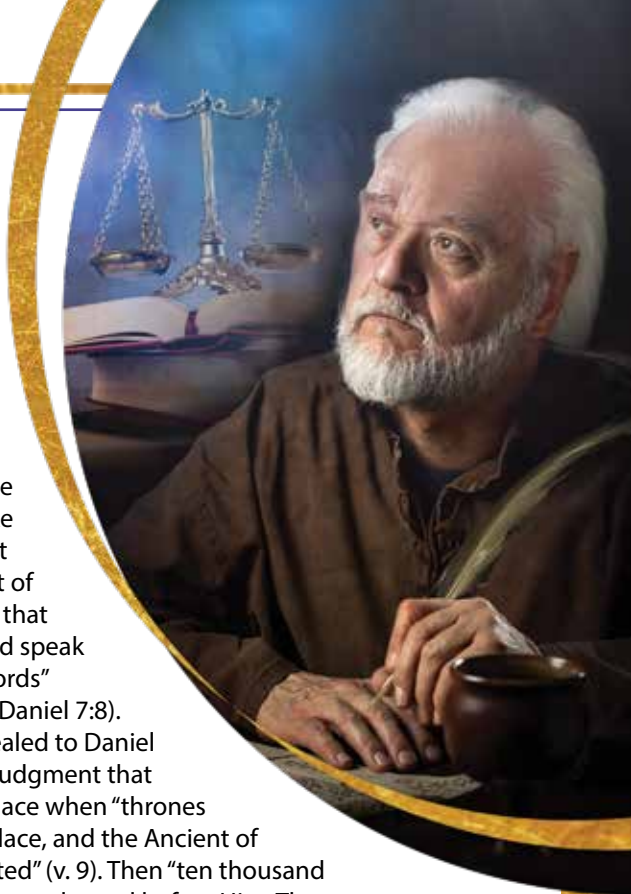
Daniel the prophet spoke of a judgment in the context of a false power that would rise and speak "pompous words" against God (Daniel 7:8). The Lord revealed to Daniel the scene of judgment that would take place when "thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated" (v. 9). Then "ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened" (v. 10). It was not until *after* this judgment in God's throne room had taken place that this power that rose up against God—what Revelation 13 calls "the beast"—would be obliterated. Daniel explains that "the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame" (Daniel 7:11).

Between the time Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection, becoming our High Priest (Hebrews 7:25), and His return to earth, the Bible predicts that an apostate power on earth will attempt to turn attention away from Christ's vital work in the heavenly sanctuary. Though functioning as a temporary illustration for the Israelites, the earthly sanctuary still holds significance for God's church in every age—and especially now at the end of time.

Summary

The Day of Atonement teaches us important truths about Jesus' death and ministry on behalf of sinners. This yearly service carried the minds of believers to the final events of the great conflict between Christ, the Lamb of God, and Satan, the scapegoat. It explained the final purification of the universe from the toxic presence of sin and of those who refuse to repent and embrace salvation in Christ.

But did you know that the Bible actually predicted when this judgment began? In the next section, we'll establish the date, an answer found in the longest time prophecy in the Bible.



THE Sanctuary ATTACKED

It has only happened once. The American Revolutionary War marked the only time a foreign power captured and occupied the U.S. capital. The Burning of Washington by British forces during the War of 1812 was a retaliation for America's attack on the English-held Port Dover in Upper Canada.



On August 24, 1814, Major General Robert Ross led British forces in setting fire to many U.S. government and military buildings—including the Capitol and the White House (known at the time as the Presidential Mansion). However, just one day after the attack began, a heavy thunderstorm helped to put out the fires. It also spawned a tornado that killed several British troops. After sustaining severe losses to their forces and ships, the British were forced to retreat.

After “The Storm that Saved Washington,” the Americans retook their capital city after 26 hours. Today, you can still see burn marks from the fires on some walls in the White House.

God's sanctuary on earth was burned to the ground—twice.

It first happened in the time of the prophet Daniel, when Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, captured Jerusalem and destroyed Solomon's Temple sometime around 587 BC.

The second time happened in AD 70, when military general and future Roman emperor Titus besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the Second Temple, also known as Herod's Temple. Every year, Jews still mourn the destruction of both temples during Tisha B'Av, a day of fasting.

Did you know that Bible prophecy has foretold that the same power that influenced Babylon and Rome to destroy the earthly temples would eventually attack heaven—and attempt to occupy the position of Jesus Christ in the heavenly sanctuary?

In this section, as we explore the longest time prophecy in Scripture, you'll discover the important place that God's sanctuary occupies in the battle between good and evil. Even as a cruel world power claims dominion, God is still directing efforts to rescue humanity from sin. Through the sanctuary, we see how God's justice and goodness will be vindicated before the universe.

To better understand this section, we recommend you read Daniel 8 and 9.

The Sanctuary in Prophecy

While the First Temple, the one built by Solomon, lay in ruins, the prophet Daniel received several visions from God that described future scenes in the heavenly sanctuary. (Remember, the earthly sanctuary was a representation of the heavenly sanctuary.) And just as the daily sacrifice on earth was designed to point the Hebrews to the Messiah's death for their sins, so their yearly Day of Atonement pointed forward to another of His works in His mission to redeem humanity: the final work of the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

In one of these extraordinary visions, Daniel saw a ram with uneven horns pushing west, north, and south and conquering every beast he met (Daniel 8:3, 4). The angel Gabriel later appeared and explained to the prophet, "The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia" (Daniel 8:20).

