

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Faculty Publications

2007

Christ at His Sanctuary: Toward Adventist-Evangelical Dialogue

Roy E. Gane

Andrews University, gane@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs>

Recommended Citation

Gane, Roy E., "Christ at His Sanctuary: Toward Adventist-Evangelical Dialogue" (2007). *Faculty Publications*. 2361.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pubs/2361>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

CHRIST AT HIS SANCTUARY

Toward Adventist-Evangelical Dialogue

Roy E. Gane

Prof. of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Languages
Director, Ph.D./Th.D. and M.Th. Programs
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Paper presented at dialogue with World Evangelical Alliance
Andrews University
August 6, 2007

The Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the biblical earthly and heavenly sanctuaries is compatible with evangelical theology up to a point, beyond which the Adventist view is unique. The purpose of this paper is to briefly describe the commonality, specify the point of departure, and explain the uniqueness.

For my understanding of the sanctuaries, I am indebted to many scholars, such as the Adventist authors of the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (7 vols.; ed. Frank Holbrook) and my Jewish mentor at the University of California, Berkeley, Jacob Milgrom (author of the Anchor Bible series commentary on *Leviticus*; 3 vols.). However, rather than reviewing a lot of literature on the topic, perhaps the simplest and most precise way for me to begin the present dialogue is to cite aspects of the biblical sanctuaries that I was able to include in the volume I wrote on *Leviticus, Numbers* for the evangelical NIV Application Commentary series (Zondervan, 2004), and explain aspects I intentionally left out because they belong to the uniquely Adventist sphere of interpretation. This particular process requires me to be excessively self-referential, for which I apologize in advance.

SANCTUARY CONCEPTS COMPATIBLE WITH EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

Here are some key concepts regarding the biblical sanctuaries and their functions (especially regarding sacrifices) that are presented in my *Leviticus, Numbers* commentary. Not all evangelicals would agree with all of these points, but acceptance of them is by no means confined to Seventh-day Adventists.

Christ's Sacrifice as the Remedy for Sin and its Results

1. The life-and-death consequences graphically portrayed in all of the varied ancient Israelite animal sacrifices reached fulfillment in the rich, once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29).¹

¹ Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 68; cf. 69-70, 89-92.

2. Just as purification (so-called “sin”) offerings remedied not only acts of sin but also physical ritual impurities signifying the state of mortality resulting from sin, through Christ’s sacrifice, God “not only forgives us from our sins (1 Jn 1:9), he heals us from our disease of *mortality* and gives us eternal *life* (Jn 3:16)!”²
3. “Christ’s sacrifice is crucially necessary because it enables God to *maintain his justice when he extends mercy* by forgiving human beings who have violated his law. Only this sacrifice makes it possible for God to be just when he justifies those who believe (Rom. 3:26).”³
4. God directly pardons sinners. He has never delegated to any human being (including priest) the right to grant forgiveness as he does.⁴
5. “Forgiveness through expiation mediated by Aaronic priests at the Israelite sanctuary was provisional, contingent on the future sacrifice of Christ (Heb . 9:9; 10:1-4, 11).”⁵
6. “As evidence for the substitutionary nature of Christ’s atonement, Christians need look no further than the fact that as Priest he bore human sins and as Victim he died for those sins.”⁶

Christ’s Priestly Ministry in God’s Heavenly Sanctuary

1. We no longer need human priests in a sanctuary/temple on earth because Christ, the uniquely divine-human substitute for sinners and mediator between God and humanity, has inaugurated his better, truly efficacious priestly ministry in God’s heavenly temple following his ascension.⁷
2. Now that Christ ministers in heaven, there is no Christian holy place where God’s glorious Shekinah Presence visibly resides at one particular location on earth. Therefore, “Christians are no longer obliged to observe the Pentateuchal laws of ritual purification, which governed interactions between the Israelites and the Lord while he dwelt among them in his sanctuary.”⁸

Vertical and Horizontal Typology

1. There is “vertical” correspondence/typology between God’s sanctuary up in heaven and the Israelite sanctuary down on earth, which was a “copy and shadow of what is in heaven” (Heb 8:5; cf. Exod 25:9).⁹
2. There is “horizontal/historical” correspondence along the timeline of history: “From the perspective of the New Testament, the Israelite sanctuary system ‘prophesied’ later and greater realities of salvation history, whether on earth or in heaven.”¹⁰ Thus, the cross of Christ fulfills the function of the “altar” for Christians (Heb 13:10-12)

² Ibid., 228, quoting Roy Gane, *Altar Call* (Berrien Springs, MI: Diadem, 1999), 118.

³ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 127; cf. 128.

⁴ Ibid., 102-103.

⁵ Ibid., 179-180.

⁶ Ibid., 197.

⁷ Ibid., 180-185.

⁸ Ibid., 229.

⁹ Ibid., 181. On biblical hermeneutical controls for typology, especially of the horizontal and vertical varieties, see Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical τύπος Structures* (Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 2; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981). On ways in which the Israelite sanctuary represented various aspects or roles of Christ, see Gane, *Altar Call*, 38.

¹⁰ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 181.

and Israelite spring festivals prefigured Christ's death and resurrection (1 Cor 5:7; 15:20).

