

Christ in the Sanctuary

Recently, a dear friend sent me an email in which he requested Biblical proof that Christ began His final phase of ministry in the Most Holy Place in 1844. This was to be done solely with the Bible and history. Well, I always love a challenge.....

The study of the sanctuary is one of the most awesome in the entire Bible. Every aspect of this teaching focuses on Jesus Christ. From the sacrificial offerings, the ministries of the priest, the furniture, and finally, the Ark of the Covenant; everything was designed to teach about Christ in the redemption of mankind and their restoration from sin! The very heart of the sanctuary was the sacrificial service and in this light, we remember John the Baptist's words when he saw Christ coming toward him, 'The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.'" John 1:29 Christ was the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of mankind, and by that offering placing within the reach of humanity forgiveness for sin and power for obedience!

How about the ministries of the priest's in the sanctuary? Do these also point to Christ? The Bible answers this so clearly. "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. **For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices**: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: **Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Hebrews 8:1-5 Paul has said a mouthful here, but it can be easily understood.

Paul stated that the sanctuary on earth was made according to the pattern of the Heavenly Temple that was given to Moses. This was repeated several times to Moses in Exodus. (Exodus 25:9, 40; Ex. 26:30) So, the earthly temple was a copy of the temple of God in Heaven! Then, Paul declares that the priests, who ministered in the temple, served after the pattern of Christ's Heavenly Temple ministries! Paul states several times in Hebrews that Christ is our Heavenly High Priest. Notice, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:14-16

In the earthly temple, how many ministries did the priests have? The Bible clearly identifies two ministries carried on by the priests. There was a daily ministry carried on in the court yard and in the Holy Place. This is clearly laid out for us in Leviticus 4:27-31. "And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the LORD; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him." In this daily ministry, the priest ministered in the court yard and in the Holy Place. This went on throughout the year.

It was this ministry that Christ began after He ascended to heaven. In fact, when John saw Christ in the sanctuary in Revelation 1, Christ is wearing the same garments worn by the High Priest when he ministered in the courtyard and Holy Place. "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." Revelation 1:13 This garment down to the foot was the podayra which Exodus 28 identifies as being worn by the high priest when in his daily ministries. "And thou shalt make the robe (podaray) of the ephod all of blue." Ex. 28:31 This robe was the podaray. John sees Jesus in 95 AD ministering in the Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary, walking in the midst of the 7 candlesticks!

Once each year, the High Priest would carry on His final phase ministry. This occurred on the Day of Atonement. This service is found in Leviticus 16 and Leviticus 23:26-32. The High Priest dressed in the plain garb of regular priests (Lev. 16:4). This solemn day was known by 3 different names; the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27, 28), the Day of Judgment (Leviticus 23:29, 30), and the cleansing of the sanctuary (Leviticus 16:16-19). For those who were afflicting their souls before God in repentance for sin, they were atoned for by the blood of the Lord's goat. Those choosing a path of sin and rebellion were judged and cut off from the camp. Those in affliction were cleansed from sin along with the sanctuary on this solemn day!

Since the earthly priests carried on their ministries after the pattern of our Heavenly High Priest, and they had two ministries, then Christ also had two ministries in the Heavenly Sanctuary! But when did Christ begin His final phase of ministry in the Most Holy Place? Are there any time prophecies that discuss the beginning of the judgment, and the cleansing of the sanctuary? Revelation 14:7 declares, "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and

give glory to him; **for the hour of his judgment is come**: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” This passage clearly pinpoints that the beginning of Christ’s work in the Most Holy Place has begun and states that a time prophecy nails the date! Daniel 8:14 says, “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” This passage gives a time period specifically connected to the day of atonement/judgment/cleansing of the sanctuary. If we can find out when this time period of 2300 years begins, then we can know when Christ began His Most Holy Place work!

Daniel chapter 8 doesn’t help because the part of the prophecy in this chapter that dealt with time was not explained to Daniel. “And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business; **and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it.**” Gabriel was told to explain everything to Daniel and he returns 13 years later in chapter 9 to give him an explanation of the 2300 years! “Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, **I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.** At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: **therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.**”

Verse 24 of Daniel gives another time period of 490 years that pertains solely to the Jews. But, verse 25 gives a starting point for both time periods. **“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem** unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” If the date for the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem can be ascertained, then the beginning of the cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary and Christ’s Most Holy Place work can be realized. There were three decrees. “And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. **And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.**” Ezra 6:14 Cyrus originated decree in 536 BC, Darius reaffirmed it in 520 BC, and Artaxerxes completed it in 457 BC.

Taking 457 BC as the starting date and adding 2300 years to it, plus the year zero, we arrive at 1844! Since Artaxerxes decree took place in the autumn of 457 BC, then Christ begin His Most holy Place ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary in the autumn of 1844. Judgment had begun, atonement was being made, and the sanctuary was being cleansed!