Daniel then saw another powerful animal attack the ram, breaking its horns:

"The male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation" (Daniel 8:21, 22).



History affirms that Greece conquered Medo-Persia, so it is clear that the "large horn" on this goat represents Alexander the Great, "the first king." And just as the vision foretold, after his death, the empire was divided among his four generals, symbolized by the four horns.

But then Daniel sees in vision another power that would arise after Greece, "a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land" (v. 9). What world power arose after Greece?

The Next World Power

History reveals that the kingdom mentioned in Daniel chapters 2 and 7, the one that would follow Greece, is Rome. This is in harmony with the prophetic rule of "repeat and expand," where the same prophecy is foretold more than once and each time more detail unfolds.

Daniel 7:24–27 establishes that Rome in its papal form will be succeeded by the kingdom of Christ. The "little horn" of Daniel 8 fits this pattern exactly: It follows Greece and is finally supernaturally destroyed—"broken without





IS Antiochus Epiphanes THE “Little Horn” Power IN DANIEL 8?

Some Bible commentaries suggest that Antiochus Epiphanes, a tyrannical Greek king that harassed the Jewish people around 167 BC, is the subject of Daniel 8, but this interpretation simply does not fit.

For one, Christ Himself applied the abominations of Daniel 9:26, 27 to the immediate future, not the past persecutions of Antiochus. Jesus foresaw that Roman armies would destroy Jerusalem and the temple in His own generation (Luke 21:20–24). In Matthew 24:15, He specifically said that Daniel’s prediction in chapter 9 would be fulfilled when Christians would see the abomination of desolation “[stand] in the holy place” in Jerusalem at some future time. Jesus also connected the destruction of Jerusalem to Israel’s final rejection of Him as their Savior (Matthew 21:33–43; see also John 11:48). This relationship between denying the Messiah and the destruction of the city and temple is the crucial message of Daniel 9:26, 27.



human means” (Daniel 8:25)—at Jesus’ second coming. (Compare Daniel 8:25 with Daniel 2:34.)

Daniel 8 says that the Medo-Persians would become “great” (v. 4), the Grecians “very great” (v. 8), and the little horn “exceedingly great” (v. 9). History is clear that no power following Greece and occupying Israel became “exceedingly great” other than Rome, which, as the prophecy also predicted, extended its power to the south (Egypt), the east (Macedonia), and “the Glorious Land” (Israel).

Moreover, only Rome has attempted to stand against Jesus, “the Prince of the host” (v. 11) and “the Prince of princes” (v. 25). Pagan Rome crucified Him and also destroyed the Jewish temple.

Later, papal Rome effectively caused the heavenly sanctuary to be “cast down” (v. 11) and “trampled underfoot” (v. 13) by seeking to replace Jesus as our High Priest in heaven with an earthly priesthood that claims to forgive sins. Of course, no one but God can forgive sins (Luke 5:21), and Jesus is our only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5).

Daniel 8 tells us that the little horn would also destroy many of God’s people (vv. 10, 24, 25) and “cast truth down to the ground” (v. 12). When asked how long God’s people and the sanctuary would be attacked, the angel replied: “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14).

Heaven’s reply was that the sanctuary in heaven—and God’s church on earth—would experience a cleansing





after 2,300 prophetic days, which is 2,300 literal years. (In Bible prophecy, there is a day-for-a-year principle. See Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34.)

We learned that the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary took place on the Day of Atonement. On that day, God's people were identified as belonging to Him and the record of their sins was removed. Those who clung to sin, however, were cut off from Israel. Thus, the camp was cleansed from sin.

In Daniel 8:14, the Lord assured Daniel that sin and the "little horn" would not always prosper, control the world, and persecute God's people. Instead, after 2,300 years, God will step in through the heavenly Day of Atonement (or judgment), when sin and unrepentant sinners will be identified and, later, removed from the universe.

Thus, the universe will be cleansed from sin forever. The wrongs against God's people will at long last be righted, and the peace that once characterized Eden will once again fill the earth.

