THE TIME OF THE END: PART TWO

God has appointed a specific time for the judgment to begin (**Acts 17:31**). Daniel tells us that there is an *appointed* time at the end (**Daniel 8:17, 19**). Daniel's vision led us into a discussion of the "cleansing of the sanctuary," (**Daniel 8:14**) which we discovered was a reference to the Day of Atonement—a special annual feast the Israelites regarded as a day of *judgment*. The angel Gabriel told Daniel that the "cleansing of the sanctuary" was going to take place in 2300 days, which in Bible prophecy represents 2300 years (**Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34**).

In **Exodus 25:8, 9**, God instructs Moses to build an *earthly* sanctuary according to a plan that he was shown (see also **Acts 7:44** and **Hebrews 8:5**). This plan was a blueprint based on a sanctuary in heaven! The ancient Israelite sanctuary was a *type*, or shadow, of the ministry of our heavenly High Priest (Jesus Christ) in heaven's sanctuary (**Hebrews 8:1, 2**). Everything that took place in the earthly sanctuary foreshadowed some aspect of Christ's ministry for our sinful world. Even the furniture and physical layout (see **Hebrews 9:1-6**) pointed to Christ.

The sanctuary was divided into two compartments—the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. In the Holy Place, you could find a golden candlestick (pointing to the "Light of the World," **John 8:12**), a table of *shewbread* (pointing to the "Bread of Life," **John 6:35, 51**), and an altar of incense (representing the prayers of the saints ascending to God, **Revelation 8:4**). In the Most Holy Place was the Ark of the Covenant, with two angels perched on the lid, representing the throne of God. It was literally the place where the presence of God rested when He was in the sanctuary (see, for example, **Exodus 25:22; Exodus 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:6-13** and **Psalm 99:1**). Inside the Ark was the ten commandment moral law of God, representing the fact that God's government is based on the rule of law. Of course, the lid on the Ark is called the *mercy* seat! Our God is not only perfectly just, but He is also perfectly merciful! (In **Revelation 11:19**, the "temple of God" is opened in heaven, and John is given a glimpse the "Ark," or throne of God.)

The earthly priests went into the Holy Place every day. Blood from sacrificial animals (pointing out our need for the blood of Christ) was sprinkled against the veil. Only the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place, and then only once a year (**Hebrews 9:7**). This happened on the Day of Atonement, when the sanctuary was cleansed of all the sins that had been symbolically transferred into it. According to **Leviticus 16:7-10-16**, two goats were selected. One of them was to be the Lord's goat; the other a *scapegoat*. Aaron, the High Priest, sacrificed the Lord's goat and sprinkled its blood seven times before the *mercy seat*, on the Ark of the Covenant. Thus the sanctuary was cleansed. Sin was symbolically eradicated by the blood of Christ! **Leviticus 16:20-22** tells us that the sins from the sanctuary were then symbolically placed on the scapegoat, and it was driven out into the wilderness to die.

This system of cleansing the sanctuary went on year after year for hundreds of years. But when Christ came and died on the cross of Calvary, this system of sacrifices was no longer needed because the Lamb of God

(to whom all the sacrificial animals pointed) had been slain for our sins once and for all (**Hebrews 10:10**). The veil in the temple was torn in two the moment Christ died, signifying that the sacrificial system in earth's sanctuary had come to an end (**Matthew 27:51**).

According to **Hebrews 9:24**, when Jesus returned to heaven, He went into the heavenly sanctuary to serve as our High Priest. **1 John 2:1** reminds us that He serves as our advocate. Sin will not be permitted to go on forever, however. In **Hebrews 9:26-28** we are told that "once in the end of the world" Jesus will put away sin forever. When He returns, it will be *"without sin"* (**Hebrews 9:28**).

The prophecy of **Daniel 8:14** points us forward to this time. This is the longest time prophecy in the entire Bible: 2300 years until the sanctuary is cleansed, or the heavenly judgment will convene. To help Daniel understand, Gabriel appears in another vision by which Daniel can understand and calculate the first (**Daniel 9:25-27**). Daniel is told that 70 weeks are "determined" (or literally, "cut off" from the 2300 year prophecy) for his people. Who are Daniel's people? The Jews. The 2300 year prophecy is divided into two parts for simplicity's sake: the first 70 weeks (70 x 7 = 490 years) is for the Jewish people. The remaining 1,810 years take us down to the time of the judgment.

In **Daniel 9:25**, we learn that the date that marks the beginning of both the 490 years for the Jews *and* the 2300 years until the judgment is when the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem is given. In 457 B.C., the Persian king Artaxerxes sent the Jews back to Jerusalem, along with all the supplies they would need, to rebuild Jerusalem (**Ezra 7:13, 20, 23, 27**). If you add 490 years to 457 B.C., you come to 34 A.D. (remember that you must add a year when you cross the B.C./A.D. line). A.D. 34 happens to be the year that Stephen was stoned and the gospel was taken to the Gentile world!

Daniel 9:25 tell us that the Messiah would appear after "seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." That's a total of 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 years. That takes us to 27 A.D., the very year that Jesus was baptized and began His ministry as the Messiah! (Luke 3:1 tells us that He was baptized in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar.) **Daniel 9:26** tells us that some time *after* 27 A.D., Jesus would be "cut off," and then after that, the sanctuary and the city would be destroyed (compare with **Matthew 23:37-39; 24:2**). True to God's Word, Jerusalem was ransacked by the Roman General Titus in 70 A.D. Then in **Daniel 9:27**, we are told that Jesus would confirm the covenant with the Jews for one week, or seven years. This is precisely the period of time between 27 A.D. (His baptism) and 34 A.D. (when the gospel went to the Gentiles). In the middle of this period, He was "cut off" (compare with **Isaiah 53:8**) for our sins. This happened in the spring of 31 A.D., right on schedule! At this point, the sacrificial system came to an end. The veil in the temple was torn in two.

We know the 490 years began in 457 B.C. And 2300 years from 457 B.C. takes us to 1844. That means that in 1844, the judgment scene depicted in **Daniel 7:9, 10** began. The judgment is already underway, today! This is in keeping with the spectacular warning message given to the world just before Jesus returns—in **Revelation 14:6, 7**, a worldwide message declares that the "hour of His judgment *is* come."

Revelation 3:5 tells us that Jesus will stand for us in the judgment, if we will let Him and **1 John 2:1** tells us that He is eager to represent us before the Father. It is entirely up to you!

457 B.C. — Rebuilding of Jerusalem
27 A.D. — Baptism of Messiah
31 A.D. — Crucifixion
34 A.D. — Stoning of Stephen, Gospel goes to the Gentiles
1844 A.D. — Cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary; the judgment convenes!

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