Transfer of Sin and Stages of Atonement

1. Leviticus 6:27-28 shows that purification (so-called "sin") offerings, prefiguring Christ's sacrifice, had unique transfer properties: "By carrying evils from those who offered them, these sacrifices polluted what they touched even accidentally. Since the ritual required that the blood and suet contact part of the sanctuary, the sanctuary received contamination that had to be removed on the Day of Atonement."¹¹ God's "goal was to purify faulty people, not to pollute his sanctuary, but the effect on the sanctuary was an inevitable side-effect."¹²
2. The ancient Israelite ritual system enacted two major stages of atonement, first throughout the year and then on the Day of Atonement/Purgation:
Stage 1: Throughout the year purification offerings removed evils from their offerers and left those evils at the sanctuary, where they accumulated. Thus, the evils were moving *into the sanctuary*. This stage resulted in *forgiveness (slh)* or *physical cleansing (thr)* for the offerer.
Stage 2: On the yearly "Day of Purgation," special purification offerings removed *from the sanctuary* and camp the evils that had accumulated in the sanctuary throughout the year. This stage resulted in *moral cleansing (thr)* for the Israelites.¹³
3. As in the Israelite ritual system (especially in Leviticus), the New Testament indicates that there are stages of reconciliation (= at-one-ment) between God and his people. Paul wrote that through Christ's death, God had already reconciled human beings to himself (Rom 5:10; Col 1:22; 2 Cor 5:18-19), but on the other hand, he appealed: "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). This is because Christ's once-for-all sacrificial death (Heb 9:26, 28) made complete provision for the salvation of all who accept him (Jn 3:16-18), and as long as human relationships with God are being healed through Christ's intercession and the ongoing transforming power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord is reconciling people to himself. All reconciliation/atonement flows from Christ on the cross, but the cross was not the end of the story. Just as priestly mediation was essential for Israelite sacrifice, Christ's "intercession is an intense reality—a work that is absolutely necessary—and without which the continued application of redemption cannot take place."¹⁴

Judgment for Vindication of God and His People

1. God's sanctuary represents his character (love, including justice and mercy), authority, and reputation. So purification of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (*Stage 2*) enacted vindication of the justice of God's character, which was necessary

¹¹ Ibid., 150; cf. 148-149; for more detail, see Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 165-181.

¹² Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 150.

¹³ Ibid., 278; cf. 277, 279-283; incorporated into a study note in *Faith in Action Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 174. For much more detail, see Gane, *Cult and Character*, 267-302.

¹⁴ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 292-293, quoting Andrew Murray, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), 194.

because he had incurred judicial responsibility through showing mercy to guilty but repentant people by forgiving rather than condemning them (*Stage 1*).¹⁵

2. The Day of Atonement was Israel's judgment day, when those who continued to accept his gift of grace and received moral cleansing/vindication showed ongoing faith and loyalty to him by practicing self-denial and abstaining from work (Lev 16:29-31).¹⁶
3. On the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) there was also judgment on Azazel's goat (so-called "scapegoat"), who represented not Christ but Satan, the archenemy of God who originated sin, and tempts and maliciously accuses his people.¹⁷

POINT OF DEPARTURE

In the following portion of my *Leviticus, Numbers* commentary, I came up to the point of departure into unique Adventist interpretation, but intentionally stopped just short of it:

We have found that purging the ancient Israelite sanctuary once a year signified the clearing of God's reputation with regard to his treatment of people who had made different kinds of choices regarding him. Since Christ's ministry in God's heavenly temple has superseded the Aaronic services (Heb. 7-10) at the earthly "copy and shadow" (8:5), the possibility arises that Christ as Victim-Priest may address a burden of God's reputation that is borne at his headquarters in the temple.

This possibility is strengthened by the fact that "heavenly things" had to be purified by Christ's sacrifice at the beginning of his priestly ministry in God's temple (Heb. 9:23), just as part of the earthly sanctuary received purging blood when Aaron and his sons were consecrated (9:21; cf. Lev. 8:15—outer altar). Thus "the New Testament does not limit the application of Christ's death to cleansing the person; it also affirms that the sanctuary has been purified by the blood of Christ so that we now have access into the heavenly court." If Christ's better sacrifice has this function at the beginning of his priestly ministry, perhaps it also cleanses the heavenly sanctuary later on in some way that is analogous to the purgation accomplished by the Israelite high priest on the Day of Purgation (see comments on Lev. 23:26-32).

God's temple in heaven would be affected by spiritual rather than ritual transactions. We pray to confess our sins rather than physically leaning our hands on Christ's head, and he forgives and cleanses us (1 John 1:9). He purifies our consciences with his blood (Heb. 9:14), but this is not literal, physical blood that he took with him in a container when he ascended to heaven. Rather, Christ has carried the "cross event" with him to heaven in his own person (Rev. 5:6).¹⁸

¹⁵ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 284-288, 293-295; for more detail, see idem, *Cult and Character*, 318-323, 331-333.

¹⁶ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 404-409; for more detail, see idem, *Cult and Character*, 305-318.

¹⁷ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 288-291, 295-297; cf. idem, *Cult and Character*, 261-266.

¹⁸ Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 294-295, quoting Allen P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 136. Cf. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 409

Seventh-day Adventists find the possibility suggested by the typology to be confirmed: Christ's better sacrifice indeed "cleanses the heavenly sanctuary later on in some way that is analogous to the purgation accomplished by the Israelite high priest on the Day of Purgation." This confirmation is found in eschatological passages of Scripture. Thus Seventh-day Adventists combine sanctuary typology and eschatology, seeing biblical evidence for a last phase of atonement at the heavenly temple, which functions as the antitype to the Israelite Day of Atonement.

ESCHATOLOGICAL PRE-ADVENT JUDGMENT

In the Bible there are several phases of divine judgment applying to the whole world, including judgment of the world at the cross in the sense of casting out the "ruler of this world," i.e., Satan, the usurper (Jn 12:31), announcing the verdict of judgment that separates the loyal from the disloyal among the nominal people of Christ at his Second Coming (Matt 25:31-46), a deliberative phase of judgment after the Second Coming during the millennium, apparently to fix penalties on those who are already condemned as lost (Rev 20:4, 12-13), and the final execution of judgment on the disloyal and wicked when they, Satan, and all evil are destroyed at the end of the millennium (vv. 9-10, 14, 15). So God's "judgment" is a process spanning a long period of time.

