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Edwin R. Thiele

Andrews University

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What took place in 1844

The sanctuary in heaven is where God carries on His work in behalf of human beings. The second phase of that work—the investigative judgment—began in 1844.

By EDWIN R. THIELE

The revelation that after 2300 days the sanctuary was to be cleansed and restored as foretold in Daniel 8:14 was a matter of much perplexity to the prophet. Even after Gabriel had been sent to explain it Daniel still did not understand. When Gabriel had said that the period would extend "for many days" to "the time of the end," Daniel was so distressed that he fainted and for some time could not go about his business for the king (Dan. 8:17, 19, 26, 27).

Believing that the sanctuary to be cleansed was the Temple at Jerusalem and that because of Israel's sin God was deferring its restoration, Daniel gave himself to earnest supplication, begging God to look with mercy upon His people and sanctuary: "Cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate. . . . Defer not, for thine own sake, O my God" (chap. 9:3, 17-19).

As a result of the prophet's prayer, Gabriel was sent a second time. He admonished Daniel to "understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city. . . . 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" (verses 23-25).

Edwin R. Thiele is a retired minister and teacher living in Porterville, California.

Daniel was led to conclude that Jerusalem was to be restored at an early date and that its restoration would mark the commencement of a prophetic period that would reach to the time of the Messiah and beyond. Thus it becomes clear that the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 cannot be limited to that in Jerusalem, but must refer to its antitype in heaven, where the Messiah would serve as our great High Priest.

As indicated in last week's article, 457 B.C. was the year when the 2300 days began. That makes A.D. 1844 the year when the prophecy concludes. "Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed," God had said. An indication as to what that involves can be gained by noting the sequence of events set forth in Daniel 7 and then comparing that with the sequence in Daniel 8. The parallels are striking.

In Daniel 7:5 a power symbolized by a bear was seen to arise. This was paralleled in Daniel 8:3, 4, 20 by a ram, which Gabriel identified as Medo-Persia.

Next came a leopard with four heads (chap. 7:6). In Daniel 8:5-8, 21, 22 the parallel to the leopard beast is a rough goat whose first great horn was to be replaced by four smaller ones. That, Gabriel said, represented Greece, whose first great king would be replaced by four smaller kingdoms—Alexander the Great and his four successors.

Daniel 7:7, 8, 19-25 introduces a desolating creature among whose ten horns a little horn was to arise that would "speak great words against the most High, and . . . wear out the saints of the most High" who would be "given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." In Daniel 8:9-13, 23-25 this power has its parallel in the little horn, which "waxed great, even to the host of heaven" and was to "destroy the mighty and the holy people" and "stand up against the Prince of princes." In referring to this "abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matt. 24:15), Jesus identified Rome as this power.

View of the judgment

Next, in Daniel 7:9, 10, 26, we are given a view of the judgment. "The Ancient of days did sit. . . . A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." "The judgment shall sit, . . . they shall take away his dominion," it was foretold of the little horn. It is at this juncture in the parallel in Daniel 8:13, 14 that the question is asked about the devastating power, "How long shall be the vision . . . to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" and the answer is given, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

The sequence in Daniel 7 has come to the investigative judgment. At the same point in Daniel 8 the cleansing of the sanctuary follows. Is there any connection and significance to this fact? Notice again the parallels involved:

Daniel 7
Bear (Medo-Persia)
Leopard (Greece)
Little horn (Rome)
The judgment

Daniel 8
Ram (Medo-Persia)
Rough goat (Greece)
Little horn (Rome)
The sanctuary cleansed

In Bible study it is of paramount importance to compare scripture with scripture. As we do, many ambiguities are resolved and a clearer understanding is reached. Following this course with Daniel 8:14 and chapter 7:9, 10, 26, leads to definite conclusions that the cleansing of the sanctuary involves a work of judgment.

Additional indications that the cleansing of the sanctuary involves a work of judgment are found in the ceremonies of the solemn Day of Atonement. The Jewish people looked on that day as a day of judgment when decisions were made for life or death. Cleansing ceremonies played a vital part in that day. For the holy place an atonement was made "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins" (Lev. 16:16). Concerning the altar of sin offering, the priest was to "cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel" (verse 19). To the people God said, "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (verse 30).

In the Greek version of Leviticus 16 the word used for "cleanse" is *katharizō*, which is the same word used in the Greek Daniel 8:14 for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

Because sin defiles, a cleansing is called for in connection with the sanctuary in heaven devoted to our redemption from sin.

The type of Satan

The placing of the sins of the penitent on the head of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement was another judgment procedure. The scapegoat was a type of Satan. He is responsible for sin and must be punished as the one who rebelled against God and led people into sin. At the close of the investigative judgment, before Jesus' return, the sins of the righteous will be placed on the head of Satan for him to carry a thousand years in the wilderness of ruin to which he has reduced the earth. (Please note that the blood of the goat that was sacrificed on the Day of Atonement reconciled the sinner to God. It represented Jesus, our Substitute. Only after this act of atonement was complete were sins placed on the scapegoat.)

In this procedure God and all that He stands for will be fully vindicated. God's law will be vindicated, obedience to which is required of all who are to live eternally in a holy heaven with their holy God. God's plan of redemption, which grants pardon to the penitent but requires destruction for the wicked, will be vindicated. Never again will the wisdom, love, justice, or authority of God be questioned. Never again will the bliss of heaven be threatened.

Thus God's sanctuary will be cleansed, vindicated, and restored to its rightful place. Cleansing will be the work performed. Vindication will be the result achieved. The translations of the Greek and Hebrew both apply.

The arrangements in the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary also point to a judgment procedure. Its most vital items are the mercy seat and the ark with the law of God. At the mercy seat God would commune with His earthly children (Ex. 25:22). Eternity for each person rests upon his relationship to God and his attitude toward God's law. The choice is one's own. The verdict is God's. He is judge of all.

The sanctuary in heaven is where God carries on His work in behalf of human beings. Father and Son are one in that work. Jesus gave His life that we might live. God gave His Son that we might not perish. Jesus at His ascension went directly to His Father's side to associate with Him in the first phase of the work of making the sacrifice at Calvary the means of human redemption. The second phase of that work—the investigative judgment—began in 1844.

Seventh-day Adventists in their "Fundamental Beliefs" as voted at the 1980 General Conference session rightly declare that Christ "was inaugurated as our great High Priest and began His intercessory ministry at the time of His ascension. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry. It is a work of investigative judgment which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. . . . This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus."

To summarize, it was Gabriel who told Daniel that the 70 weeks leading to the Messiah would begin at "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." That took place in 457 B.C. The 2300 days also began at that time. Gabriel confirmed the use of the year-day principle for the 70 weeks and the 2300 days when he indicated that the latter period would extend for "many days," to "the time appointed," "at the time of the end." That, we have seen, was 1844.

The cleansing ceremonies connected with the Hebrew Day of Atonement, the placing of the sins of the people on the head of the scapegoat, and sending him forth to die in the wilderness set that day forth as a day of judgment.

The mercy seat placed above the law of God in the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary points to the work of heavenly judgment.

And finally, the location of the prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary at the end of the 2300 days as given in Daniel 8:14 comes at the same point in sequence as the account of the judgment in Daniel 7:9, 10, verifying that the judgment is involved in Daniel 8:14.

Seventh-day Adventist teachings that the investigative judgment began in the sanctuary in heaven in 1844 are sound and Biblically based.

Concluded □