

24. Christ's Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary

There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle which the Lord set up and not man. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. He 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. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent.

At His ascension, Jesus Christ began serving as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, a ministry which He continues today.

- God has a sanctuary in heaven, where Christ now serves as High Priest. Hebrews 1:3, 8:1-5, 9:23-28; 1 Timothy 2:5
- Christ is ministering today on our behalf, opening the way for us to receive the grace we need. Hebrews 2:16-17, 4:14-16, 9:15-22, 10:19-22

The earthly sanctuary's two phases of ministry—intercession and judgment— illustrate the two phases of Christ's ministry in heaven.

- As our High Priest Christ offers the merits of His own blood for our purification and justification. Hebrews 9:11-14
- The final judgment has three phases: investigative, millennial review, and executive. Daniel 7:9-14; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 20:4, 11-15
- According to prophecy, Jesus entered the investigative judgment phase of His ministry in 1844. Daniel 8:13-14, 9:24-27; Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6
- The investigation reveals who is abiding in Christ and ready to live with Him eternally. Revelation 20:12, 14:12
- The investigation clears God of charges of injustice. Rev. 14:6-7, 16:4-7
- The Day of Atonement ritual in the earthly sanctuary foreshadowed the final judgment and the eradication of sin and Satan. Leviticus 16
- At the end of the judgment probation closes and Christ will return to give the kingdom to His loyal followers. Daniel 7:9-27; I Thessalonians 4: 16-17; Revelation 22:11-12

Personal Application

-  Will there be any question about God's justice at the close of probation?
-  Knowing that the investigative judgment is now in progress gives me hope that Christ will return soon to take me to live with Him eternally.

Commitment

- Jesus, I believe that You are my High Priest in the investigative judgment going on now, and I rely on You to forgive me, transform me, and prepare me for eternal life.