

Ellen G. White Estate

MY JOURNEY TO LIFE SANCTUARY

Scripture's Longest Time Prophecy

STEP 4 OF 28



My Journey to Life, Step 4

Foreword

My Journey to Life will give you the keys for finding peace of mind, harmony of body, and success in relationships. Every step will transform your outlook on life as you unpack each lesson. We pray they will help you to fall in love with the greatest Teacher this world has ever known. Together, let's walk the pathway step-by-step to a new life in Jesus.

Preface

Our study today focuses on the profound lessons revealed through the ancient Biblical sanctuary and its services. The earthly tabernacle with its sacred compartments and ceremonies; the duties of the priests and their special clothing; the animals used in the sacrificial system—each of these symbols pointed to Christ and the redemptive work He would continue to do in heaven on behalf of His people. Let's take a deeper look at the sanctuary and its relevance to us today.

Step Four—The Sanctuary

Scripture's Longest Time Prophecy (It's more relevant than you think!) "There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it, Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent."—*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, p. 351

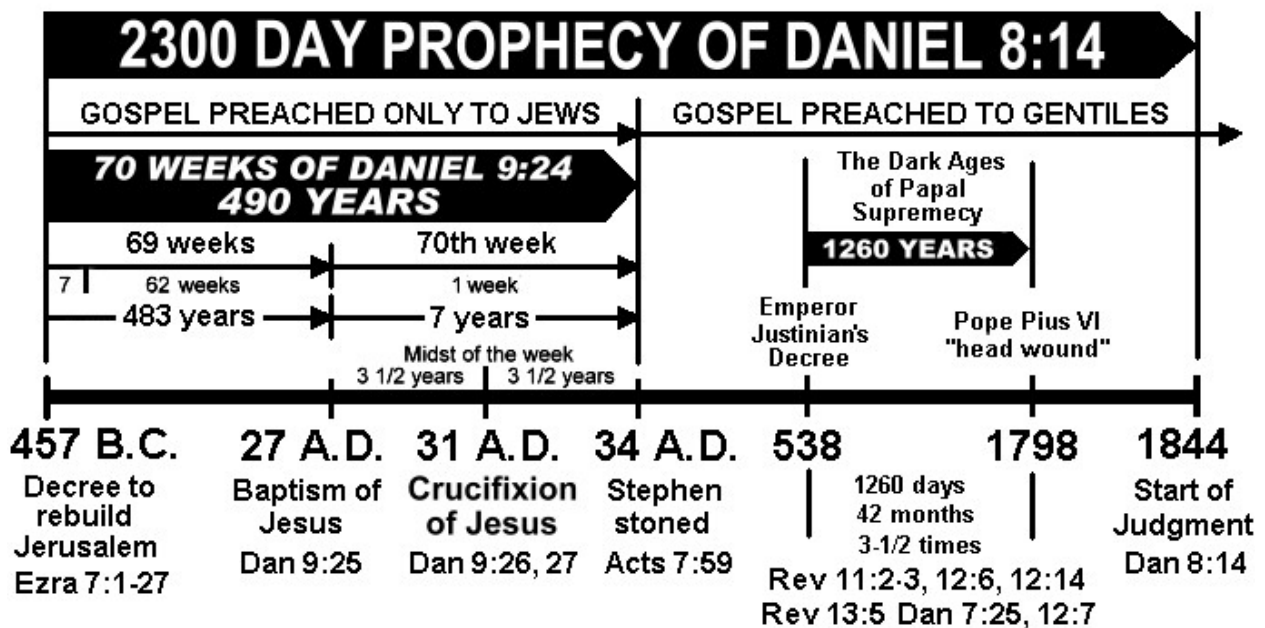
Bible Discovery: Leviticus 16; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Daniel 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Hebrews 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Revelation 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 4, pp. 312.3-315.2

1. Where is Scripture's longest prophecy found, and what does it point to? Studied together, the Old Testament book of Daniel and the New Testament book of Revelation unlock the mystery of Scripture's longest time prophecy in Daniel 8:14. Daniel wrote that the prophecy extends over a period of 2,300 prophetic days (where one day = one year in symbolic Bible prophecy). The time prophecy begins in 457 BC, and Revelation tells us that the culminating event of the prophecy is judgment!