The 2,300-day Prophecy

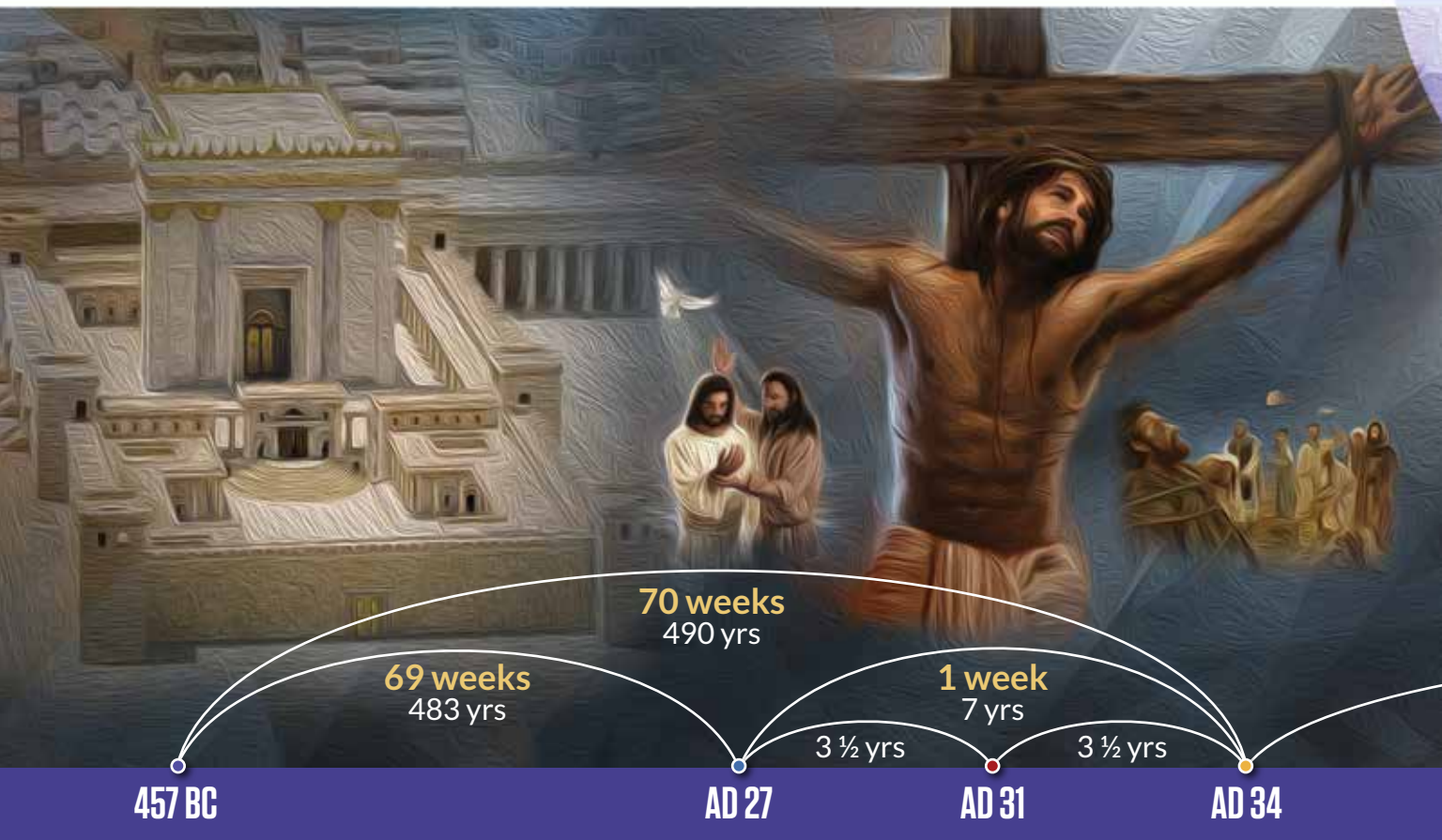
When speaking about the 2,300-day prophecy, the angel Gabriel stressed, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the *time of the end*. ... I am making known to you what shall happen in the *latter time* of the indignation. ... Therefore seal up the vision, for it refers to *many days in the future*" (Daniel 8:17, 19, 26, emphasis added). This special prophecy, as we shall see, applies to all of us who are living at the end of earth's history.

After Daniel's vision of chapter 8, the angel Gabriel came to explain the vision to the prophet. However, when Gabriel reached the point of the 2,300 days, Daniel collapsed and became ill. He eventually regained his strength and resumed doing his normal work, but he remained concerned regarding the unexplained portion of the vision. Daniel prayed earnestly for his people, the Jews who were in captivity in Medo-Persia, pleading with God to forgive them. Daniel 9 begins with this prophet's beautiful appeal to God.

While Daniel was in prayer, Gabriel returned and stated that he had come to explain the rest of the vision described in Daniel 8 (compare Daniel 8:26 with

2300





Daniel 9:23). The angel explained that 70 weeks from the 2,300 years would be “determined for” (9:24) Daniel’s people, the Jews, and their capital city of Jerusalem.

These seventy prophetic weeks equal 490 literal years ($70 \times 7 = 490$). It meant that God’s people would soon return from their captivity in Medo-Persia, and that when that happened, the Lord would allot 490 years from the 2,300 years to His people as another opportunity to repent, serve Him, and proclaim the first advent of the Messiah to the world.

The starting point for the 2,300-year and 490-year prophecies is found in Daniel 9:25:



“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”

This starting event was fulfilled by a decree from Persian King Artaxerxes authorizing God’s people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city. The decree, found in Ezra 7, was issued in 457 BC—the seventh year of the king (v. 7)—and was implemented in the autumn.

The Time Is Fulfilled

The angel said that 69 prophetic weeks or 483 literal years ($69 \times 7 = 483$) added to 457 BC would reach to the time of the Messiah (Daniel 9:25). Simple math shows that moving ahead 483 years from the fall of 457 BC reaches the fall of AD 27. (Note: There is no year 0.)

In Hebrew, the word “Messiah” means “anointed” (John 1:41, margin). Exactly as predicted, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38) at His baptism (Luke 3:21, 22). Again, using the Jewish calendar, His anointing took place in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1), which was AD 27. Amazing! The prediction that this would occur was made more than 500 years before it happened!