Within the judgment process, there is another phase. Revelation 22:12 says: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (NASB95 here and in subsequent quotations unless otherwise indicated). In context, this means that when Christ comes again, human fates have already been decided on the basis of prior deliberation regarding the way they have lived. A number of passages reveal this phase of deliberative judgment before Christ's Second Coming.

The apostle Paul spoke of "the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Rom 2:16; cf. Eccl 12:14). Lest anyone think this doesn't apply to "born again" Christians, he affirmed that "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God" (14:10).¹⁹ Such accountability sounds scary, and indeed it should be to those inclined to be disloyal. However, for the loyal, who have made a covenant with God by sacrifice (Ps 50:5) through accepting Christ as their sufficient sacrificial Substitute and merciful Mediator, and who hold on by faith to the forgiveness and transformation that he has provided (cf. Col 1:21-23), such a judgment would be a welcome opportunity for divine justice and vindication (cf. Ps 35:24; 50:3-6; 96:10-13; 135:14) against the oppressive accusations of Satan, who tries to claim God's people as his own because they have sinned (Zech 3:1-5; Rev 12:10).

on Lev 23:26-32, showing the connection between the Israelite Day of Atonement and the future "Day," when the Lord judges his people (Heb 10).

¹⁹ Jn 3:18 says literally, "He who believes in Him is not judged" (NASB and NASB95; cf. NJB). However, several English translations recognize that in this context "judged" refers to the condemnation part of the judgment process: "He who believes in Him is not condemned" (NKJV; cf. NRSV, NIV).

Hebrews 10:26-30 warns Christians against future apostasy. Here the “terrifying expectation of judgment” (v. 27) has to do with the execution of punishment. However, the *a fortiori* argument referring to the pentateuchal guideline for capital cases (“dies without mercy on [the testimony of] two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment...”; vv. 28-30) implies that before the execution there is a deliberative phase involving witnesses, which is still future from the perspective of the author of Hebrews. Here the scope of God’s judgment is: “His people” (v. 30).

In Revelation 14, an angel/messenger with an “eternal gospel” to proclaim to all inhabitants of Planet Earth (v. 6) announces: “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters” (v. 7). We know that this time of judgment is before Christ’s Second Coming because its proclamation is part of a gospel appeal to choose God before all fates are sealed. In verses 9-10, another angel warns: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” This refers to the previous chapter (Rev 13), where an arrogant, blasphemous beast (a composite of the predatory animals in the apocalyptic vision of Daniel 7) persecutes God’s people, has power for 42 months (= 3 and ½ years/times; Rev 12:14—“a time and times and half a time”; cf. v. 6—1,260 days), suffers a major wound but revives, and there is an attempt to coerce people to worship it.²⁰ So in Revelation 14 the appeal during the time of the judgment is God’s answer to the threat posed by the beast.

Going back to Daniel 7, which provides background for Revelation, we find a succession of predatory beasts representing human powers, the fourth of which is depicted as a terrifying monster with ten horns. Among its horns there arises a new horn that begins little but grows powerful and arrogant and symbolizes a blasphemous, persecuting power that heavily engages in activity belonging to the sphere of religion: “He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time” (v. 25).

God’s answer to the threat posed by the “little horn” power is an awesome eschatological judgment in heaven (vv. 9-10). This judgment follows and condemns the depredations of the arrogant and oppressive “little horn” power (vv. 11, 26), and vindicates the holy people of God. These people consequently receive eternal possession of the kingdom/dominion of this world (vv. 18, 22, 27) under the lordship of “One like a Son of Man” (= Christ), who receives the kingdom when he comes to the “Ancient of Days” (God the Father) in heaven (vv. 13-14). This conferral of status upon Christ in heaven through the judgment takes place before Christ’s Second Coming.

The parallel with Revelation 13 and 14 is unmistakable: The same kind of oppressive, blasphemous earthly religious power, exercising domination for the same length of time, is followed by the same kind of divine response: a judgment. This

²⁰ Cf. 2 Thess 2, where apostasy involves a blasphemous “man of lawlessness,” who is finally destroyed at Christ’s Second Coming (vv. 1-12).

intertextual comparison suggests that the “beast” of Revelation, still future from the perspective of the apostle John at the end of the first century A.D., represents the same power as the “little horn” of Daniel, and the judgments in Daniel 7 and Revelation 14 are the same event.²¹

The fact that in Daniel 7 books/records are used before a verdict is reached (v. 10) indicates that this is a deliberative phase of judgment, which considers the history of human deeds. Consequently, Adventists have often called this an “investigative” judgment. However, the investigation is not for God’s information because he already knows everything. Rather, disclosure of this information is for God’s created beings (e.g., “myriads upon myriads were standing before Him”; v. 10), so they will know that his treatment of human beings is fair. From this perspective, the tribunal could be called God’s “demonstrative judgment.”

The fact that the judgment is for the benefit of God’s created beings, who cannot read thoughts as God can, explains why other biblical passages speak of God bringing works to judgment (e.g., Eccl 12:14) rather than thoughts of faith or lack thereof. While we are saved only by grace through faith (Eph 2:8), living faith works through love (Gal 5:6; James 2:26), so works are a valid symptom of faith, which can be witnessed by God’s created beings.

The vision of Daniel 8 largely overlaps the chronological scope of chapter 7, but this time the eschatological remedy is presented from a different angle: “Unto 2,300 evening morning, then the sanctuary will be justified” (8:14; my literal translation). Within the parallel literary structures of Daniel 7 and 8, it is clear that the justifying of God’s sanctuary is the functional equivalent of the judgment, indicating that these descriptions refer to the same divine response to religious rebellion against him.²²

Daniel 8:14 raises two major questions: (1) How could God’s sanctuary be justified through a judgment? and (2) How does the expression “2,300 evening morning” indicate the timing of the event? To answer these questions, we must examine the vision of Daniel 8 more closely.

