

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

How to Interpret Scripture **Lesson 11: The Bible and Prophecy**

The foundation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a belief in the good news of Daniel 8:14: "Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Then shall this constant cloud of failure which has hovered over God's Israel be lifted; then shall God's name be cleared as His people demonstrate His plan of salvation to be a success; then shall the sacrifice of Christ be vindicated. A cynical attitude which says, "Suppose the church fails and the conditions are not met" is the same as saying, "Suppose the sanctuary will not be cleansed." The honor of God requires that it *shall* be cleansed.

This is the ultimate issue in the great controversy. We have the privilege of standing in absolute loyalty to Christ and to His Bride-to-be.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was not raised up to prepare a people to die, but to prepare a people to be translated "in the great day of God."

When the angel told Daniel that "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (Dan. 8:14), the prophet could have known of the year-day principle in Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, and that there is a heavenly sanctuary. The cosmic Day of Atonement was coming.

As a thoughtful prophet, Daniel could understand the spiritual connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary (Lev. 16:29, 30; 23:27-29). What is important is not a ritual ceremony, but heart-cleansing. The event is concerned with the fate of the world, and the final triumph of the great plan of redemption.

The year 1844 marks the beginning of that final phase of Christ's High Priestly ministry in the Most Holy Apartment. Great progress was made in the early days of the Advent Movement as those who recognized the change to Christ's ministry in the Most Holy Apartment cooperated with Him.

They accepted the seventh-day Sabbath truth, health reform, dress reform, and in 1856 first recognized that the Laodicean message of Revelation 3:14-21 applied primarily to them rather than to the "nominal churches." This readiness to accept advancing light was "cooperation" with Christ's cleansing of the sanctuary.

In 1856 the Lord gave Ellen White a vision in which an angel informed her that some present at the May conference in Battle Creek would "be alive and remain upon the earth to be translated at the coming of Jesus." [1] This meant that heaven intended the return of Jesus to be within the lifetime of those people. "The angel" whom Ellen White quoted word for word was not omniscient (only the Father is), but he was using his best angelic judgment. He knew that the 2300-year prophecy had been fulfilled, a serious-

mindful people were responding in cooperation with the great High Priest, and had now even accepted the cleansing ministry of the Laodicean message. The angel therefore confidently predicted that “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall *begin* to sound, the mystery of God should be finished” (cf. Rev. 10:6).

Heaven did not let the angel down. The latter rain began well within the lifetime of those people present at the 1856 conference—32 years later.

What was to happen after 1844? God’s judgment was to begin (Mal. 3:1-5, 17, 18; Zech. 12:10-13:1). This meant a thorough cleansing of human hearts, for God’s “judgment” is not intended to condemn, but to vindicate. Preparation for such vindication is God’s loving purpose.

Sins were to be “blotted out,” “remembered no more” (Acts 3:19; Jer. 31:33, 34). This was antitypical to the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary and people on the typical Day of Atonement.

The latter rain and the loud cry were to complete the gospel commission for all the world (Joel 2:23–25, 32). This blessing was to consist of a “teaching of righteousness.”

Christ’s saving power was to be demonstrated “perfectly,” totally (Heb. 2:9-3:1; 4:15; 6:1; 7:25; 9:28, etc.). This unique ministry, never before achieved in human history for a “people,” a “body,” is to be realized through Christ’s ministry in the Most Holy Apartment.

Although “some few in every generation” as individuals have responded totally to God’s grace, never before has a “*body*” of God’s people from “every nation, kindred, tongue and people” prepared for translation. This special preparation coincides with the opening of the Most Holy Apartment ministry (Rev. 10:7, 8; 11:19; 12:17; 14:12).

Never has such “a body” had to meet the demanding challenge of the mark of the beast. Even the martyrs in the Dark Ages did not have to meet so severe a test. And never has a “body” of God’s people experienced the full reception of the seal of God. Only a much more intimate fellowship with Christ *on His cross* can prepare God’s people for that test. Again, this will include representatives from “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people” (Rev. 13:13-17; 15:1-4).

The ultimate “in Christ” experience will be the preparation of Christ’s church to become the bride at the wedding. A flower girl is innocent and “perfect;” but her only concern at the wedding is the cake and ice cream. The bride has grown up to maturity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of her bridegroom (Rev. 19:7, 8). This is of course a never-before accomplishment in history, and can be possible only through Christ’s final atonement ministry. This entails learning a new motivation that transcends egocentric concern. [2] This again will be true of believers of “every nation, kindred, tongue and people.”

—Paul E. Penno

Endnotes:

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 131, 132.

[2] cf. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 480.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JERYxhqPkKg>

Many of Pastor Penno's sermons are on YouTube in Spanish. Just type **pastor paul penno en español** in the search bar.

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