At that time, Jesus began to preach that “the time is fulfilled,” confirming the time prophecy of Daniel, beginning His ministry by clearly referring to the 2,300-year prophecy and stressing its importance and accuracy. (See Mark 1:14, 15; Galatians 4:4.) This is awesome and thrilling evidence that the Bible is inspired, that Jesus is the Messiah, and that all the other dates in the 2,300-year/490-year prophecy are valid!

With 483 years of the 490-year prophecy covered, there was still one prophetic week (seven literal years) left

2300-DAY PROPHECY

“For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.”

Daniel 8:14

1,810 yrs

AD 1844



to unfold (Daniel 9:26, 27). The Bible teaches that Jesus was “cut off”—that is, crucified—“in the middle of the week,” which was three and a half years after His anointing in AD 27. This brings us to the spring of AD 31.

Please notice that the gospel is revealed in verse 26: “After the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.” Indeed, when Jesus was cut off, it was not for Himself. He “who committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:22) was crucified for you (1 Corinthians 15:3; Isaiah 53:5). Jesus lovingly offered His life to save us from our sin. Hallelujah! Jesus’ atoning sacrifice is in the very heart of Daniel 8 and 9.

The 490-year period of final opportunity for the Jewish nation ended in the fall of AD 34, when Stephen, a martyr of the early church, was tried by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court. As Stephen preached the gospel to them, the leaders plugged their ears (Acts 7:57), signifying that the nation of Israel was officially rejecting the message of Christ. The Sanhedrin then ordered Stephen to be stoned, and he died praying, like Jesus, that God would forgive his executioners.



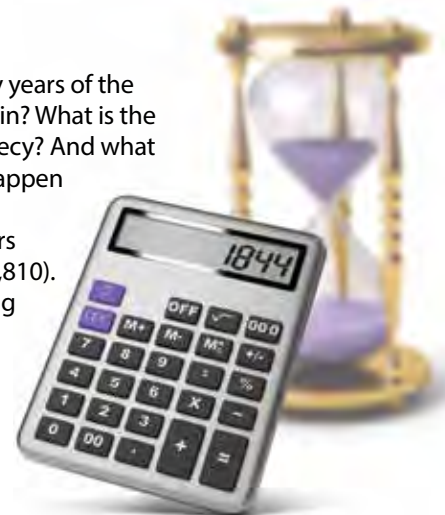
From that date, AD 34, onward, the Jews, having rejected Jesus, were no longer to be the standard-bearers of salvation. The disciples then began preaching the gospel to other people and nations of the world (Acts 13:46).

God has chosen “spiritual Jews” to be the messengers of salvation in Jesus Christ, given to people of all nationalities who accept and serve Him. All who accept Christ have become His chosen people, “heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). Spiritual Jews, of course, include Jewish individuals who embrace Jesus as Lord and Savior (Romans 2:28, 29).

Years Remaining

After AD 34, how many years of the 2,300-year prophecy remain? What is the ending date for the prophecy? And what did the angel say would happen on that date (Daniel 8:14)?

There were 1,810 years remaining ($2,300 - 490 = 1,810$). That means that the ending date for the prophecy is 1844 (AD 34 + 1810 years = AD 1844). The angel said that at this time, the sanctuary would be cleansed—meaning



THE Sanctuary IN Revelation

Though evil powers torment the world, the book of Revelation reveals that God watches over and intervenes in earth's history from the sanctuary in heaven. Consider how often the events of Revelation transpire in the context of the temple.

- Revelation 1:13** Jesus walks among the lampstands
- Revelation 3:12** Overcomers become a pillar in God's temple
- Revelation 4:1, 2** An open door and the throne room of heaven described
- Revelation 5:6, 8, 12, 13** . . Jesus, the sacrificial Lamb, is the central figure
- Revelation 6:9** John sees martyrs under the altar
- Revelation 7:14, 15, 17** . . . A great multitude in the temple worships God and the Lamb
- Revelation 8:3, 5** An angel holds a golden censer with incense and offers it on the golden altar before the throne, then throws the censer to the earth
- Revelation 9:13** A voice comes from the golden altar of incense in heaven
- Revelation 11:1** John was asked to measure the temple of God and the altar
- Revelation 11:19** The temple is opened, and John sees the ark of the covenant
- Revelation 12:11** The victorious overcome by the blood of the Lamb
- Revelation 13:8** Names written in the Book of Life of the Lamb
- Revelation 14:10** Unbelievers tormented in the presence of the Lamb
- Revelation 14:15, 17, 18** . . . Angels come out of the temple and altar with sharp sickles
- Revelation 15:3** The saved sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb
- Revelation 15:5-8** Angels come out of the temple, which is filled with smoke
- Revelation 16:1** A voice from the temple tells angels to pour out bowls of wrath on the earth
- Revelation 16:7** A voice from the altar affirms God's justice
- Revelation 16:17** A voice from the temple says, "It is done!"
- Revelation 21:22** The New Jerusalem has no temple, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"



that the heavenly judgment would begin. (Recall that the earthly sanctuary was destroyed in AD 70, replaced by a new earthly temple, the church.) We learned that the heavenly Day of Atonement was slated for the “end time.” We know that the beginning date for this event is 1844. God set this date. It is as certain as the AD 27 date for Jesus’ anointing as the Messiah. God’s end-time people are commanded to announce it (Revelation 14:6, 7).

