

The Great Controversy Series

Sermon 36: In the Most Holy Place

For many, the book of Revelation is not understandable. The symbols in it remain a great mystery. But the book of Revelation was not given to be a mystery to us. The word revelation in Greek means 'removing from cover' or revealing.

Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants -- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

God gave information to Christ to show to the believers. Christ then gave the information to an angel who communicated it to John. This information was written for us.

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

To keep those things written in the book we must understand them, right? The book of Revelation is full of sanctuary scenes. If we want to understand the book of Revelation we must investigate the sanctuary.

Revelation 1:12-14 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

Last time we saw a candlestick in the wilderness tabernacle of Moses. In Solomon's temple there were 10 candlesticks. Here, we see in heaven seven candlesticks and Jesus is doing a ministry among them. In this scene is Jesus in the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place? He is in the Holy Place because He is trimming the lamps of the candlesticks according to the daily ministrations.

Revelation 8:3-4 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

As we saw last time, where was the golden altar? That is right, it was in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. In this scene we see once again the daily ministrations because morning and evening incense was offered on the golden altar.

Revelation 11:19 Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

Where is the ark of the covenant, in the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place? Correct, in the Most Holy Place. Then where does this scene take place? Correct, in 1844 Jesus entered the Most Holy Place in heaven and began the Day of Atonement ministrations.

This is just an introduction. Step by step we will get into the details. The summary of what I want to say is this: The truth of the heavenly sanctuary explains the event of the great disappointment of 1844 and is a key to our understanding the Bible.

The words in Daniel 8:14, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed" and in Revelation 14:7, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water" both talk about the same event. In 1844 Jesus began the judgment day in the Most Holy Place. How many people will be judged?

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

So this subject includes you. One day you will be judged. At that time, either you will receive eternal life or you will be punished with eternal death. What subject could be more important?

The prophet Daniel describes Jesus approaching God for judgment.

Daniel 7:9-10 " I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; ¹⁰ A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

Daniel 7:13 " I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

These scenes describe the judgment and Jesus, who is the son of man, approaches the Lord. (Jesus used the term son of man for Himself frequently. For example Matthew 12:8.)

The prophet Malachi describes the same event with these words:

Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

The Lord Jesus will come suddenly to His temple. The believers expected Jesus to come to this earth, not to His temple.

The believers were not read for Jesus to come to this world. Another warning and instruction would be given to the church, they have a work to do.

Malachi 3:2 "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderer's soap.³ He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver, That they may offer to the LORD An offering in righteousness.

Jesus is before God doing a work of mediation for us. Why is He doing a work of mediation? Because even after we are born again we sin. Satan will not enter heaven. Why? Because he is rebelling in sin. O.K., while you are sinning will the Lord leave Satan out and take you to heaven? What is the difference between you two? Repentance and faith. Correct. But if repentance and faith does not make us better people than Satan, what good is it? One of the reasons we are born again is to receive power against sin and keep God's law.

Romans 8:4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

One day, Jesus will finish His mediation and come to this world. When Jesus finishes His mediation there will be no mediator for sinners. When Jesus comes to this world how will sinners be able to stand before Him? Malachi says this. Jesus' coming to the temple and His coming to this world are separate events. When Jesus comes to this world who will be able to stand? Those who have clean hearts and hands will be able to stand.

Malachi 3:4 "Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem Will be pleasant to the LORD, As in the days of old, As in former years.

While Jesus is cleaning the temple in heaven there must be a corresponding work with the believers. They must overcome sin by God's grace and their own efforts. They must quit sinning. This work is brought out in Revelation in a more detailed fashion.

When this work is completed the believers will be ready for Jesus' coming. Jesus works so,

Ephesians 5:27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

I am not saying that we are saved by our own works. Where does our power to overcome sin come from? It comes from the Lord through the Holy Spirit. Did we deserve the gift of the Holy Spirit? No, this is God's grace.

But what is the difference between those who truly repent and have faith and false believers? True believers have the Holy Spirit in them and they do righteousness.

1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Jesus Christ is mediating for the believers in the Most Holy Place in heaven. But if someone doesn't want to quit sinning, by God's grace if he or she is not overcoming sin then will Jesus take that person to heaven to continue in sin? No. This life is given to us as a testing time.

1 John 2:4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

The judgment day is now. You don't know when your name will come up in the judgment. If you are knowingly and continuously sinning how can Jesus defend you before God? Jesus' righteousness covers the sin of all who have true faith. But Jesus' righteousness does not cover those who are knowingly and continuously trampling on God's law. In that case we must be born again. The Holy Spirit must come inside. We must live a new life.

Someone says, "I was baptized. Then Jesus accepts me." In Matthew 25 in the parable of the 10 virgins, five were not wise and they had no oil in their lamps. The oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. At midnight the call came to go out and meet the bridegroom. But those without the oil in their lamps were not ready. Those who had oil in their lamps went into the wedding and the door was shut. The others were not able to enter. The bridegroom said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you" (Matthew 25:12).

Friends, now is the time to trim your lamps. Do not put it off. It is not enough to say, "I have been baptized." You must truly be born again. While Jesus is cleaning the heavenly tabernacle, you also do a corresponding work.

The prophet Malachi not only spoke about Jesus' coming to the Most Holy Place, he also spoke about Jesus' coming to this world.

Malachi 3:5 And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien -- Because they do not fear Me," Says the LORD of hosts.

Again, Jesus' coming to the temple and His coming to this world are separate events. The cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14, the son of man's coming to the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:13, the messenger's coming suddenly to the temple in Malachi 3:2 and the bridegroom's coming to the wedding all depict the same event: the Day of Atonement, the judgment day.

In the summer of 1844, the call, "The bridegroom is coming" was made. The Bible says,

Matthew 25:10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

The coming of the bridegroom spoken of here takes place before the wedding. O.K. what is the wedding? The wedding symbolizes Jesus' receiving His kingdom. The holy city New Jerusalem is the capital and representative of the kingdom.

Revelation 21:9-10 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

The believers are guests at the wedding.

Revelation 19:9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

At the wedding, Jesus Christ will receive His kingdom.

Daniel 7:14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

As His bride, He will receive the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Do you want to enter the holy city? Do you want go there to worship God and Jesus Christ through ceaseless ages? You can. Now keep your lamp full of oil. While Jesus is removing sins from the heavenly sanctuary remove sin from your life. When Jesus comes, be ready to meet Him.