

accepted as occurring in AD. 31, to find the correct starting point. This brings us again to 457 BC. We also count forward 1813 years to find the end of the period. This brings us to AD. 1844.

The way marks all stand. This seventy-week period was to “seal up” (make sure) the vision and prophecy. It serves to prove the starting point that is so essential. When we take 457 BC. as the date for beginning this period of 2300 prophetic days, or years, it clearly brings us down to the year AD. 1844. The evidence of this is absolutely conclusive, as the subdivisions of the prophecy leave no room whatever for doubt.

Sanctuary to Be Cleansed; Judgment Opens

But why are we at such pains to prove this point? We answer: It is because these considerations bring us face to face with the stupendous fact that in the year AD. 1844—just over a hundred years ago—the hour struck for Jesus, our High Priest, to pass beyond the dividing veil into the most holy place and begin the solemn work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary from the accumulated sins of all past ages. Since the cleansing of the sanctuary involves the work of judgment, we also must conclude that then the great investigative judgment began in heaven. With the death of Jesus, the usefulness of the earthly sanctuary passed away. The only sanctuary of God in existence in 1844 was the one in heaven, of which Jesus is priest and minister. It follows, therefore, that the sanctuary which the angel Gabriel predicted would be cleansed at that time must be the heavenly one.

The beginning of the judgment in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 is graphically described by the prophet Daniel. Said he:

“I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit: His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool; His throne was fiery flames, and the wheels thereof burning fire. 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.” Dan. 7:9,10, RV.

The Judgment Scene

This, then, is the time when the “Ancient of Days,” the great God, moves from the first to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. Then the heavenly host assemble to join in the solemn work of judging those who are candidates for salvation. Aft G d is seated upon His throne in the holy of holies, or the inner room of the sanctuary, Daniel describes how Christ, accompanied by the angelic host, is ushered in before Him.

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven [the angels of God], and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him.” Dan. 7: 13.

The scene of the ministry of Christ the High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is changed from the first to the second room, or apartment. The opening of the work of judgment is pictured by the prophet Malachi:

“The Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, says the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Mal. 3: 1-3.

Without a Wedding Garment

In the parable of Matt. 22:11-13, God is represented as a king who has prepared a wedding feast for his son. The guests have been invited, and are assembled. The appointed hour is near. The marriage is about to take place. But this important ceremony is preceded by the king's coming in to inspect the guests, to ascertain whether they are all properly attired.

“When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he said unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matt. 22: 11-13.

In verse two of this chapter Jesus is recorded as saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." This parable, therefore, is illustrative of the final inspection by the great King of heaven of those who have accepted the invitation to the "marriage supper of the Lamb [Christ]." (Rev. 19: 9.) The prescribed robe to be worn at the marriage of God's Son is described by John:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Rev. 19: 7-9.

In this time of awful searching, those who are found without the wedding garment, those whose robes are not washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb are "cast out." Among those cast out -there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." They are cast "into outer darkness." In other words, they are rejected by the great judge and are numbered with the lost! The "wonderful numberer" has weighed them in the balances of divine justice, and they are found wanting.

Those, on the other hand, who are found wearing the wedding garment are accepted of God, sealed for His kingdom, and are declared to be His jewels. Of them He says:

"Thou has a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Rev. 3:4,5.

The Investigative Judgment

This work of the examination of character and of the determination of who are to be accounted worthy of eternal life and of a home in God's eternal kingdom is the investigative judgment. The investigative judgment is the closing work to be performed in the heavenly sanctuary. When this work is completed, the sanctuary is cleansed from all record of sin and defilement, and God rewards both saints and sinners. In each case the judgment is absolutely just. Every case will have been tried; every word, thought, or action will have been scrutinized; every weight of evidence will have been taken into account, and a just and righteous sentence will be passed upon every soul. Said the Apostle Paul: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. 5: 10.

