

My thoughts May 2016

The query:

Why is there a sanctuary (temple) in heaven? There is no blood (death) there!!

My response:

That's a question I have never heard asked before – not whether there is a sanctuary building in heaven, but a query regarding its purpose! It can lead us into a very deep area of God's kingdom, so I'll try and keep my answer brief and to the point as a starter.

First, let us establish beyond doubt that the sanctuary was there before sin entered the universe, and it will still be there after sin is cleansed from the universe.

The following quotes have had the old words modernised, and in some instances, the long paragraphs have been broken up for clarity. I have added the emphasis.

Moses was told:

Exodus 25:8-9.

And let them [allow them to] make Me a [earthly] sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the [heavenly] tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it.

Then we are told:

Hebrews 8:

¹ Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; ² a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, **which the LORD pitched**, and not man.

Hebrews 9:

¹ Then verily the first covenant [the Old Testament system] had **also** ordinances [rules] of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary [just like the heavenly one]. ² For there was an [earthly] tabernacle made; the first [part of which] wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary [aka the holy place].

[The **altar** of incense is not mentioned in this text.]

³ And after the second veil, the tabernacle [room] which is called the Holiest of all [the most Holy]; ⁴ which had the [portable] golden censer [stored in it], and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein

[in the side of it] was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and [in the box of it] the Tables of the Covenant [the Ten Commandments]; ⁵ and ***over it the cherubims [the angels] of glory*** shadowing the Mercy Seat; ***of which we cannot now speak particularly*** [in any detail].

But we are told in another place about them for one of them was the first rebel:

Exodus 25:

¹⁸ And you shalt make two cherubims [angels] of gold, of beaten work shall you make them, in the two ends of the Mercy Seat. ¹⁹ And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: even of the Mercy Seat shall you make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

²⁰ And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the Mercy Seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. ²¹ And you shalt put the Mercy Seat above upon the ark [as a lid]; and in the ark you shall put the Testimony [the Ten Commandments] that I shall give you.

²² And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the Mercy Seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony [the box], of all things which I will give you in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Who did these statues represent? God says of them:

Ezekiel 28:16.

You have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane [lacking spirituality] out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, ***O covering cherub***, [who comes] from the midst of the stones of fire.

{DA 758.4}

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the LORD says, “You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.” Ezekiel 28:12. ***Lucifer had been [one of] the [two] covering cherub***. [Exodus 25:21-22] He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had rebelled, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling ***of his character*** was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father.

{DA 21.3}

In heaven itself this law [of unselfishness] was broken. Sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore he misrepresented God . . .

{Christ Triumphant 10.2}

Once [in the distant past] Satan was in copartnership with God, Jesus Christ, and the holy angels. He was highly exalted in heaven and was radiant in light and glory [the “stones of fire”] that came to him from the Father and the Son, but he *became* disloyal and lost [that is, rejected] his high and holy position as covering cherub.

Jude 1:

⁶ And the angels which kept not their first estate, *but left* their own habitation, He has reserved [preserved] in everlasting chains [they have prescribed limits] under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

But they know this:

Matthew 8:

²⁸ And when He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they [the devils] cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Are You come here to torment us before the time?”

When Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians we had the real nature of the sanctuary (temple) and its services explained to us:

Hebrews 13:

¹⁰ We [Christians] have a [spiritual] altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the [earthly] tabernacle. ¹¹ For the bodies of those beasts [the bulls and goats], whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without [outside] the camp [on a ritually “clean” rubbish heap for they were not eaten].

¹² Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered without [outside] the gate . . .* [let's move on a little]

¹⁵ “By Him [as our High Priest] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.

16 But to do good and to communicate [share] forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”.

So the intention of the physical earthly sanctuary was to illustrate the spiritual heavenly one. And we are told that the heavenly sanctuary (sometimes called a temple) will be here in the new world to carry on that intent.

Revelation 21:

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea [no more immense bodies of water, only great lakes].

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, “Behold, *the tabernacle of God* is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God”.

A lateral thought:

Why is there a city in the new world? Earthly cities are hot beds of sin!

{GC 413.3}

Further, the tabernacle built by Moses was made after a pattern. The LORD directed him: “According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, *and the pattern of all the instruments [and the services] thereof*, even so shall you make it.” And again the charge was given, “Look that you make them after their pattern, which was showed you in the mount.” Exodus 25:9, 40.

And Paul says that the first [earthly] tabernacle “was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices;” that its holy places were “patterns of things in the heavens;” that the priests who offered gifts according to the law served “to the example and shadow of heavenly things,” and that “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures [copies] of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:9, 23; 8:5; 9:24.

{GC 414.2}

The matchless splendor of the earthly tabernacle reflected [attempted to copy] to human vision the glories of that heavenly temple where Christ our forerunner ministers for us before the throne of God.

The abiding place of the King of kings, where thousand thousands minister to Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him

(Daniel 7:10); that temple, filled with the glory of the *eternal* throne, where seraphim, its shining guardians, veil their faces in adoration, could find, in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands, but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory.

Yet important truths concerning the heavenly sanctuary and the great work there carried forward for man's redemption were taught by the earthly sanctuary and its services.