HOW CAN GOD’S SANCTUARY BE JUSTIFIED THROUGH A JUDGMENT?²³

God’s sanctuary/temple is the headquarters of his administration, where he has his throne (Jer 17:12). So his sanctuary represents his reputation, character, and authority. This is confirmed by the fact that his “name” was present at the sanctuary (Deut 12:5, 11), and his “name” has to do with his reputation (Ezek 20:9). Therefore, the common

²¹ Cf. Matt 24:15; Mk 13:14, where Jesus puts the “abomination of desolation,” predicted by Daniel, in the future from his perspective.

²² Cf. William Shea, “Unity of Daniel,” in *Symposium on Daniel* (ed. Frank Holbrook; Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2; Washington, D.C: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 2:209; Jacques Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (revised ed.; Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987), 29-30.

²³ This section is adapted from Roy Gane, *Who’s Afraid of the Judgment?* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2006), 38-42.

denominator between the judgment and justifying the sanctuary is God's reputation: The judgment justifies/vindicates God's reputation, and this event is represented by the justifying/vindication of his sanctuary.²⁴

Reinforcing the connection between sanctuary and judgment, there is a strong link between Daniel 8 and the Israelite Day of Atonement (Lev 16), which combined the themes of justifying the sanctuary and judgment: Ritual/symbolic cleansing of the sanctuary by blood (vv. 14-19) represented vindication of God, and at the same time those who showed loyalty to God were affirmed (Lev 16:30) but the disloyal were condemned (23:29-30).²⁵

In addition to the fact that in Daniel 8:14 God's sanctuary is restored through being "justified," Daniel 8 alludes to the sanctuary and Day of Atonement in several ways:

1. In Daniel 8, Daniel saw two sacrificeable animals: a ram and a he-goat. These are found as a pair in only one ancient Israelite ritual context—the Day of Atonement—as the two sacrifices of the Israelite nonpriestly community (Lev 16:5, 15, 24).²⁶
2. In Daniel 8:11, the "little horn" removes the *tamid*, "Regularity," referring to regular worship, as indicated by the fact that elsewhere the Hebrew word *tamid*, "regularity/regular" qualifies a cluster of regular worship activities performed for God by his people at the Israelite sanctuary.²⁷
3. In Daniel 8:11, the place of God's sanctuary is thrown down (cf. v. 13).
4. Daniel 8:12 refers to rebellion/transgression against the regular worship of God. The word for "rebellion" here is the noun *peša*^c, which appears in pentateuchal ritual law only in the context of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:16, 21).

Thus far we have found that in Daniel 7 and 8 the solution to the problem of the "little horn," including its effect on God and on his people, is an awesome event that functions as a great end-time Day of Atonement before Jesus comes to earth again. Just as the Israelites could not see their high priest approach God in the sanctuary (Lev 16), Christ approaches his Father in heaven, out of earthly sight (Dan 7:13).

²⁴ "In view of the idea of vindication in 8:14 and the fact that "Son of man" in the preceding chapter also represents vindication—the promises regarding the kingdom of God couched in the imagery of a new (cleansed, restored, vindicated) temple—it is not strange that some scholars have seen that 8:14 symbolically presents the same judgment pictured in 7:9-13" (Desmond Ford, *Daniel* [Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1978], 163).

²⁵ Jews still observe Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, as a day of judgment according to rabbinic tradition (Jacques Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000], 128-129). For a linguistic link between the concepts of justifying and cleansing, where these ideas intersect in the semantic area of "vindication," see the synonymous parallelism in Job 4:17.

²⁶ Cf. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, 26-29.

²⁷ Including weekly renewal of the "bread of the Presence" (Exod 25:30; Lev 24:8), daily maintenance of the lamps on the lampstand so that they can burn nightly (27:20; Lev 24:2-4), daily/continual mediation by the high priest, as represented by his unique garments (28:29, 30, 38), the daily burnt offering (29:38, 42), daily burning of incense (30:8), regular/continual maintenance of fire on the outer altar (Lev 6:13), and the high priest's regular grain offering (6:20).

A Day of Atonement judgment does not nullify the forgiveness that believers have already received. Against ubiquitous scholarly misconception for two thousand years, the biblical passages dealing with the Day of Atonement (Lev 16; 23:26-32; Num 29:7-11) say nothing at all about forgiveness because the great Day provided atonement *beyond* forgiveness: moral cleansing/vindication for the loyal, reaffirming the forgiveness that they had already received (Lev 16:30 in context).

In the ancient sanctuary, when the high priest enacted the judgment on the Day of Atonement, he didn't cleanse the sanctuary by wiping off the bloodstains that had been applied for sins during the year. No, he put more blood in several of the same places (Lev 16:14-19; compare 4:6-7, 17-18, 25, 30, 34), reaffirming the forgiveness that had already been given.

Whose blood did that represent? Christ's blood! Christ's sacrifice is so great that it not only purchases our forgiveness, it pays the cost of mercy after forgiveness, thereby reaffirming our atonement, our reconciliation with God. Let's hear it again for the blood of Christ!

Christ's blood applied to you in the judgment says: You are really forgiven and finally cleansed from any impediments to your covenant relationship with God. You belong to God, not to Satan.²⁸

Just as Daniel 7 places a time limit on the persecutions of the "little horn" (verse 25—"a time, times, and half a time"), Daniel 8 limits the time during which God's sanctuary would suffer defilement: "Unto 2,300 evenings-mornings, then the sanctuary shall be justified" (my translation).