The Hour of His Judgment Is Come

For this solemn work God in the long ago appointed a definite time. Acts 17: 31 reads: "He has appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness." God's plans are laid with precision, and He is never late in their accomplishment. When the time prophecy of Dan. 8: 14 ended, in the year 1844, the hour struck for the great and final judgment to begin on those who were candidates for heaven. The time was fulfilled, and the work was begun. As described by Daniel, "the judgment was set, and the books were opened." John the beloved pictures the dead as standing before God:

"And the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Rev. 20:12,13.

In the light of these considerations we are brought to the inevitable conclusion that for more than a century we have been living in the time of judgment! These are earth's most solemn hours. That which makes it most solemn is the fact that when this work of investigating and cleansing is finished, human probation will close for ever. The door of mercy will swing shut. In the parable of the ten virgins, this closing of the plan of redemption is described thus: "And they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage; and the door was shut." Matt. 25:10. This final scene of the judgment work

is further described by the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 13:25-30:

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are: then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

This, then, is the great decision hour! In the words of the hymn, “We are living, we are dwelling, in a grand and awful time.” The judgment is in session, and every individual who has ever at any time accepted the provisions of the gospel has his case pending there judgment begins at “the house of God.” (1 Peter 4: 17.) The great wicked world that has openly spurned God’s proffered mercy will be judged later. Without Christ as a Savior and Mediator the wicked have “no hope” and are “without God in the world.” (Eph. 2:12.) The only judgment necessary in the cases of unrepentant sinners will be to determine the degree of punishment to be meted out. There will be time for this after the subjects of God’s kingdom are all determined.

How Shall We Stand?

O. A. Newlin, D.D., tells a story of a Hungarian king, who, finding himself on a certain day depressed and unhappy, sent for his brother, a good-natured but rather indifferent prince. To him the king said: “I am a great sinner and fear to meet God.” Here was a king facing Job’s question, “What shall I do when God rises up? And when He visits, what shall I answer Him?” But the prince only laughed at him and treated the matter as a joke, just as some of you are doing now. This did not serve to relieve the royal unhappiness. When you get a vision of your guilt before God, you want help; and your friends may laugh at your seriousness, but that will never answer the question.

It was a custom in Hungary at that time that if the executioner at any time sounded a trumpet before a man’s door, it was a signal that he was to be led forth to execution. The king sent the executioner in the dead of night to sound the fatal blast before his brother’s door. The prince, awaking from sleep, realized its awful import. Quickly dressing, he stepped to the door and was seized by the executioner, and dragged pale and trembling into the king’s presence. In an agony of terror he fell upon his knees before his brother and begged to know in what way he had offended him. “My brother,” answered the king, “if the sight of a human executioner is so terrible to you, shall not I, having grievously offended God fear to be brought before the judgment seat of Christ?” The sense of sin makes us all fear to face God. We are reminded in the Bible that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Mercy Still Lingers

Let us pause to assure all who may chance to read these lines, but who are still outside the ark of safety, that there is still opportunity for them to send their sins into the sanctuary in heaven, and have them blotted out for ever. In the earthly sanctuary the priest continued his work of mediation for sinners until he finally-left the most holy place on the day of atonement. So it is with Jesus.

Jesus still offers His blood for repentant sinners who come to Him. His hands are outstretched. He is still the Mediator between God and man, holding in His hands the golden censer of mediation; and His gracious words still ring in sinners’ ears: “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6: 37. Thank God, the door to the mercy seat is still ajar! There is still mercy and pardon for the vilest sinner who in penitence and faith will accept Jesus as his Savior and Friend.

Oh, then, will you not come to Him now? Why linger? Why imperil your soul by rejecting His offer of mercy, To you today is this loving message sent:

“Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel?” Eze. 18: 30, 31.

Called to the feast by the King are we,
Sitting, perhaps, where His people be;
How will it fare, friend, with thee and me
When the King comes in?

Like lightning's flash will that instant show
Things hidden long from both friend and foe;
Just what we are will each neighbor know,
When the King comes in.

Joyful His eye shall on each one rest
Who is in white wedding garments dressed;
Ah! well for us if we stand the test,
When the King comes in.

Lord, grant us all, we implore Thee, grace,
So to await Thee, each in his place,
That we may fear not to see Thy face
When Thou came in.
J. E. LANDOR.