

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**  
***The Promise God's Everlasting Covenant***

**Lesson 11: New Covenant Sanctuary**

**HOW DOES THE 1888 MESSAGE LEAD US TO  
FALL IN LOVE WITH THE SDA SANCTUARY  
MESSAGE?**

Let me note a few items of interest:

(1) The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary impinges on day-by-day living on earth. The 1888 idea is that it is impossible for the sanctuary in heaven to be “cleansed” or “justified” or “made right” (different meanings of the Hebrew verb translated “cleansed” in Daniel 8:14), until the hearts of God’s people on earth first are cleansed.

(3) But this is not merely a legal “assumption” on God’s part. It’s not a work that He knows well is not yet reality. When Revelation 14:12 declares, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God”—it’s indeed true. These people have in fact “overcome, even as [Christ] overcame” (Rev. 3:20). They have not merely been legally accounted so, contrary to reality.

When Ellen White speaks of the “eighteen hundred years” of Christ’s ministry in the First Apartment, at no time did He have a corporate body of believers on earth whose faith had thus matured. But now comes a change in His ministry in the Second Apartment. It’s the cosmic Day of Atonement. The heavenly sanctuary is at last “cleansed” in that now He has a corporate body of people whose hearts have been cleansed from every root of alienation from God. The "Atonement" is a full reconciliation with Himself.

But the 1888 idea of the cleansing of the sanctuary is not that God’s people do the work. The High Priest does it.

Very prominent in the 1888 message is this idea of ceasing to resist our Lord. Ellen White caught it. Not until after the 1888 Conference did she state it clearly: "The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus . . . in repentance for his sins" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 27). Therein is the essence of this cleansing of the sanctuary idea!

(5) To answer our initial question in very simple terms: the difference between Christ’s ministry in the First Apartment and in the Second is what He does in His believers. Up until 1844, His ministry was concentrated totally in preparing believers to die, so

they could be “accounted worthy” to come up in the first resurrection. And that is a wonderful work for our High Priest to accomplish. If any of us are called to die, may we be prepared!

But when looked at in context, it becomes clear that Christ’s ministry in the Second Apartment is concentrated on preparing a people to be translated without tasting death. While they are still in the flesh, they must see Jesus, they must meet Him face to face, which only “the pure in heart” can ever endure. These must be “alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord. . . . Then we which are alive and remain [the “remnant”) shall be caught up together with [the resurrected saints of all ages] to meet the Lord in the air” (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

The “context” of the Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary message is significant in the light of Christ’s Matthew 24 discourse. It was Heaven’s purpose that the second coming of Christ occur within the “generation” of those who saw the last of the celestial “signs” of His near return. This otherwise inexplicable delay is directly the result of “resisting our Lord in His office work.” The gospel commission in the light of Revelation 18:1-4 could have been accomplished within a few years of 1888. The delay in finishing the work of cleansing the heavenly

sanctuary is not due to computer backlogs in the heavenly offices, or to any angelic inefficiency.

(6) The 1888 idea of the cleansing of the sanctuary also relieves minds of perplexity about what Christ is doing all this time. It's only natural that His people wonder—is He vacationing? Or absorbed in work in some other corner of His great universe? Is He serious that “the tabernacle of God is [to be] with men”?

(7) The 1888 idea of the cleansing of the sanctuary also imparts to those who understand it, a new motivation for following Christ. The truth of *agape* supplies the strength—“the *agape* of Christ constraineth us” (2 Cor. 5:14). Fear of the “investigative judgment” is “cast out.” This again is part of the cosmic Day of Atonement—a time for at-last-realized one-ness with Christ. That delivers from fear as much as He Himself was delivered from fear in His life on earth.

The Sanctuary truth leads directly to the Bride of Christ making herself ready. That “oneness” is further delineated in Scripture as a development that has never taken place in all past history: “the marriage of the Lamb is come, for His wife hath made herself ready.” A special blessing is pronounced on those who are invited to “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:6-9). As individuals, all (including those of

the last days) are “guests at the wedding.” But as a corporate body, the church of the great Day of Atonement becomes the Bride of Christ.