WHEN DOES JUSTIFYING THE SANCTUARY (= JUDGMENT) BEGIN?²⁹

If God's pre-Advent judgment is the end-time equivalent of the Israelite Day of Atonement, on which God expected all of his faithful people to show their loyalty while his sanctuary was being purified (Lev 16:29-31; 23:26-32), shouldn't Christians know when the end-time judgment begins? God told the Israelites precisely when the Day of Atonement began so that they would know when to participate (Lev 23:27, 32).

Daniel 8 says the justifying of the sanctuary (= judgment) comes after "2,300 evening morning." This chapter parallels chapters 2 and 7 in that it covers a sweep of history from Daniel's day until the end of the present era.³⁰ The vision of Daniel 8 begins with the progression from Medo-Persia to Macedonia/Greece, which are explicitly identified in verses 20-21 and symbolized by a ram followed by a he-goat (verses 3-8). By nailing down the referents of these symbols, the text gives the reader indisputable historical anchor points.

²⁸ Gane, *Altar Call*, 340. The typology/symbolism of the Day of Atonement begins to be fulfilled at the cross because that is when Christ's sacrificial blood was shed. But application of Christ's blood for the purpose of cleansing God's sanctuary = judgment does not begin until later because the judgment is still future from the perspective of the writer of Hebrews 10.

²⁹ Based on Gane, *Who's Afraid of the Judgment?*, 36-38, 59-67.

³⁰ On parallel historical outlines in Daniel 2, 7, 8, the Babylonian "Dynastic Prophecy," and the New Testament, see *ibid.*, 42-44.

Here are ten exegetical steps to identify the time when justifying the sanctuary begins:³¹

Step 1: Identify the “little horn” (Daniel 8)

In Daniel 8, God’s sanctuary is justified at the end of “2,300 evening-morning” (v. 14) and solves problems caused by an evil “little horn” power. The “little horn” arose after a succession of powers:

- A ram (vv. 3-4) representing the **Medo-Persian** empire (verse 20) was conquered by a goat with a big horn (vv. 5-7), symbolizing **Greece/Macedonia** under its first king (v. 21). This must be Alexander the Great, who conquered Medo-Persia in the 330s B.C.
- When Alexander died, his kingdom was split into **four Greek (Hellenistic) kingdoms**, represented by four horns (vv. 8, 22). The four kingdoms were: Ptolemaic Egypt, Seleucid Syria, Attalid Pergamum, and Antigonid Macedonia.
- The “little horn” arose at the end of the rule of the four kingdoms (v. 23) from one of the 4 “winds of heaven,” that is, directions to which Alexander’s empire was divided (vv. 8-9). It was distinct from the four Greek kingdoms and superseded them, building a great empire in several horizontal directions (south, east, and toward the “Beautiful [Land]” = Palestine, implying that it came from the northwest; v. 9). Then it went vertical as a religious power, persecuting the “host of heaven” (= God’s people; v. 24), challenging the Commander of the host, disrupting true worship of God, and putting something else in its place (vv. 10-13).³² Only one power fits this description: **Rome** in its pagan and papal phases.³³

³¹ Ibid., 62-67; adapted from Gane, *Altar Call*, 280-297; cf. Clifford Goldstein, *1844 Made Simple* (Boise, Id.: Pacific Press, 1988).

³² On the horizontal and vertical dimensions in Daniel 8, see Shea, “Unity of Daniel,” 193-195.

³³ In attempting to establish Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a Hellenistic Seleucid ruler (reigned 175-164/3 B.C.), as the “little horn,” many scholars have taken “out of one of them” to mean that the “little horn” comes out of one of the Hellenistic horns. After all, horns do not come out of winds. But neither do horns normally grow out of other horns, and this is symbolic prophecy, where symbols need not conform to what we find in real life (see, e.g., 7:6). There are several reasons to reject an interpretation that Daniel 8 predicts the rise and career of Antiochus as *any* fulfillment (including an “apotelesmatic” one) of the “little horn.” For example:

(1) “*Them*” in “out of one of them” at the beginning of verse 9 most naturally refers to the nearest antecedent: the immediately preceding “four winds of heaven” at the end of verse 8. So the “little horn” need not arise from a Hellenistic kingdom at all, but can simply come from one of the directions toward which Alexander’s kingdom was divided.

(2) Daniel 8:9, presenting the “little horn,” does not continue the description of the Hellenistic kingdoms, but begins a new literary unit containing elements equivalent to those found in the earlier paragraphs regarding the Medo-Persian ram and the Hellenistic he-goat: identification of origin, directions of expansion, and indication of power/greatness. This implies that the “little horn” is independent of the foregoing Hellenistic powers rather than continuing one of them (Martin Pröbstle, “Truth and Terror: A Text Oriented Analysis of Daniel 8:9-14 [Ph.D. dissertation; Andrews University, 2006], 534-537).

(3) In Daniel 8 the Medo-Persian ram “magnified himself” (verse 4), Alexander’s Greek goat “magnified himself exceedingly” (verse 8), and the “little horn” “grew exceedingly great” (verse 9). If Antiochus were the “little horn,” how could his greatness be comparable to that of Alexander the Great, or even mighty

The Roman empire was in control from shortly before the beginning of the Christian era to the fifth century A.D. The empire was superseded by the Church of Rome, which dominated the Middle Ages. If the justifying of God's sanctuary happens after domination by the "little horn" and if the "little horn" represents Rome, the sanctuary must be justified after domination by Rome.