{GC 415.2}

In the temple in heaven, the dwelling place of God, His throne is established in righteousness and judgment. In the most holy place is His law, the great rule of right by which all mankind [and all created beings] are tested. The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, *before which Christ pleads His blood* [shows His "death"] in the sinner's behalf. Thus is represented the union of justice and mercy in the plan of human redemption. This union infinite wisdom alone could devise and infinite power accomplish; it is a union that fills all heaven with wonder and adoration.

The cherubim of the earthly sanctuary, looking reverently down upon the mercy seat, represent the interest with which the heavenly host contemplate the work of redemption. This is the mystery of mercy into which angels desire to look -- that God can be just while He justifies the repenting sinner and renews His intercourse with the fallen race; that Christ could stoop to raise unnumbered multitudes from the abyss of ruin and clothe them with the spotless garments of His own righteousness to unite with angels who have never fallen and to dwell forever in the presence of God.

{DA 21.1}

The angels of glory find their joy in giving, -- giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know.

{GC 417.3}

The cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, *must be accomplished with blood*: in the former, with the blood [the evidence of death] of animals; *in the latter, with the blood [evidence of the death] of Christ* [the Son of God].

Paul states, as the reason why this cleansing *must* be performed with blood, that without shedding of blood [someone's death] is [there can be] no remission.

Remission, or putting away of sin, is the work to be accomplished.

But how could there be sin connected with the sanctuary, either in heaven or upon the earth? This may be learned by reference to the symbolic service; for the priests who officiated on earth, served "to the example and shadow of heavenly things." Hebrews 8:5 . . . [let's move on a little]

"Without shedding of blood," says the apostle, there is no remission of sin. [Note the singular noun.]

"*The life* [as well as the death] of the flesh is in the blood." Leviticus 17:11.

{GC 420.2}

And what was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary *is done in reality* in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary.

{GC 421.3}

As anciently the sins [note the plural noun] of the people [which were absorbed **INTO** the priest, in the sin-offering ritual, Leviticus 6:25-26] were by faith placed upon the [priest's] sin offering [a bullock, Leviticus 4:3-7] and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith *placed upon Christ* and transferred, *in fact*, to the heavenly sanctuary.

And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished *by the removal*, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.



If we have read these scriptures prayerfully we will now know that the sanctuary in heaven is, and has been since the beginning, the general meeting place of the peoples of the universe and is a very busy bustling place. And, as mentioned in the query, there cannot be any blood there for that is the evidence of death or separation from God, and death has no place where the God of Life presides. Yet Christ is pictured there pleading His "death" as a means of redemption!

So why do both the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy say that the removal of sins is accomplished *by blood*?

In the last quote above, it is written that the record of the results of sins are “transferred, *in fact*, to the heavenly sanctuary”. If we allow the Spirit to tell us that the sanctuaries (both the heavenly and the earthly) are *symbols* of the Son of God, then we can begin to see the truth.

{DA 597.5}

“In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone [the rejected one] was a symbol of Christ. He says: Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And *He shall be for* [you] *a sanctuary*; but for a Stone of stumbling and for a Rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin [trap] and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.”

Carried down in prophetic vision to the *first* advent, the prophet is shown that Christ is to bear trials and tests of which the treatment of the chief cornerstone in the temple of Solomon was symbolic.

“Therefore thus says the LORD God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation: he that believes shall not make haste [try to run on his own].”
Isaiah 8:13-15; 28:16.

The earthly service shows us that the record of the “death” of the sinning Christian is first moved INTO the priest by virtue of his eating a portion of the offering animal’s *flesh* (not its blood). In this symbolism it (the death), becomes the priest’s. He then passes it on to the building THROUGH THE BLOOD of *his* sacrifice when he makes an offering for himself later in the day.

(We should note that the blood of a lamb was NEVER taken into the building, for only the blood of bulls and goats was used there. Hebrews 9:13. It was the *flesh* of a *female goat* that transferred the guilt of the ordinary person to the priest [not the blood]. Leviticus 4:28.)

When we apply this symbolism to the Son of God, we should be able to see that in the first instance He takes the guilt and effect of the confessed sin into Himself, and we can walk away forgiven and cleansed! But He must do something with that “death”. So He then “transfers” it to another place inside of Him where it awaits a final solution. (In this He explains that that which He did on the cross at Calvary was only an illustration of the FIRST PART of the burden – the priest eating the flesh).

Then, on the real Day of Atonement at the end of time He can pass the effects of the sins from Himself onto the scapegoat and finally be free of them. And included in this ritual are all the multitude of the other confessed sins He has been holding since the first Christian confessed the first sin back at the gates of the Garden of Eden.

Thus it is written:

{Counsels for the Church 348.1}

The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, *was not to cancel the sin*; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but *it rested in the sanctuary* until the day of atonement.

{DA 23.3}

So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His divine character and life. “The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.” John 1:14, R.V., margin.

Conclusion:

So one purpose of the earthly sanctuary is to show us what is happening INSIDE the life of the Son of God.

And that has ALWAYS been the purpose of the sanctuary in heaven.

It was originally built to explain in physical terms the workings of the mind and heart of God to the people of the universe, and then when sin entered its rituals were expanded to include the dealings of God with actions of sin.

There is no physical blood involved in this, but what is happening in the LIFE of the Saviour is on show for those willing to be shown, and has been from the beginning.

oooOooo

Next query:

How can Christ be said to have died “from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) when history tells us that He died at Calvary 4,000 years later (give or take a few)?