

GOD'S TWO SANCTUARIES

In our last study, we outlined very carefully two related time prophecies of the book of Daniel--the 2,300 days of chapter 8, and the seventy weeks of Daniel 9. Both began at the same date--457 BC. The shorter period led to the exact year of Christ's baptism, to His crucifixion, and to the time when the early Christian leaders turned fully to the Gentiles with the message of salvation and hope. The longer period of 2,300 years led to 1844, when a large and sincere group of Christians looked for the second coming of Christ to this earth to "cleanse" it by fire. They understood the earth to be the "sanctuary." (Re-read Daniel 8:14.)

In 1844, the earth was not the sanctuary Daniel referred to, nor was the cleansing Christ's return with a fiery purification of this earth. In the context of that year, exactly what could the sanctuary have been? And how could it be said to be cleansed? In this and the next study, we will let the Bible answer these questions.

What is the sanctuary? The Old Testament devotes many chapters to the subject. About one-half of the book of Exodus, almost all of Leviticus, large areas of Numbers, and some of Deuteronomy discuss it. Other references are to be found in many other Old Testament books. In the New Testament, a large part of Hebrews is concerned with it, as well as many allusions to it in some of Paul's writings and in the Revelation.

1. We need to begin with the fact that for some two and one-half millennia after the creation of earth, the system of offering sacrifices for sin was continued. Then in the time of Moses, about fourteen and a half centuries before Christ's birth, a tabernacle or sanctuary was made to serve as the center for sacrifices and for dealing with the sins of the entire nation of Israel. What can we learn about this first "tabernacle" in these texts?

- (a) Exodus 25:8,9,40 _____
- (b) Exodus 27:1-8 _____
- (c) Exodus 26:35 _____
- (d) Exodus 26:33,34 _____

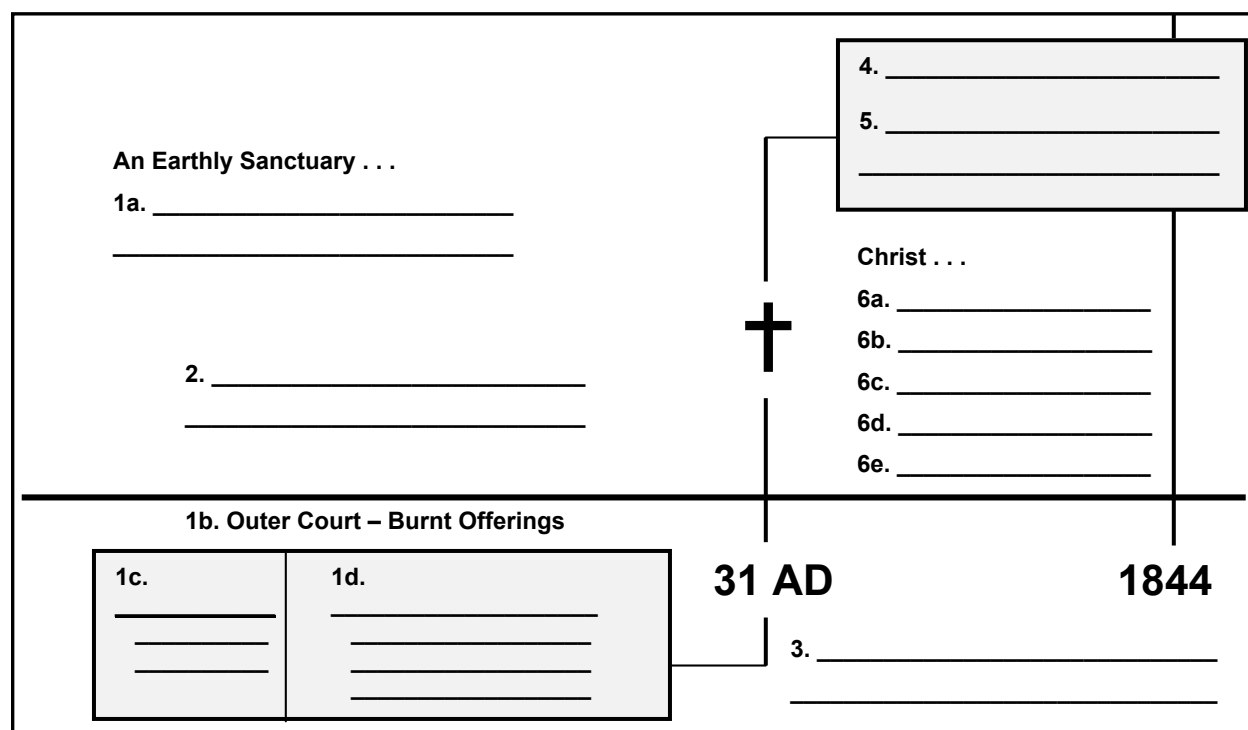
This was clearly a sanctuary on earth, not the earth itself. It was the focal point in the spiritual worship of Old Testament Israel. For a detailed description, read Exodus 36-40.