Persia ➔ Greece ➔ 4 kdms ➔ Rome ➔ *Sanctuary Justified*

Note: We have identified the vertical phase of the "little horn" with the Church of Rome, not out of some kind of prejudice, but by simply following the evidence in the Bible and recognizing the accurate way in which Daniel's prophecies have been fulfilled. By implicating the Church of Rome, the Bible warns against an institutional system of hierarchy, ritual, and dogma that is contrary to God and his pure worship, but it by no means excludes all members of that communion from ultimate salvation.³⁴ Jesus said, "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd" (Jn 10:16; cf. Rev 18:4, calling people from end-time "Babylon"). Through the centuries, there have been many wonderful people belonging to the Church of Rome, whose sincerity, spirituality, sacrificial living for Christ, and unselfish service for others are a source of inspiration to all Christians. Would that we were all as devoted as Mother Teresa!

Step 2: Recognize that the 2,300 days cannot be literal days

The question in Daniel 8:13 is: "How long is the vision...?" The answer is: "2,300 evening-morning," that is, 2,300 days (v. 14).³⁵ But the vision lasts from Medo-Persia at the beginning of Daniel 8 (vv. 1-2) until the end of Rome, a period covering many centuries. This is many times longer than 2,300 literal days, which is less than 6 and 1/2 years.

Step 3: Recognize that Daniel 9 explains the vision of Daniel 8

Daniel prayed to God (9:3-19), who sent Gabriel (vv. 20-23) to help him "understand the vision" (v. 23) by giving him additional information. There is no vision in Daniel 9, so this must be the vision of Daniel 8. Gabriel comforted Daniel by telling him that the Jews would be restored to their land and temple sooner than the end of the 2,300 days. Within "seventy weeks," Jerusalem would be restored and "an Anointed Prince," the Messiah, would come (9:24-27).

Medo-Persia? Rather than expanding his empire, he failed to conquer Egypt and was driven out of Palestine by the Maccabees.

For more detail, see William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (ed. Frank Holbrook; Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1; Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 31-66; Desmond Ford, *Daniel* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1978), 164, 188, 191; Gane, *Who's Afraid of the Judgment?*, 78-86.

³⁴ Gerhard Pfandl, *Daniel: The Seer of Babylon* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 82-83.

³⁵ For reasons why "evening morning" here means "day" (not half-day) units, see Gane, *Who's Afraid of the Judgment?*, 83-85.

Step 4: Identify the date when the “seventy weeks” began

Daniel 9:25 gives the beginning of the “seventy weeks”: “from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.” The word/decreed that resulted in the restoration of Jerusalem as the capital of the Jews was the decree of the Persian king **Artaxerxes I**, which went with Ezra to Jerusalem in the seventh year of his reign (Ezra 7), which was **457 B.C.**³⁶

Step 5: Recognize that the “seventy weeks” are weeks of years

The “seventy weeks” began during the Persian era and were to include the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah. How could all that happen in seventy weeks of literal days, that is, 490 days? Leviticus 25 provides the solution. For the Israelites, a week could be a week of years: After seven Sabbaths/weeks of years (= 49 years), Jubilee freedom would come (Lev 25:8-10). Similarly, the “seventy weeks” of Daniel 9 are a large-scale Jubilee period. Freedom from domination by foreign powers could come after seventy weeks of years, which totals 490 years. The fact that the “seventy weeks” represent a period leading up to a kind of “Jubilee” is reinforced by verse 25, which refers to “seven weeks of years” (= 49 years) at the beginning of the “seventy weeks.”³⁷

Step 6: Find the end of the 490 years

Taking into account the fact that there was no zero year between B.C. and A.D. time (1 B.C. → 1 A.D.; not 1 B.C. → 0 → 1 A.D.), 490 years from 457 B.C. is **34 A.D.** On a calculator: 490 - 457 = 33, but add 1 because there was no zero year and therefore the 490 years reach forward an extra year. This is confirmed by Daniel 9:25-26, which says that the Messiah would come at the beginning of the last week of years (7 years before 34 A.D.), that is, after 7 + 62 = 69 weeks, which is 483 years, coming from 457 B.C. to 27 A.D.

	Messiah	
457 B.C.	27 A.D. 34 A.D.	
490 years		

³⁶ For “restore” (Hiphil of *šwb*) with a city as direct object meaning restoration to former ownership, cf. 1 Ki 20:34; 2 Ki 14:22 (Ibid., 74). Earlier decrees of Cyrus and Darius, also recorded in the book of Ezra, did not even mention the city of Jerusalem. On the dating of Artaxerxes’s decree and Ezra’s return, see Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1953, 1970), especially 115, 127; cf. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (ed. Francis D. Nichol; Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1955), 3:100-108; Brempong Owusu-Antwi, *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27* (Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series 2; Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 1995), 295-299.

³⁷ L. Koehler, and W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:1384 lists as the third meaning of *šabua* ‘, “week”: “a week of years, a period of seven years,” citing Dan 9:24, 25, 27.

We have strong evidence that this prophecy was accurately fulfilled in real time, indicating that Daniel's apocalyptic time periods are precise rather than chronologically meaningless.³⁸ Jesus was baptized and began his public ministry "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Lk 3:1). It is well known from secular historical sources that Tiberius became sole emperor of Rome (after having been co-ruler in the Roman provinces) when Augustus died on August 19, 14 A.D. Luke most likely followed the usual Jewish method of dating at that time, which reckoned the first year of a king's reign as the portion of the year coming before the first New Year's Day (in autumn, about mid-October) of his reign. So the time between August 19 and October of 14 A.D. would have been counted as Tiberius's first year. The emperor's second year would have been the Jewish civil year covering October of 14 A.D. to October of 15 A.D. Continuing in this way, Tiberius's fifteenth year would have reached from the autumn of 27 A.D. to the autumn of 28 A.D. The end of Daniel's 483 years was 27 A.D., falling within the range of Tiberius's fifteenth year.³⁹