In the days of Noah, God said that the Flood would occur in 120 years (Genesis 6:3)—and it happened. In Daniel’s day, God stated that His end-time judgment would begin in 2,300 years (Daniel 8:14)—and it happened! God’s end-time judgment has been in session since 1844. It is a judgment that will soon reveal the truth about God’s character and the enemy’s deception to destroy humanity.



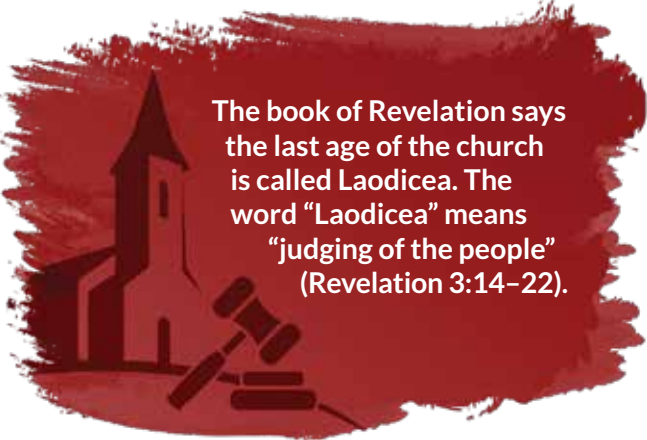
The Sanctuary in Your Life

When you consider the wickedness and injustice in the world today, it is easy to become bewildered by events that make it appear as though the Creator is disconnected from it all. Evil people seem to prosper while men and women of faith are persecuted. The innocent suffer; the guilty walk free.

Where is God in all of this? Does He even care?

David, the shepherd-king of Israel, knew the feeling. When he observed unrestrained evil, he wrote, “When I thought how to understand this, it was too painful for me” (Psalm 73:16). Who could blame him?

But a divine perspective has been given that makes the answer clear: Our loving God has unfolded, through the sanctuary, His master plan to rescue humanity. Even now, the Lord is working for the salvation of all through the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Just like David, we may know this to be true, for David added, “It was too painful for me—until I went into the sanctuary



The book of Revelation says the last age of the church is called Laodicea. The word “Laodicea” means “judging of the people” (Revelation 3:14–22).

of God; then I understood their end” (vv. 16, 17, emphasis added).

Like a drone hovering above the scene of an accident and capturing images for the news, the message of the sanctuary provides us with a view from above that opens our understanding to the great war between good and evil, a war which is unfolding in our world today. Furthermore, the work of Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly temple—offering Himself as a sacrifice to purge our sin—gives us hope that judgment will soon bring an end to the evil on our planet.

God is calling His people to proclaim, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come” (Revelation 14:7). We are living now in the time of the heavenly Day of Atonement, a day in which all people should assess their lives and repent of their sins.

The opportunity to choose to be on God’s side will soon be over and Jesus will come. Christ says, “Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is” (Mark 13:33). The good news for God’s people is that this is not a time to be afraid! When we look to the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, we can understand why:

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14–16).



THE Sanctuary AND YOUR Body Temple

Did you know that several Bible passages appear to refer to the Jewish sanctuary as an allegory for our bodies? For instance, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 says, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (See also 1 Corinthians 3:16.)

While you never want to take an allegory too far, here are some interesting correlations:



Skin. The sanctuary had curtains and walls, which protected the Holy Places within it, and was even covered with animal skins (Exodus 26:14). In the same way, our skin protects us.



Bones. Posts and framing held these curtains in position (Exodus 26:26). Likewise, our bones provide support for our bodies.



Digestive. The altar consumed sacrifices, producing heat. We consume food and produce energy. Only clean animals were consumed in the sanctuary. "Peter said, ... 'I have never eaten anything common or unclean'" (Acts 10:14).



Circulatory. The laver was filled with water for cleansing (Exodus 30:21). Our bodies have a liquid circulatory system for cleansing.



Vision. A lamp in the Holy Place provided illumination. Jesus said, "The lamp of the body is the eye" (Matthew 6:22).



Heart and Mind. The ark of the covenant contained God's law. We should have God's law hidden in our hearts (Deuteronomy 6:6) and our minds (Hebrews 10:16).

Our bodies have been made in the image of God. We should keep them holy by caring for them as meticulously as the priests kept the sanctuary cleaned, orderly, and holy. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). (See also 1 Corinthians 3:17.)





What on Earth HAPPENED IN 1844?

disappointment into a worldwide movement to restore Bible teachings that had been covered in the rubbish and dust of human tradition and the garb of religious cloaks.

The Great Advent Awakening

In the early 1800s, a number of Christian groups around the world began to rediscover and explore the prophecies of Daniel. After studying Daniel 8:14 and the 2,300 days, they came to the same conclusion: The most momentous event in history was about to take place. They believed the “cleansing of the sanctuary” foretold the return of Jesus, who would cleanse the earth with fire.