(9) The message of the True Witness to the “angel of the church of the Laodiceans” is seen to be the Sanctuary truth. It has not become a museum piece that belongs in our denominational attic; its vital present truth grips hearts today. The Holy Spirit impresses souls worldwide who seek to follow Christ that the stern rebukes of the Laodicean message are still administered.

(10) From the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary is ministered the gift of repentance. In order for the dilatory Bride to “make herself ready” for the “marriage of the Lamb,” she must welcome that disclosure of her true need. The Bride is a corporate body; therefore, her repentance is a corporate repentance.

(11) Because she overcomes “even as Christ overcame,” she shares fully by faith His own experience of repentance. He repented in behalf of the human race; so does she. He “tasted death” for every man; she identifies with Him on His cross as He does so. Thus she too would rather die eternally than bring shame and disgrace on Him.

As a “body,” she learns in the Day of Atonement an intimate fellowship with Christ that few individuals

in history have known, such as Job, Moses, or Jeremiah. In the Day of Atonement, she learns to “grow up unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

Although our great High Priest cleanses the sanctuary and we let Him do it, He cannot make the Bride to be “ready.” No bridegroom in history can make any bride to be “ready”! That’s something she alone can do. The new *agape* motivation, the new concern developed for the honor of Christ in the great controversy, the New Covenant experience of identifying with Christ on His cross, prompts the world church to a new awareness of her unique duty today. It’s not a “work” performed in order to be saved; it’s a concern for Christ like that of a bride for a husband who needs her. The idea of Christ being in need is implicit in the Sanctuary message.

(13) The 1888 idea of the Sanctuary truth clarifies our prayers. It is futile to pray, “Lord, make your Bride get ready!” He can’t do that. It’s also probably futile for us to pray that He will give His people the gift of repentance; He has been trying to give it to them for over a century. If we pray for the latter rain (which is good), respect for the Lord would require that we recognize that He gave us its “beginning” over a century ago, and “we” would not have it. To keep

begging a friend to give you a gift when he's been trying to give it to you, would be rude.

We can pray that the Lord will give us individually the gift of repentance insofar as we receive the gift today. We can pray individually that He will enable us to understand what was the initial gift of the latter rain—a message of objective truth. But we are told that the corporate refusal initially to receive the gift constituted an “insult” to the Holy Spirit. Should not our prayers now be especially reverent and respectful?

## **SECOND QUARTER 2021**

### **SABBATH SCHOOL INSIGHT #11**

**JUNE 12, 2021**

#### **“NEW COVENANT SANCTUARY”**

*“Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance” Hebrews 9:15, RSV.*

The subject of the new covenant sanctuary is immeasurably broad, deep, and profound. The sanctuary is prophetic and Christ's work therein as intercessor is soon to finish, yet the lessons in regard to its truths will be studied throughout eternity for the sanctuary reveals God's plan of salvation and unfolds to us His unfathomable love, mercy, and justice - His character.

*“The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it not worthy of careful thought and study now?” –Ellen White, Steps to Christ, p. 88.*

*“The great plan of redemption, as revealed in the closing work for these last days, should receive close examination. The scenes connected with the sanctuary above should make such an impression upon the minds and hearts of all that they may be able to impress others. All need to become more intelligent in regard to the work of the atonement, which is going on in the sanctuary above.” –Ellen White, Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 575.*

The sanctuary aids us in following Christ as Prophet, Sacrifice, High Priest, Judge, and King. Reading the bible through the lens of the sanctuary sheds a clearer beauty and brighter light on Christ our righteousness. This biblical topic is just as central to the New Testament as it is to the Old. In the New, we behold the promise, previously revealed in type, as a living reality.

