

The Sanctuary – Preview to the Gospel in Symbols

ST Series - Prologue

God's Three Books

From the creation of the world to now, the one outstanding purpose of Heaven has been to reveal to man the character and work of our Creator and Redeemer. To accomplish this, God has given three books to the human family:

- 1) The book of _____, His Word in nature.
- 2) The _____, His Word visualized in an object lesson; and
- 3) The _____, the written Word.

For the first 2500 years, the book of creation was man's only lesson book. During this time, he gradually failed to discern the spiritual lessons in nature.¹ After just 1600 years, God had to destroy the world by a flood, since mankind to a large degree has lost sight of the Creator and instead worshipped the things of nature—the sun, moon, stars, water, earth and even the animals God had made for man's use. "He worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." And as a result, his "foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:25, 21.

Within a few generations after the flood, God found a man, Abraham who would respond positively. In calling him out of his idolatrous kindred, God's purpose was that Abraham's seed might reveal to the world His character and divine plan. But once again, Abraham's descendants were fast losing sight of the character of the true God, and His wondrous plan of salvation.² But it would still be several hundred years before Moses would come on the scene, and Christ would teach him and Israel (after calling them His espoused people in covenant relationship (Exodus 19 & 20), and Israel being set up as a formal nation, that Christ would teach them through the most marvelous object lesson ever conceived and used—the sanctuary.

To the mature Christian student a knowledge of the sanctuary is of inestimable worth, because it makes the entire plan of salvation visible in one magnificent view. When viewed in the light of the sanctuary, the Bible thus becomes a great system of truth.

Thus we see with God's three books a vast and complete library of divine revelation. The grand central theme of the Bible is Christ and redemption. What a privilege we have to study this subject at the winding up of this world's history. We will see that the Sanctuary is a "compacted prophecy of Christ" with spiritual significance of the sanctuary building, the furniture, all the furnishings, the curtains and metals, and all the components—both corporately and individually reveal that "In His temple every whit of it uttereth His glory." Psalm 29:9 margin.

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1. In this Sanctuary series, we will discover that when sin entered the human family (Gen 3), man lost the ability to control himself—his thoughts, his words and even his actions. Though the pre-incarnate Christ came and gave hope to the human family, yet still, man was now fallen and could only resist Satan's control over him, by keeping his mind on God and being loyal to Him. The race was in its infancy and yet quickly became corrupted by the intermarriage of the 'sons of God' (Seth's descendants) with the 'sons of men' (Cain's descendants), and thus departed from God.
 2. As we shall see, even the immediate descendants of Abraham (Isaac, Jacob and the 12 sons) had serious character flaws. Abraham had serious character defects which were passed down to the 3rd and 4th generations. Joseph appeared to be the only one who escaped such defects after his conversion on the way to Egypt—he determined to put God first.

The Importance of the Sanctuary

God has given us this great system of truth to impress us with the importance of the spectrum of truth via a picture lesson, that even a child can understand. (Didn't Jesus say you must become like little children to enter the Kingdom of heaven? Matt 18:2, 3). So let us be converted and become like a little child, that He may teach us these sublime, profound truths for our admonition upon whom the end of the world is come.

It is clear from inspiration that this subject is "of the utmost importance" for we each must not neglect to "thoroughly investigate these subjects" which involve this great system of truth. We should ever keep in mind that Christ has our best interest in mind at all times, and knows what we need in order to overcome in judgment—a thorough 'indoctrination' in truth, present truth, applying these lessons through the Spirit to our lives personally.

The subject of the Sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. . . . The Sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects, and be able to give an answer to everyone that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them" (GC 488, 489).

"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**. **When this great truth is seen and understood, those who hold it will work in harmony with Christ to prepare a people to stand in the great day of God, and their efforts will be successful"** (5T 575).

"**The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the Sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross**. By His death He began the work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. **We must by faith enter within the veil, 'whither the Forerunner is for us entered.'** **There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected**. There we may gain **a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption"** (GC 489). "The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, *the restoration in the human soul of the image of God*. . . . He who grasps this thought has before him **an infinite field for study**. He has the key that will unlock to him **the whole treasure-house of God's word**. The science of redemption is the science of all sciences; . . . This is the **highest study in which it is possible for men to engage**. As no other study can, *it will quicken the mind* and **uplift the soul"** (Ed 125, 126).

In our next lesson, we will examine the construction, material and purpose of the courtyard, the first of three parts to this glorious sanctuary teaching. May God continue to teach and lead us through His Spirit to grasp these great truths, that we may know how to appropriate them and share them effectively with others. May it be for the praise of the glory of His grace.