These believers came to be known as “Adventists,” since they were convicted about the soon advent (coming) of Christ. William Miller, a farmer turned Baptist preacher, and his group, known as the Millerites, believed that Jesus would return in October 1844. Between 1833 and 1844, more than a million people attended his revivals, and a large number of believers from virtually all Christian denominations agreed with his conclusion that Christ was about to return. A number of them even sold or gave away property in eager expectation of Jesus’ soon coming.

When the date came and went uneventfully, however, it became known as the “Great

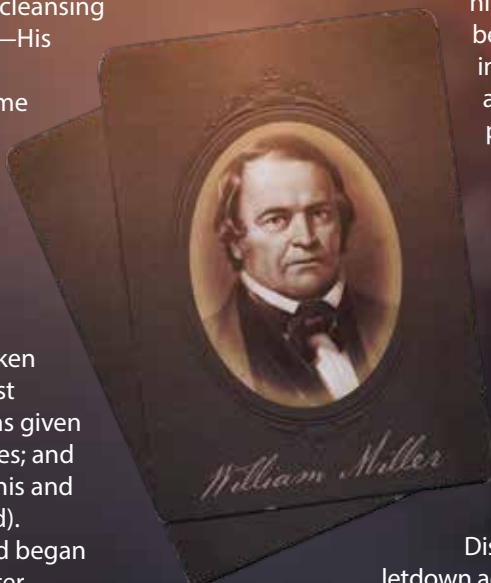
Disappointment.” But the crushing letdown actually became a catalyst for a

We’ve learned that the 2,300-day time prophecy of Daniel 8:14 stretches from 457 BC to AD 1844, marking a transition in the heavenly ministry of Jesus as our High Priest.

But can the fulfillment of this time prophecy be seen in events that occurred on the earth? Yes! A cleansing also took place in Jesus’ sanctuary on earth—His body, the church—in 1844.

Within the 2,300-day prophecy is the time prophecy of 1,260 years of persecution by the apostate church (AD 538 to 1798). This was the time when the Bible itself was obscured from the people, its truths hidden from humanity; this was the time when the little horn power, as described by Daniel, “exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered” (Daniel 8:11, 12, emphasis added).

But following this prophetic period, God began to lift up the truth in His Word, turning a bitter



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new Christian movement. Several believers came together and committed to setting aside doctrinal differences in order to openly study the Bible, comparing scripture with scripture. They were determined to follow its teachings without denominational bias. Through intense study, this small group discovered that many practices and teachings that had crept into Christianity had no foundation in the Bible.

Among many other findings, they rediscovered the truth of baptism by immersion and that there are no biblical grounds for baptizing babies. They also rediscovered that salvation was by faith alone through grace, that the Ten Commandments had not been annulled, that the seventh day was still the Sabbath, and that the Bible does not teach that the wicked will be eternally tormented in hellfire but



will instead be consumed and ultimately perish. They also learned that a believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that we should eat and drink to God's glory.

Just as in the Day of Atonement, the message of the 2,300-day prophecy calls each of us to seek a cleansing of our own hearts from any false teachings, which inevitably lead to wrong behaviors. In this way, the work in the heavenly sanctuary had a corresponding response on earth in the sanctuary of God's church. This movement that spawned out of the "Great Disappointment" not only identifies the last-day apostate church but also lifts up Christ as the true High Priest and head of the church, the One who calls all people out of the darkness of spiritual Babylon (which means "confusion") and into the light of Bible truth. "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4). (See also Daniel 12:4, 9; Revelation 10:6, 9–11.)

At the end of the 2,300-year prophecy of Daniel, Jesus began cleansing His sanctuary in heaven and His sanctuary on earth, the church. Since 1844, the Adventist movement that discovered and announced this event has become the fastest-growing Protestant church in the world.

Other Significant Events in

1844

- ⊙ Karl Marx writes *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, forming the foundation of *The Communist Manifesto*.
- ⊙ Charles Darwin completes his "Essay" on natural selection, the first of his major manuscripts to espouse the theory of evolution.
- ⊙ Famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche is born (October 15, 1844) and would later teach that "God is dead."
- ⊙ Samuel F. B. Morse sends the first official telegram from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore, which reads, "What hath God wrought." It is the dawn of electronic communications.
- ⊙ Charles Goodyear receives a U.S. patent for vulcanization, a process to strengthen rubber, transforming the industrial world.
- ⊙ The Edict of Toleration is passed, the catalyst by which Jews were allowed to resettle in the Holy Land.
- ⊙ Persian prophet "the Báb" begins preaching, and his teachings eventually form the foundation of the Bahá'í Faith, which is partly based on prophecies found in Daniel 8 and 9.
- ⊙ Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, is killed. Brigham Young, their next president, leads followers to the Utah Territory and incorporates The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which eventually grows into a worldwide movement.
- ⊙ The Codex Sinaiticus (Sinai Bible), one of the world's oldest-known handwritten Bibles, is uncovered in Egypt by Constantin von Tischendorf.

Your Questions Answered

Q Must the Jewish temple be rebuilt in Jerusalem before Jesus returns?

A Many popular Evangelical and Pentecostal teachers (Hal Lindsey, Tim LaHaye, Dave Hunt, and John Hagee, to name a few) have adopted a view of prophecy in which the Antichrist must make his debut on earth in the Jewish temple. Therefore, according to this theory, the temple must be rebuilt at some point before the Second Coming.