Step 7: Recognize that the end of Daniel 9 refers to events that would happen after the 490 years, but still during the 2,300 days

Gabriel told Daniel that the "Anointed One" = Messiah = Christ was to be "cut off" and have "nothing," and then Jerusalem would be destroyed along with its temple (Dan 9:26). In Daniel 9:27, the Messiah would confirm a covenant with many (cf. Matt 26:28) and make the earthly sacrificial system cease, that is, bring an end to its significance (cf. 27:51; Heb 7-10) at the end of the 490 years. Then "on the wing of

³⁸ Commenting on Daniel 9, referring to Daniel studying Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years (v. 2), Tremper Longman III discounts the accuracy of Daniel's apocalyptic time periods. Jeremiah's prophecy, which predicted that the people of Judah and surrounding nations would serve the king of Babylon until God would punish Babylon and free the Judeans from exile (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10), was not fulfilled over a seventy year period. Rather, in light of 2 Chron 36:20-23, the Babylonian exile lasted significantly less than seventy years: from the Babylonian destruction of the temple and completion of deportation (586 B.C.) until Cyrus's conquest of Babylon and decree allowing some Judeans to return to their homeland (539 B.C.). Furthermore, Zech 1:12 refers to the seventy years later, in 519 B.C., as if they are still in process (*Daniel* [NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1999], 221-222). Longman concludes: "When we compare these passages and reflect on the number itself, we reach the conclusion that the number is not literal, nor even referring to one specific period of time. This should not concern us; it is the predominant way in which numbers are used in apocalyptic. The recognition of this fact should also prepare us for the even more extravagant use of numbers later in the chapter" (222). Longman is off target in several ways:

- (1) Jeremiah's prophecy is not apocalyptic, so conclusions from this classical prophecy cannot be automatically applied to the apocalyptic time periods of Daniel.
- (2) Babylon dominated Syria-Palestine from 605 B.C. on, and Cyrus's decree to release the Judeans did not occur immediately when Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, or Daniel would not have been concerned about freedom for his people after this conquest had already taken place (Dan 9). So the larger parameters of the Babylonian domination and resulting captivity may have covered seventy years.
- (3) 2 Chron 36 makes an application of the seventy years in the context of a report regarding the destruction and deportation in 586 B.C., but this does not necessarily mean that the seventy years commenced at this date. After all, the land would have begun to enjoy its "sabbaths" earlier as a result of previous deportations.
- (4) Zech 1 addresses results of the seventy years that still remained, decades after the end of this period.

³⁹ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (1956) 5:243-247 explains this chronology in detail.

abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate” (Dan 9:27).

In Daniel 9, the immediate context of the desolating/appalling abomination is the destruction of the second (Herod’s) temple in Jerusalem by the Imperial Roman (horizontal phase of “little horn”) army under Titus in A.D. 70, a few decades after the sacrifice of Christ (about A.D. 31). Jesus spoke of this event when he warned, “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:15-16). Because the early Christians recognized this sign when the pagan banners of the Roman army stood in the holy space that extended outside the walls of Jerusalem from the temple area, they escaped the destruction of the city.

The language of Daniel 9:27 also ties in to the rest of the story that we already know from 8:11-13, especially in the words of verse 13—“transgression that makes desolate” (NRSV; cf. the parallel “abomination of desolation” in 11:31; 12:11), during the latter part of the 2,300 days. Here Daniel 8 refers to some kind of earthly false worship that the vertical phase of the Roman “little horn”—the Church of Rome—would put in place of the earthly sacrificial and priestly system that Christ had made to cease. Now we can better understand why Daniel 8 would portray Imperial and Papal Rome together under the same “little horn” symbol: Both would perpetrate desolating transgression/abomination after Christ’s First Coming. While 9:27 has Imperial Rome in the foreground, the Church of Rome is in the background.

Step 8: Recognize that the 2,300 days, like the seventy weeks, must represent years

Now we know several things:

- The sanctuary that is “justified” at the end of the 2,300 days must be God’s heavenly sanctuary, where Christ is ministering (Heb 7-10), because this event remedies the abominations committed by the vertical (papal) phase of the “little horn,” which occur after the earthly temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.
- The 2,300 days of Daniel 8 and the 490 years of Daniel 9 both began in the time of the Medo-Persian empire.
- The 2,300 days reach beyond the 490 years, through a time when the Church of Rome would set up false worship, to a time when God would solve this problem. So the 2,300 “day” period reaches from Medo-Persian times all the way through the era of domination by the Church of Rome. Therefore, the “2,300 days” must be longer than the 490 years, and as in the expression “seventy weeks,” “evening-morning” = days must represent years, as elsewhere in some symbolic time prophecies (Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6), and in accordance with the fact that the Hebrew word for “days” (plural of *yom*) can refer to years (e.g., Judg 17:10; 1 Sam 1:21; 27:7).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For more evidence regarding days = years in such contexts, see William Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (ed. Frank Holbrook; revised ed.; Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1;

Step 9: See how the 490 years overlap the first part of the 2,300 years

Since Gabriel explains “the vision” but gives a beginning point only for the 490 years (Dan 9:23, 25), which is the first phase of the 2,300 years, the beginning point for the 2,300 years must be the same. From 457 B.C., when the city of God’s ancient earthly temple began to be restored, the 490 years reached forward to the establishment of Christ’s first phase of atonement. The 2,300 years reach forward to the beginning of his second phase of atonement: judgment.