Bible Discovery: Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6; Daniel 7:9, 10; 8:14; 14:6, 7

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 410.1



2. What does "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" mean in Daniel 8:14? William Miller thought the sanctuary was the earth, and it would be cleansed by the fires of the judgment at Christ's second coming. He believed this was at the conclusion of the 2300 day/year prophecy in 1844. On closer investigation of Scripture, early Sabbath-keeping Adventists discovered the Bible speaks of an earthly sanctuary modeled after the heavenly sanctuary. Confessed and forsaken sins which had symbolically accumulated over the year in the earthly sanctuary were "cleansed" when the High Priest entered the Most Holy Place on the annual Day of Atonement

(Yom Kippur). Heaven’s sanctuary is the center of God’s government, where Jesus now works to restore us to full fellowship with Him. We are in the judgment phase of Earth’s history, which Yom Kippur prefigured.

Bible Discovery: Exodus 25:9, 40; Leviticus 16:29, 30; Psalm 11:4; 63:1, 2, 8; Hebrews 9:22, 23; 10:1-25

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 417-419

3. What exactly happened in heaven at the close of the 2300 day/year prophecy? Just as the high priest went from the Holy Place into the Most Holy Place on the ancient Day of Atonement, so at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, Jesus entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. The Jewish Day of Atonement where God judged His people was a representation of heaven’s judgment event described in Daniel 7. This “pre-Advent investigative” judgment involves examining the heavenly records of all who have believed on Jesus. He also continues to be our Mediator while now serving as our Judge.

Bible Discovery: Leviticus 16:1-34; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Malachi 3:16; Matthew 12:36; Revelation 8:3-5; 11:19; 15:8

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 483.1-2

4. What is God trying to “prove” by providing so many biblical references to the earthly sanctuary and the heavenly sanctuary? He’s trying to “prove” how much He loves us, all of us! We have been separated by sin from our loving heavenly Father. God longs to reunite us to Himself and illustrates the path home to His heart through the various elements of the sanctuary—its courtyard and two apartments, the Holy Place and Most Holy Place. Each area and each piece of furniture says something beautiful about Jesus and a phase of His plan to reconcile us, redeem us, and bring us home to heaven at last.

Bible Discovery: Exodus 26:33; 28:29; Psalm 11:4; 77:13; Isaiah 59:1, 2; Revelation 5:8; 8:2, 4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 29, 1886, par. 5; *Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886, par. 4

5. What is the main message of the sanctuary system? Worship and sacrifice are inseparable in the sanctuary narrative, illustrating for us the message of salvation through Christ. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament sanctuary services pointed forward to Jesus’ death on the cross of Calvary, a sacrificial substitution through which the Lord provided a means of redemption for every repentant sinner. As our High Priest, Jesus intercedes on our behalf, purifying the believer by His blood and righteousness. Just as the Israelites met with God at the sanctuary, so the

heavenly temple is also a center of worship, from where God interacts with His people on Earth. Heaven’s sanctuary is the place from which God grants us forgiveness today, teaching us how to live for Him and rescuing us from our distress.

Bible Discovery: Exodus 25:8; 1 Kings 8:30, 34, 36, 49, 50; Psalm 95:6; 18:6, 14-19; 20:2, 6; 103:19-22; Hebrews 9:26; 1 John 1:7

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 948.3

6. After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, where did He go and what did He do in heaven’s sanctuary? From His completed atonement at the cross, Jesus ascended to the Holy Place to begin His work of intercession on behalf of every repentant sinner. This initiation of Christ’s priestly work in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds to the role of the priest in the Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary (see answer to the next question). On the atypical Day of Atonement beginning October 22, 1844, Jesus entered the Most Holy Place for the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. He is vindicating His people in a final judgment before the universe and applying the cleansing benefits of His sacrificial death to all whose names are preserved in the Book of Life.