### **The Covenant Ratified**

*“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins” Hebrews 10:4.*

*“Christ's death and resurrection completed His covenant. Before this time, it was revealed through types and shadows, which pointed to the great offering to be made by the world's Redeemer, offered in promise for the sins of the world. **Anciently believers were saved by the same Savior as now, but it was a God veiled. They saw God's mercy in figures.** The promise given to Adam and Eve in Eden was the gospel to a fallen race. The promise was made that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and it should bruise His heel. **Christ's sacrifice is the glorious fulfillment of the whole Jewish economy. The Sun of Righteousness has risen. Christ our Righteousness is shining in brightness upon us.**” –Ellen White, 1 Manuscript Releases, p. 111.*

### **The New Covenant Priesthood**

*“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the*



*heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” Hebrews 8:1, 2.*

*“His priesthood being the present office and work of Christ, this having been His office and work ever since His ascension to heaven, Christ in His priesthood is the all-important study for all Christians, as well as for all other people.” –A. T. Jones, The Consecrated Way, p.14.*

Toward the end of his address before the Sanhedrin, Stephen speaks of the sanctuary/temple. However, at this point, realizing his end is at hand, he abruptly concludes his sermon. Some years later it is as if Paul, a witness to Stephen’s testimony and martyrdom, takes up where Stephen left off. Hebrews is very clear as to the existence of the heavenly sanctuary, and that Jesus since His ascension has been ministering within as humanity’s high priest. Paul explains why the Levitical priesthood and the earthly sanctuary services always were, and could only be a shadow, (Hebrews 8:4-6; 10:1-10) that pointed to the heavenly, to the true Sacrifice and Mediator for mankind.

*“The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” Hebrews 7:21. Psalm 110 is here quoted, and it is of interest that this messianic psalm is the most referenced Old Testament chapter in the New in regard to Jesus (Hebrews 1:3, 1:13, 5:6-10, 7:11-28, 8:1, 10:12-13, 12:2; Matthew 22:43-45; Mark 12:36-37, 16:19; Luke 20:42-44; Acts 2:33-36, 5:31, 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; 1 Peter 3:22). Surely the early church had some appreciation and understanding of Christ’s ministry in the sanctuary above, the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.*

In addition to *Hebrews*, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* is most helpful in understanding our Savior’s work of atonement since His ascension. Heaven’s temple is the setting and context of John’s Apocalypse. In its first 14 chapters we see Jesus, our High Priest, ministering within the two compartments. In chapters 2 and 3 He is the Son of Man in the midst of the lampstands. In chapters 4 through 7 we behold Him as the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne. (There are several hints that the table of showbread is the sanctuary location here). In chapters 8 through 11 Jesus is the mighty Archangel who intercedes on behalf of His people. As the Angel of the Covenant, He offers the prayers of the saints mingled with incense upon the golden altar. In Revelation 11:19 *“the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple.”* When we come

to chapter 14, following the three angels' messages, the Son of Man is outside the temple. Jesus's intercessory work is finished. The harvest has ripened and the Bridegroom prepares to come as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. While each 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> church, seal, and trumpet helps to enlighten us as to Day of Atonement events, the second half of Revelation's focus, after the door to the Most Holy Place is opened, is all about the closing scenes of the great controversy in connection with the sanctuary.

*"The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people.... Light from the sanctuary illumined the past, the present, and the future."* –Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423.

## **Jesus the Temple**

*"And Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them"* Exodus 25:8.

Another New Testament book where we find the sanctuary theme central is John's gospel. Here, Jesus is the sanctuary! *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled) among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"* John 1:14.

*"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.... 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.

Jesus's I AM statements in John each relate to a sanctuary object/location: I AM the bread of life come down from Heaven (table of showbread, John 6:32-58); I AM the light of the world (lampstands, John 8:12); I AM the door (entrance, John 10:1-10); I AM the good shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep (altar of burnt offering, John 10:11-18); I AM the resurrection and the life (laver- cleansing, baptism, new life, John 11:25); I AM the way, truth, and the life (altar of incense- prayer, intercession, the promised

Comforter, John 14:1-27); I AM the true vine (ark of the covenant and mercy seat- abiding in Christ, bearing fruit, keeping His commandments, John 15:1-17). The I AM statements follow an order in John's gospel. The first two refer to articles of furniture located on the north/south axis. The remaining I AM statements flow from the entrance of the sanctuary to its innermost location.