2. 480 years later, after Israel had settled in Canaan, after the judges, and after the first two kings, this portable tabernacle was replaced by the permanent and magnificent temple of Solomon. What does 1 Kings 6:1,11-14,37,38 tell us about this new temple?

Years later, after the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Babylonians, a new temple was built by Zerubbabel. It was completed in 515 BC, and was enlarged and beautified by Herod in the first century BC.

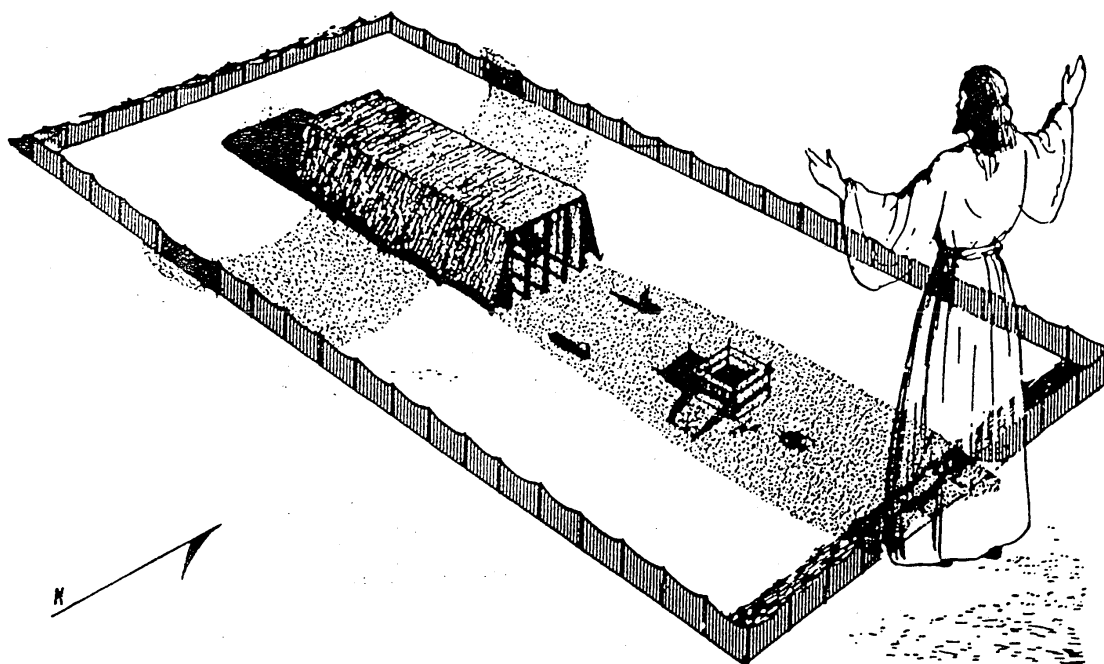
3. The earthly tabernacle and temple, the "sanctuary," was used in Jewish worship until Christ's day. What happened to the Jewish nation, and worship, and the temple in the first century AD?
- (a) Matthew 23:38; 24:1,2 _____
 - (b) Mark 15:37,38 (John 19:30) _____
 - (c) Luke 19:41-44 _____

4. If the earthly sanctuary, or temple, ended in the first century, AD, then what are we to understand by the "sanctuary" in connection with 1844 AD, when there had been no Jewish sanctuary on earth for centuries? Watch the answer unfold in a study of the following passages.
- (a) Hebrews 8:1-7 _____
- (b) Hebrews 9:1-12 _____
5. When did our Lord take up His position in this heavenly sanctuary, at God's right hand in heaven, according to Mark 16:19? (See also Acts 7: 55,56; Ephesians 1:19,20; Hebrews 9:24.)
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6. What can we learn from a study of the contents of the old sanctuary on earth that symbolizes Christ's great earthly and heavenly ministry for the sinner?
- (a) 1 Corinthians 5:7 (Ex. 40:28,29) _____
- (b) John 6:35 (Ex. 40:23) _____
- (c) John 1:9 (Ex. 40:24) _____
- (d) Romans 8:34 (Ex. 40:26,27) _____
- (e) John 15:10 (Ex. 40:20,21) _____
7. The evidence is clear that the sanctuary in 1844 at the close of the 2,300 years was in heaven, where Christ continually ministered for sinners. If so, then what is meant by the "cleansing" of something that is in heaven? Our next lesson will focus on the answer to this intriguing question.



Class Question: In what way(s) does the Old Testament sanctuary help us better understand and appreciate the second coming of Christ?

Other Questions: (1) Can we give a clear explanation of the 2300 day (and 490 day) prophecy which is central in Adventist end-time theology? (2) What is the real purpose for an end-time judgment? (3) How can we face the last judgment without fear in our hearts? (4) Is forgiveness for our sins (when we ask) final and total? Why do our records in heaven have to be "investigated" again (Eccl. 12:13,14) if forgiveness is final? (5) If we are truly saved by grace, in what way do our "works" figure into final judgment?



Shadows of the Christ