The language of Daniel 9:24 agrees with the idea that the 490 years were the first part of the 2,300 years: “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people...” The Hebrew word translated “decreed” here (Niphal of *htk*) is not used elsewhere in the Bible. However, in rabbinic Hebrew it is fairly common, most often with the basic meaning, “cut (off).” Objects of cutting could be things such as animal parts, but the word could also be used for cutting a verse into two verses.⁴¹

“Determined” or “decreed” is an extended meaning because in ancient times a legal decision or decree by a government was regarded as something that was “cut” (compare our idiom, “cut a deal”). The Hebrew word is ideal for Daniel 9:24 because both the basic and extended meanings apply: The “seventy weeks” were “cut off” for the Jewish people from the beginning of the 2,300 years and they were “determined/decreed” for the Jewish people.

Step 10: Find the end of the 2,300 years

Since the 490 years began in 457 B.C., the 2,300 years also began in 457 B.C. Now that we have a beginning date, we can easily figure out when the heavenly sanctuary is to be justified according to Daniel 8:14. Going forward 2,300 years from 457 B.C., without a zero year, we come to **1844 A.D.**, soon after the civil power of the church of Rome came to its lowest point in 1798.⁴² So it makes sense that a heavenly judgment beginning in 1844 would solve problems created by the Roman power after the period of domination by this power had finished.

The implications of this conclusion for modern Christians are staggering. We are living at the time of the pre-Advent Day of Atonement judgment, just before Jesus comes again to conquer Planet Earth and set up his eternal kingdom! The messages of the three angels in Revelation 14 directly apply to us: While Christ, our heavenly high priest, is involved in justifying/vindicating the sanctuary, representing God’s holy character, we should be participating in this event by demonstrating our loyalty through keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:12). Richard Davidson has pointed

Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), 67-110; Gane, *Who’s Afraid of the Judgment?*, 68-72.

⁴¹ Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Press, 1975), 513.

⁴² When Napoleon’s general, Berthier, captured the pope.

out three major reasons why this judgment, prefigured by the Israelite Day of Atonement, is good news: “(1) it restores the gospel to its rightful place, bringing to the believer assurance and vindication in the judgment; (2) it accomplishes the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and its earthly counterpart, the soul temples of the saints; and (3) it vindicates the character of God.”⁴³

CONCLUSION

Why don't more people accept the eschatological aspects of sanctuary teaching, including a pre-Advent judgment taking place now? Here are a few possible reasons:

1. Abandonment of the Reformation view regarding the Church of Rome, in favor of ecumenism and political correctness. Without including the Church of Rome in fulfillment of the “little horn,” it is impossible to accurately interpret the time prophecy of Daniel 8:14.
2. Abandonment of historicism by most Christians after the disappointment of 1844, when William Miller and his associates predicted Christ's Second Coming on the basis of Daniel 8:14, mistakenly interpreting the cleansing of the “sanctuary” after 2,300 days = years as the cleansing of the world by fire. Other exegetical mistakes and excesses by historicists have not helped the cause of historicism. Well-trained Adventist scholars are now being much more careful and cautious, utilizing all the rich exegetical resources at their disposal, but the stigma is still strong.⁴⁴
3. The misconception that the Adventist teaching that Christ began a new phase of heavenly sanctuary ministry in 1844, namely, participation in a pre-Advent judgment in heaven, is simply a face-saving strategy of reinterpretation for disappointed Millerites.⁴⁵ Of course, we know that the same kind of argument was long ago directed against the reality of Christ's Resurrection.
4. The fact that nothing happened on earth in 1844 to prove the beginning of a new phase of salvation in heaven. Acceptance of this, as with other Christian beliefs, is based on faith in the biblical evidence alone.
5. Failure to grasp the role of the pre-Advent judgment in the Lord's plan of salvation, supposing it to legalistically destroy the Gospel assurance of faithful, saved people.⁴⁶
6. The misconception that Adventist sanctuary eschatology is based on the writings of Ellen G. White rather than biblical exegesis. While White participated in the Bible study through which the basic Adventist view was developed and she wrote on this

⁴³ Richard M. Davidson, “The Good News of Yom Kippur,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 2 (1996): 23.

⁴⁴ For explanation of and comparison between historicism and other approaches, see, e.g., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (1955), 4:42; Gerhard F. Hasel, “Interpretation of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks,” in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (ed. Frank Holbrook; Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 3; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 13-63; William Shea, *Daniel 7-12: Prophecies of the End Time* (The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier; Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 33-46; Jon Paulien, “The End of Historicism? Reflections on the Adventist Approach to Biblical Apocalyptic—Part One,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14 (2003): 15-43.

⁴⁵ So Longman, *Daniel*, 213.

⁴⁶ On the role of the judgment, the Gospel, and assurance, see Gane, *Who's Afraid of the Judgment?*, 93-128.

topic, she directed people to Scripture as the sole authority. Notice that the present paper relies on the Bible alone.

7. The fact that interpreting the time prophecies of Daniel is a rather complicated process. Of course, other aspects of biblical interpretation are complicated too, and the need to deal with layers of misinterpretation greatly augments the complexity, through no fault of Daniel.

Although the Seventh-day Adventist movement was started by people who had been Millerites and who continued to accept some aspects of William Miller's prophetic interpretation (especially regarding the apocalyptic time periods in the book of Daniel), we are not Millerites. While we owe a lot to Miller, we do not endorse any kind of date-setting for the Second Coming of Christ.

We are focused on Christ, the atonement he has bought with his blood, and his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as he brings his glorious plan of salvation to completion. The unique thing about Adventist sanctuary teaching, simply put, is that we believe Christ is in the last phase of his saving work. This highlights the imminence of his coming and the urgency of yielding to his Spirit in order to appeal to people of all nations to accept the gift of salvation by grace through faith that works by love, the gift of peace with God (Rom 5:1) and assurance of having salvation: "He who has the Son has life" (1 Jn 5:12). This eschatological urgency drives our proclamation and service, including our worldwide health-care and educational work, including that of Andrews University.