This view relies on a particular reading of 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4:

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

Since the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple in AD 70, many assume that in order for this Antichrist, who is in their view one specific person, to sit in the temple, it will have to be rebuilt. But biblical clues point to a better interpretation.

A Spiritual House

Before King David died, he wanted to build a permanent temple in Jerusalem. Nathan the prophet told the king that he would not build this temple; rather, his son Solomon would do it. First Chronicles 17:11, 12

recounts, “It shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever.” Later, David affirms that the Lord had told him, “Your son Solomon ... shall build My house and My courts” (1 Chronicles 28:6).

These passages are prophecies with dual applications. Yes, history shows that Solomon, David’s son, built a physical temple. Yet the New Testament says that Jesus is the true “Son of David” and is to build a kingdom that lasts forever. Jesus taught that He had come to transfer attention away from a physical building of worship to something greater: His body, the church.

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’ Then the Jews said, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?’ But He was speaking of the temple of His body” (John 2:19–21).

Jesus’ prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple (Matthew 23:38; 24:1, 2; Mark 14:58) inspired the most intense rejection of His teaching. Even as Christ hung on the cross, mockers shouted, “You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (Matthew 27:40). But Jesus was not speaking of rebuilding a physical temple; He was speaking of building a spiritual one.

Ultimately, Jesus and His death were the embodiment of all the ancient temple rites; thus, there is no longer any need for a physical temple or sacrificial system. “For indeed



Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). This was signified when the veil that divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was torn in two at Jesus' death (Mark 15:38). Indeed, we now have a new temple—the church, the body of Christ. Likewise, every believer is part of a new nation of kings and priests (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6).

The New Testament Perspective

After Jesus' death, Christians, who were nearly all Jews, knew Jesus to be the true Lamb of God. Since the Jewish temple was designed for animal sacrifices, New Testament writers saw the temple as no longer necessary and recognized the establishment of a new spiritual temple and priesthood:

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, emphasis added).

"Now, therefore, you are ... fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19–22, emphasis added).

"You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5, emphasis added).

Unfortunately, even after such evidence, many Christians still await the rebuilding of a physical temple on the Temple Mount. But while a physical temple may be rebuilt someday (which seems unlikely, as such an act would provoke a cataclysmic war in the Middle East), it will clearly not be a temple of God.

So what does 2 Thessalonians 2:4 actually mean? The verse states that the Antichrist power will seat itself over the church of God, claiming the worship that belongs only to Jesus. Historically, Protestant scholars applied the apostle Paul's words to the Papacy and its global influence over Christianity. (For a thorough study of this conclusion, see our Amazing Facts Bible Study Guide entitled "Who Is the Antichrist?")



Should Christians observe any of the Jewish festivals today?

According to the Bible, God's people no longer need to sacrifice a Passover lamb because Jesus is the Lamb of God, the fulfillment of the system of sacrifices. "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep



the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8).

This same principle would apply to all of the other Jewish festivals because Christ is also the fulfillment of almost every symbol in the Jewish religious system.

Those believers who are convicted to observe these days are certainly free to do so, but there is no real point in doing so in the Christian

faith. Why stare at a loved one's photo when he or she is standing next to you? Why celebrate Jesus' shadow when you can embrace Him?

The festivals remembering the Exodus and the sanctuary services were "nailed to the cross" (Colossians 2:16); they were shadows (v. 17), the handwriting of ordinances on paper. (By contrast, the Ten Commandments were written by God in stone.) Moreover, some feasts required sacrifices at the Jerusalem temple, which obviously are not possible to perform today.

However, in the place of Passover, Jesus did give Christians the communion service. (See Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19, 20.)

Q Why did animals need to be sacrificed in the earthly sanctuary services?

A "Without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]" (Hebrews 9:22). The sacrificing of animals was a gruesome rite designed to help people understand the dire consequences of sin. In the Hebrew system, the guilty sinner was to kill the animal with his own hand (Leviticus 1:4, 5; 4:24, 29). It was bloody and shocking. By personally slaying the animal, the sinner was graphically taught that his sin caused the innocent animal's death. The sinner's guilt was transferred to the lamb, who paid the price for the sin with its life. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).



According to Hebrews 10:4–11, however, these animal sacrifices only symbolically washed away a person's sin. For the actual forgiveness of sins, God sent His own innocent Lamb, Jesus Christ. The sacrificial system taught, through the symbol of the slain animal, that God would give His Son to die for their sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). Jesus is not only our Savior but also our substitute (Hebrews 9:28). When John the Baptist met Jesus, he said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). For Jew or Gentile, there has never been another source of salvation other than Jesus.

Q Were there two sets of cherubim in Solomon's temple?

Yes.

A "Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each ten cubits high. One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. And the other cherub was ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape. ... Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room; and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room" (1 Kings 6:23–27).

When the Lord instructed Moses to make the first tabernacle, it was made small and simple so as to be portable for the nomadic Hebrew people. After the nation was established in Israel, King David instructed his son



Solomon to build a stationary temple that was “exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious” (1 Chronicles 22:5).