Bible Discovery: Daniel 12:1; Luke 10:20; Hebrews 4:1, 2; 7:25; 8:2; 9:1, 22-24, 28; Revelation 21:27

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 489.1

7. Is there any significance to the architectural structure and layout of the Israelite sanctuary? Everything about the sanctuary—even its physical structure and furniture—reminds us that Jesus is the center of the salvation story. For instance, the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard was associated with the presence of the Lord through which the seeker had access to Him. The laver symbolized spiritual cleansing from sin. In the Holy Place of the sanctuary, the table of shewbread reminded Israel of the Messiah to come who would be the “bread of life”; the lampstand symbolized both the omnipresence of God, the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus as the light of the world. The altar of incense represented the prayers of the people ascending to heaven, with Christ’s merits making those prayers acceptable to the Lord.

The only piece of furniture inside the Most Holy Place was the wooden box overlaid with gold inside and out, which housed the tables of the Ten Commandments. A slab of pure gold called the “mercy seat” covered it. On this cover, two large gold cherubs faced each other. The glory of God emanated from between the cherubs, showing His willingness to atone for the sins of His people. The ark was a continual reminder of *Immanuel: God with us*.

Bible Discovery: Exodus 27:1-8; Psalm 43:4; Zechariah 4:6, 11; John 6:48-51; 8:12; Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357.2

8. How does the ancient Day of Atonement correlate to Jesus' High Priestly ministry on our behalf today? The work of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement was to symbolically cleanse the Most Holy Place from the congregation's accumulated sins of the previous year. The people prepared carefully for this event by an outward cleansing of their clothes and dwellings, and by an inward cleansing from their sins through confession, repentance, and seeking forgiveness from God.

Today, there is no need for an earthly priest because the new Covenant work of Christ depicting two aspects of His mediation in salvation history does away with the old Aaronic priesthood. Today Jesus is the only priestly mediator between God and us. In this atypical Day of Atonement, Christ invites us also to prepare for judgment through confessing and forsaking our sins and seeking the covering of Christ's righteousness (see the story of the wedding garment in Matthew 22:1-14). The idea of a judgment or investigation to determine guilt or innocence prior to determining judicial sentence can be found throughout Scripture. In heaven's judgment taking place now, Christ is all at once our Advocate, Redeemer, Priest and Friend! Nothing can take us out of His hand except our own choice.

Bible Discovery: Leviticus 4:20; 12:8; 17:11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 1:9; 2:1; 3:4; Revelation 19:8

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 352.2; 428.1

9. What was the significance of the two goats in the ancient Day of Atonement? Is the goat representing Azazel a savior symbol? No, Azazel in no way correlates with Jesus, the Messiah. On the Day of Atonement two goats were brought to the sanctuary, and lots were cast to determine which goat would be slain as a sin offering for the people, and which would become the scapegoat (Azazel). The blood of the Lord's goat would be sprinkled on the mercy seat and on the altar of incense, while the scapegoat, a symbol of Satan and demonic power, was banished into the wilderness, nevermore to return to the camp of Israel. Thus, the ritual of the scapegoat represented the removal of sin and was not a sacrificial act.

Bible Discovery: Leviticus 16:8, 21, 22; Psalm 49:7, 15; Isaiah 53:11, 12; John 1:29

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 422.2

10. How essential to us is the message of Christ's closing ministry? The Seventh-day Adventist Church came into existence as a result of careful study of the earthly sanctuary services and their implications for understanding the essential ministry of Jesus on our behalf since 1844. The first angel of Revelation 14 announces loudly that the hour of judgment has come! The

proclamation of this urgent message becomes the mission of every Christian—alerting a world in rebellion against God that there is hope, peace and joy in the Christ-centered judgment message.

