

# In the Holy of Holies - The Great Controversy, Chapter 24

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. As the disciples of Jesus, after the terrible night of their anguish and disappointment, were "glad when they saw the Lord," so did those now rejoice who had looked in faith for his second coming. They had expected him to appear in glory to give reward to his servants. As their hopes were disappointed, they had lost sight of Jesus, and with Mary at the sepulcher they cried, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Now in the holy of holies they again beheld him, their compassionate high priest, soon to appear as their king and deliverer. Light from the sanctuary illuminated the past, the present, and the future. They knew that God had led them by his unerring providence. Though like the first disciples they themselves had failed to understand the message which they bore, yet it had been in every respect correct. In proclaiming it they had fulfilled the purpose of God, and their labor had not been in vain in the Lord. "Begotten again unto a lively hope," they rejoiced "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Both the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," and the first angel's message, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is come," pointed to Christ's ministration in the most holy place, to the investigative Judgment, and not to the coming of Christ for the redemption of his people and the destruction of the wicked. The mistake had not been in the reckoning of the prophetic periods, but in the event to take place at the end of the 2300 days. Through this error the believers had suffered disappointment, yet all that was foretold by the prophecy, and all that they had any Scripture warrant to expect, had been accomplished. At the very time when they were lamenting the failure of their hopes, the event had taken place which was foretold by the message, and which must be fulfilled before the Lord could appear to give reward to his servants.

Christ had come, not to the earth, as they expected, but, as foreshadowed in the type, to the most holy place of the temple of God in Heaven. He is represented by the prophet Daniel as coming at this time to the Ancient of days: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came" - not to the earth, but "to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him." Daniel 7:13.

This coming is foretold also by the prophet Malachi. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom

ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” Malachi 3:1. The coming of the Lord to his temple was sudden, unexpected, to his people. They were not looking for him there. They expected him to come to earth, “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

But the people were not yet ready to meet their Lord. There was still a work of preparation to be accomplished for them. Light was to be given, directing their minds to the temple of God in Heaven; and as they should by faith follow their High Priest in his ministration there, new duties would be revealed. Another message of warning and instruction was to be given to the church.

Says the prophet: “Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:2, 3. Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above, are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort, they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative Judgment is going forward in Heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away sin, among God’s people upon earth. This work is more clearly presented in the messages of Revelation 14.

When this work shall have been accomplished, the followers of Christ will be ready for his appearance. “Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.” Malachi 3:4. Then the church which our Lord at his coming is to receive to himself will be “a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” Ephesians 5:27. Then she will look forth “as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.” Song of Solomon 6:10.

Besides the coming of the Lord to his temple, Malachi also foretells his second advent, his coming for the execution of the judgment, in these words: “And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Malachi 3:5. Jude refers to the same scene when he says, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds.” Jude 14, 15. This coming, and the coming of the Lord to his temple, are distinct and separate events.

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to

his temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25.

In the summer and autumn of 1844, the proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were then developed - one class who looked with joy to the Lord's appearing, and who had been diligently preparing to meet him; another class that, influenced by fear, and acting from impulse, had been satisfied with a theory of the truth, but were destitute of the grace of God. In the parable, when the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." The coming of the bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of his kingdom. The holy city, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." Said the angel to John, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." "He carried me away in the spirit," says the prophet, "and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God." Revelation 21:9, 10. Clearly, then, the bride represents the holy city, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride. Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of days in Heaven, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom," he will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of his kingdom, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, he will come in his glory, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, for the redemption of his people, who are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," at his table in his kingdom, Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30, to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of days in Heaven, to the marriage, the reception of his kingdom. "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut." They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in Heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are to understand his work, and to follow him by faith as he goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go into marriage.

In the parable it was those that had oil in their vessels with their lamps that went into the marriage. Those who, with a knowledge of the truth from the Scriptures, had also the Spirit and grace of God, and who, in the night of their bitter trial, had patiently waited, searching the Bible for clearer light - these saw the truth concerning the sanctuary in Heaven and the Saviour's change of ministration, and by faith they followed him in his work in the sanctuary above. And all who through the testimony of the Scriptures accept the same truths, following Christ

by faith as he enters in before God to perform the last work of mediation, and at its close to receive his kingdom - all these are represented as going into the marriage.

In the parable of Matthew 22 the same figure of the marriage is introduced, and the investigative Judgment is clearly represented as taking place before the marriage. Previous to the wedding the king comes in to see the guests, Matthew 22:11, to see if all are attired in the wedding garment, the spotless robe of character washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 7:14. He who is found wanting is cast out, but all who upon examination are seen to have the wedding garment on, are accepted by God, and accounted worthy of a share in his kingdom and a seat upon his throne. This work of examination of character, of determining who is prepared for the kingdom of God, is that of the investigative Judgment, the closing work in the sanctuary above.