***“Oh, that men might open their minds to know God as He is revealed in His Son! Truth came forth from the lips of Jesus, uncorrupted with human philosophy. His words were from heaven, such as mortal lips had never spoken nor mortal ears ever heard. His heart was an altar on which burned the flames of infinite love. Goodness, mercy, and love were enthroned in the breast of the Son of God. He set up his tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment, pitched his tent by the side of the tents of men, that he might dwell among them and make them familiar with His divine character and love. No one could love Christ and pay homage to Him without serving and honoring the infinite God. Those who had an appreciation of the character and mission of Christ, were filled with reverence and awe, as they looked upon Him and felt that they were looking upon the temple of the living God.”*** –Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1890.

## **Christ Our Substitute**

*“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren”* Hebrews 2:11.

Sadly, the view of Christ our substitute is largely underappreciated and often erroneously taught and understood. God's love poured out, corporate identity, Christ as the last Adam, that He who knew no sin became sin for us, that He raised up a new humanity of which He is Head, and that He is the Savior of all men, certainly all this is very good news! There is hope and help for all who do not resist the drawing power of the cross! E. J. Waggoner and Ellen White explain it well.

***“In the fullest sense of the word, and to a degree that is seldom thought of when the expression is used, He became man's substitute. That is, He permeates our being, identifying Himself so fully with us that everything that touches or affects us touches and affects Him. He***

**is not our substitute in the sense that one man is a substitute for another**, in the army, for instance, the substitute being in one place, while the one for whom he is substitute is somewhere else, engaged in some other service. No; Christ's substitution is far different. He is our substitute in that He substitutes Himself for us, and we appear no more. We drop out entirely, so that it is "not I, but Christ." Thus we cast our cares on Him, not by picking them up and with an effort throwing them on Him, but by humbling ourselves into the nothingness that we are, so that we leave the burden resting on Him alone." –E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings* (as originally printed in 1900), Ch. 4, p. 169.

*"As the sin-bearer and priest and representative of man before God, He [Christ] entered into the life of humanity, bearing our flesh and blood. The life is in the living, vital current of blood, which blood was given for the life of the world. Christ made a full atonement, giving His life as a ransom for us. He was born without a taint of sin, but came into the world in like manner as the human family. He did not have a mere semblance of a body, but He took human nature, participating in the life of humanity. According to the law Christ Himself gave, the forfeited inheritance was ransomed by the nearest of kin. Jesus Christ laid off His royal robe, His kingly crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, in order to become a substitute and surety for humanity."* –Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases* 812, 1898.

*"As a man He is the substitute and surety for humanity. As a man He liveth to make intercession for us. He is preparing a place for all who love Him. As a man He will come again with power and glory, to receive His children."* –Ellen White, *Signs of the Times*, October 10, 1892.

**"He (Christ) took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God."** –Ellen White, *1 Selected Messages*, p. 343.

## **We Are His Temple**

*"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"* 1 Corinthians 3:16.

*“In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. **From eternal ages it was God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul.”* –Ellen White, *Desire of Ages* p. 161.

*“When you turn away from the broken cisterns that can hold no water, and in the name of Jesus your Advocate come directly to God, asking for the things you need, the righteousness of Christ will be revealed as your righteousness, the virtue of Christ as your virtue. You will then understand that justification will come alone through faith in Christ; for in Jesus is revealed the perfection of the character of God; in His life is manifested the outworking of the principles of holiness. Through the atoning blood of Christ the sinner is set free from bondage and condemnation; through the perfection of the sinless Substitute and Surety, he may run the race of humble obedience to all God's commandments.”* –Ellen White, *1 Selected Messages* p. 330.

*“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest”* Hebrews 8:10, 11.

In studying the topic of Heaven's sanctuary, I was amazed at the wealth of material God has made available to us from His Word and the writings of His servants. In addition to E. G. White's inspired writings, books such as E. J. Waggoner's *Studies in the book of Hebrews*, A. T. Jones' *The Consecrated Way*, and Donald Short's *“Then Shall the Sanctuary Be Cleansed”* are very helpful resources.

May we embrace the *complete system of truth, connected and harmonious*, that the subject of the sanctuary opens to us.

### **And He Will Dwell with Them**

*“And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” Revelation 21:3, 4, 22.*

*~ Martha Ruggles*