Thus, Solomon spared no expense, placing a pair of golden cherubim 15 feet high with wingspans of seven and a half feet in the inner sanctum (2 Chronicles 3:11, 12). The ark with its two kneeling angels on the lid was placed under the overshadowing wings of these two giant angels.



Angels were depicted throughout the structure, woven into the veil (v. 14) and engraved in gold plating on the walls (v. 7) and temple doors (1 Kings 6:31–35). The golden cherubs in the temple were miniature models to help us picture the dwelling place of our Creator in heaven. The prophet Daniel also saw these ministering spirits surrounding the dwelling place of God. Daniel 7:10 reveals “a thousand thousands” ministering to God and “ten thousand times ten thousand” standing in front of Him.

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Q Does the Bible teach that there is more than one antichrist?

A “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18). The word “antichrist” comes from two words: “anti,” which means “against” or “in place of,” and “Christ,” which means “anointed.” Any person who attempts to take the place of

Jesus is an antichrist. The first person to strive toward this end, of course, was Satan. One of his primary methods is deception; he pretends he is Christ.

The apostle John tells us in this verse that “the Antichrist” (with a capital “A”) is coming. In other words, it was still in the future in John’s day. Then he adds that many antichrists (with a small “a”) have come. He later says, “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son” (v. 22). False teachers in John’s day were against Christ and, therefore, were a type of antichrist.



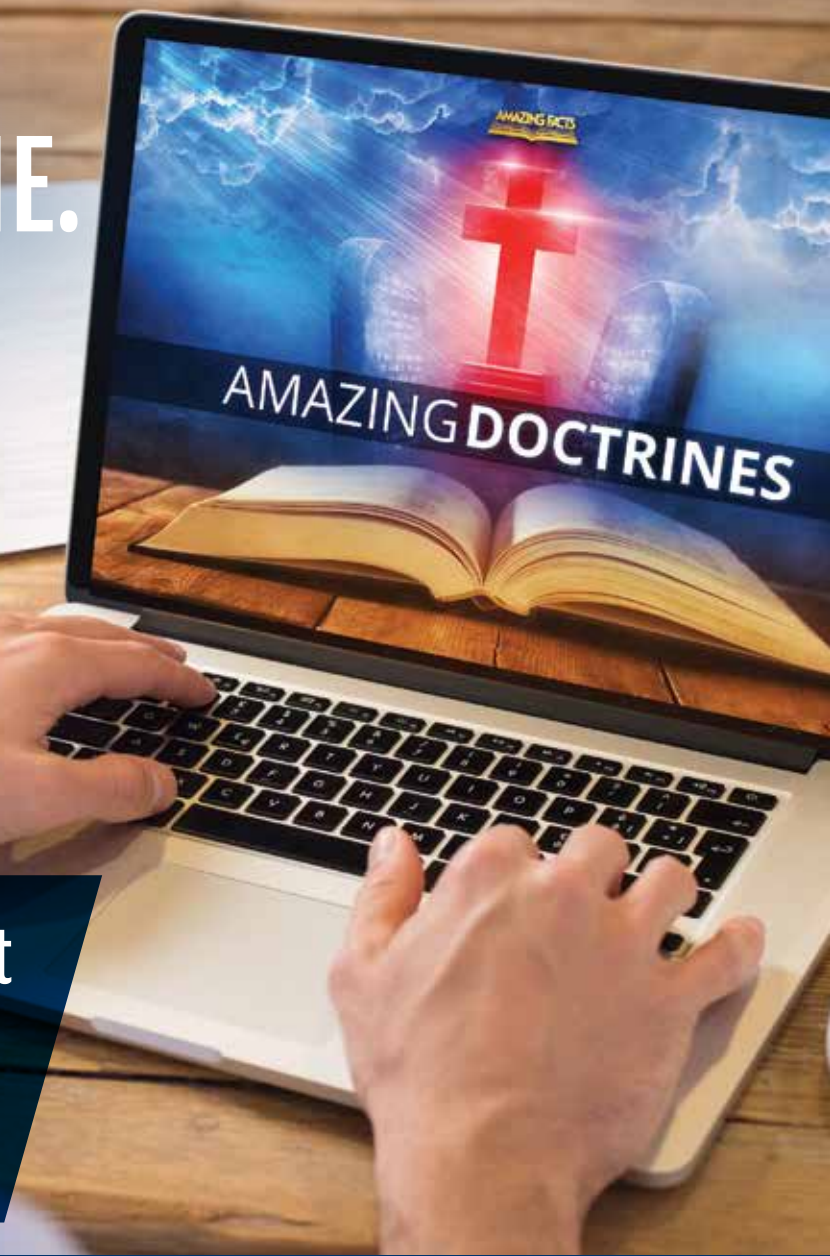
But the Bible teaches that there is a specific Antichrist power that will rise up in the last days. This power was also predicted by the apostle Paul: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of

perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

There are many other identifying points about this last-day power spoken of throughout Scripture. This Antichrist will work with a religious and political system (Revelation 13:4), seek to destroy God’s people (vv. 15–17), and change God’s law (Daniel 7:25). It will attempt to take the place of Christ’s priestly work (8:11) and will even perform miracles to deceive (Revelation 13:13). (For a thorough study of this conclusion, see our Amazing Facts Bible Study Guide entitled “Who Is the Antichrist?”)

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