When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut," we are carried down through the Saviour's final ministration, to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be completed.

In the service of the earthly sanctuary, which, as we have seen, is a figure of the service in the heavenly, when the high priest on the day of atonement entered the most holy place, the ministration in the first apartment ceased. God commanded, "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he comes out." Leviticus 16:17. So when Christ entered the holy of holies to perform the closing work of the atonement, he ceased his ministration in the first apartment. But when the ministration in the first apartment ended, the ministration in the second apartment began. When in the typical service the high priest left the holy on the day of atonement, he went in before God to present the blood of the sin offering on behalf of all Israel who truly repented of their sins. So Christ had only completed one part of his work as our intercessor, to enter upon another portion of the work, and he still pleaded his blood before the Father on behalf of sinners.

This subject was not understood by Adventists in 1844. After the passing of the time when the Saviour was expected, they still believed his coming to be near; they held that they had reached an important crisis, and that the work of Christ as man's intercessor before God, had ceased. It appeared to them to be taught in the Bible, that man's probation would close a short time before the actual coming of the Lord in the clouds of heaven. This seemed evident from those scriptures which point to a time when men will seek, knock, and cry at the door of mercy, and it will not be opened. And it was a question with them whether the date to which they had looked for the coming of Christ might not rather mark the beginning of this period which was to immediately precede his coming. Having given the warning of the Judgment near, they felt that their work for the world was

done, and they lost their burden of soul for the salvation of sinners, while the bold and blasphemous scoffing of the ungodly seemed to them another evidence that the Spirit of God had been withdrawn from the rejecters of his mercy. All this confirmed them in the belief that probation had ended, or, as they then expressed it, "the door of mercy was shut." SEE APPENDIX, NOTE 7.

But clearer light came with the investigation of the sanctuary question. They now saw that they were correct in believing that the end of the 2300 days in 1844 marked an important crisis. But while it was true that that door of hope and mercy by which men had for eighteen hundred years found access to God was closed, another door was opened, and forgiveness of sins was offered to men through the intercession of Christ in the most holy. One part of his ministration had closed, only to give place to another. There was still an "open door" to the heavenly sanctuary where Christ was ministering on the sinner's behalf. Now was seen the application of those words of Christ in the revelation, addressed to the church at this very time: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth: I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Revelation 3:7, 8.

It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement, who receive the benefits of his mediation on their behalf; while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration, are not benefited thereby. The Jews who rejected the light given at Christ's first advent, and refused to believe in him as the Saviour of the world, could not receive pardon through him. When Jesus at his ascension entered by his own blood into the heavenly sanctuary to shed upon his disciples the blessings of his mediation, the Jews were left in total darkness, to continue their useless sacrifices and offerings. The ministration of types and shadows had ceased. That door by which men had formerly found access to God, was no longer open. The Jews had refused to seek him in the only way whereby he could then be found, through the ministration in the sanctuary in Heaven. Therefore they found no communion with God. To them the door was shut. They had no knowledge of Christ as the true sacrifice and the only mediator before God; hence they could not receive the benefits of his mediation.

The condition of the unbelieving Jews illustrates the condition of the careless and unbelieving among professed Christians, who are willingly ignorant of the work of our merciful High Priest. In the typical service, when the high priest entered the most holy place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary, and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins, and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical day of atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest, and know what duties are required of us.

Men cannot with impunity reject the warnings which God in mercy sends them. A message was sent from Heaven to the world on Noah's day, and their salvation depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. Because they

rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race, and they perished in the waters of the flood. In the time of Abraham, mercy ceased to plead with the guilty inhabitants of Sodom, and all but Lot with his wife and two daughters were consumed by the fire sent down from heaven. So in the days of Christ. The Son of God declared to the unbelieving Jews of that generation, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Matthew 23:38. Looking down to the last days, the same infinite power declares, concerning those who "received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. As they reject the teachings of his Word, God withdraws his Spirit, and leaves them to the deceptions which they love.

But Christ still intercedes in man's behalf, and light will be given to those who seek it. Though this was not at first understood by Adventists, it was afterward made plain, as the scriptures which define their true position began to open before them.

The passing of the time in 1844 was followed by a period of great trials to those who still held the Advent faith. Their only relief, so far as ascertaining their true position was concerned, was the light which directed their minds to the sanctuary above. Some renounced their faith in their former reckoning of the prophetic periods, and ascribed to human or Satanic agencies the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit which had attended the Advent movement. Another class firmly held that the Lord had led them in their past experience; and as they waited and watched and prayed to know the will of God, they saw that their great High priest had entered upon another work of ministration, and, following him by faith, they were led to see also the closing work of the church. They had a clearer understanding of the first and second angels' messages, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the solemn warning of the third angel of Revelation 14.