When Christ finishes His work of judgment in the heavenly sanctuary, our opportunity to decide for Jesus is past. It is imperative that we enter a covenant relationship with Jesus now, participating in His holiness, while there is still opportunity. Soon the last great battle between the forces of God and the forces of Satan will be fought, and sin will finally be eradicated. Let us now, by faith, follow Jesus into heaven’s sanctuary, where we will find grace and mercy to sustain us through Earth’s final conflict.

Bible Discovery: Mark 13:33; Hebrews 4:14-16; Revelation 14:6, 7, 12; 22:11, 20

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, January 1, 1889, par. 1; *21LtMs, Manuscript 95, 1906*, par. 63

11. Who is being judged? Everyone who has ever lived will ultimately appear before the judgment seat of God. In the pre-Advent investigative judgment, the true believer who recognizes his need of the righteousness of Christ, will be separated from the professed believer who relies on his own works. Judgment will be made in favor of the saints, and against the apostate little horn power who has commandeered the saints’ dominion. The investigative judgment is not for God’s benefit, who already knows the end from the beginning and all about our lives and choices. It is for the benefit of the universe to answer the charge of Satan that God is unfair and arbitrary in determining who enters His kingdom of grace. The judgment vindicates the character of God Himself!

Bible Discovery: Daniel 7:22, 26; Matthew 13:28-30; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:8, 9; Revelation 19:8

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, pp. 929.1, 930.16

12. How should the pre-advent investigative judgment impact my life today? Recognition of where we are in Earth’s history will make all the difference in how we live our lives, our values and priorities. As you see the day of God’s final judgment approaching, would you like to have a relationship with Christ, who wants to bring you inner peace and eternal salvation? You *can* have an Advocate, a Friend, and a Savior at your side....and you can rejoice in His assurance of a positive verdict in the judgment. Today, if you hear His voice, harden not your heart, because all who are united with Jesus are assured of salvation! Rejoice in the reality of Christ’s substitutionary death for your sins!

Bible Discovery: John 14:1-3; Acts 10:42; Hebrews 3:15; 7:25; 8:1, 2; 10:19-21; 1 Peter 4:5; 2 Peter 1:5-8, 10; 3:9-13; Revelation 8:3, 4

Further Reading: Ellen G. White, *14LtMs, Manuscript 142*, 1899, pars. 13, 14

Reflection...

In the earthly sanctuary system, God’s people experienced consecration, thanksgiving, joy, devotion, fellowship, covenant loyalty, and most importantly transformation. How much deeper can we experience those joys in the “better sacrifice” found in Christ’s heavenly ministry for us! We find refuge and comfort when entering by faith into the second apartment of heaven’s sanctuary—where Jesus Himself presents His nail-scarred hands as judicial evidence that our salvation is safe with Him!

Next Step...

Have you ever wondered where real peace and rest can be found? At creation God gave us a special weekly gift—a 24-hour period to spend reconnecting with Him, the true Power source. This gift is especially valuable in our stressful and chaotic world. Over time, however, society has lost the significance of this special day. In our next step, we’ll learn about the history of the Sabbath and its eternal relevance.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see as the main point in the doctrine of the sanctuary?
2. How should we live in the atypical Day of Atonement?
3. In what ways does heaven’s sanctuary service proclaim the gospel today?

Further Reading

Official Adventist Website: <https://www.adventist.org/christs-ministry-in-the-heavenly-sanctuary>

Contact Information

Ellen G. White Estate: mail@whiteestate.org

Request a personal Bible study: <https://www.bibleschools.com/en/personal-studies>

Visit your local Seventh-day Adventist Church: <https://www.adventistlocator.org>

Online prayer room: <https://www.wepray.mobi>