CLEANSING THE UNIVERSE

Some elements of culture glorify sin. It is portrayed in movies and media. The masses pay to consume the reenactment of sin. The fact is that culture doesn’t view sin as sin. It is simply seen as human nature in its evolutionary progression. Even the Christian community thinks of sin in flippant, trivial terms, where grace is portrayed in a way that minimizes the gravity of what sin really is.

The Bible illustrates through the sanctuary that sin cost heaven everything. In order to remove it from the universe forever, it will require a painstaking process of transparency and transference. The cleansing of the universe forever from sin must involve the cleansing of the sanctuary from sin. This lesson will explore that cleansing as found in Daniel chapter 8.
Write out Daniel 8 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out Daniel 8:4–14. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.
CLEANSING THE SANCTUARY

Daniel chapter 8 is a repeat and enlargement of the timeline of Daniel chapter 2 and 7. Daniel chapter 2 uses metals to describe the kingdoms. Daniel chapter 7 and 8 uses beasts and horns. The animals in Daniel chapter 7 are unclean carnivorous animals of prey. However, Daniel chapter 8 uses clean animals to describe the same powers and culminates with the prophecy in regards to the cleansing of the sanctuary.

The theme and emphasis of the Daniel chapter 8 is the cleansing of the sanctuary. The animals referenced in Daniel 8 are the ram and the he-goat; there is also a reference to horns. In the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, the ram and the he-goat were the animals (Lev. 16:5) on the Day of Atonement. The horns of the altars (Lev. 16:18–19) were also cleansed on the Day of Atonement. Furthermore the phrase “the sanctuary will be cleansed” in Daniel 8:14 is an explicit reference to the Day of Atonement and cleansing of the earthly sanctuary found in Lev. 16.

Comparing Daniel chapter 7 and chapter 8, the judgment scene in chapter 7 is the same event as the cleansing of the sanctuary event in chapter 8. Both of them follow immediately after the papacy. From our previous lesson, we deduced that the judgment scene in Daniel 7 must take place sometime after 1798 and before the second coming. Therefore, the cleansing of the sanctuary must also take place after 1798, but before the second coming. This leads us to another conclusion that the reference to the sanctuary must not be the earthly sanctuary since 1798 is well after Jesus ascended as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary (Hebrew 8:1–2). It must refer to none other than the heavenly sanctuary.

The cleansing of the earthly sanctuary in Lev. 16 reveals the systematic process of how God removes sin. When a sinner came to the sanctuary, a lamb died in the place of the sinner. The blood was either sprinkled on the veil or put on the horns of the altar in the sanctuary (Lev. 4:6,7). In other words, even though the sinner was forgiven, the record of those forgiven sins were still kept in the sanctuary signified by the blood. Therefore, the sanctuary was becoming “polluted” with the record of the forgiven sins of Israel daily. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the record of the sins of Israel were removed from the sanctuary; the sanctuary was cleansed. Even as Jesus came as a Lamb, and Jesus is our High Priest in heaven; the types, symbols, and ceremonies of the Old Testament sanctuary point to the realities of the plan of salvation. The cleansing of sanctuary on earth in the annual Day of Atonement pointed to the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven. According to Daniel 7 and 8, this takes place sometime after 1798 and before the second coming of Christ.

The sanctuary process of removing sin points to the reality that there it was a systematic process. Sin does not simply disappear and vanish away; for sin to be forever eradicated from the universe God must follow process. The cleansing of the sanctuary process alludes to the nature of sin itself. Sin is not a trivial thing; it is a deadly virus that cost God everything to cure and remove from the universe.

Memorize your favorite verse in Daniel 8. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

Do you have sins that you would prefer never to see the light of day?

How does the total removal of even the record of your sins make you feel?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/dan12-3
A DEEPER LOOK AT DANIEL 8

Is There Biblical Support For The Existence Of A Heavenly Sanctuary?

Other Christian denominations have disputed the existence of a heavenly sanctuary. However, the Bible is clear regarding the existence of the heavenly sanctuary (Exod. 25:8). The word for “pattern” implies that the earthly sanctuary was a model of another entity. God gave Moses specific instructions as to the exact dimensions of the sanctuary and all its furnishings. Paul in Hebrews 8:1, 4–6 quotes directly from Exodus 25:8 and indicates that the earthly sanctuary was a model of the heavenly sanctuary.

Notice that Paul indicates that the earthly sanctuary was a “copy and shadow of heavenly things.” In other words, the earthly sanctuary is not just an Old Testament relic that lost its relevancy when Jesus died on the cross. The sanctuary continues to have relevance because the focus has shifted from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly sanctuary.

In Revelation, John sees three sanctuary articles of furniture before the throne room of God in heaven: the lampstands (Rev. 4:5), the altar of incense (Rev. 8:3), and the ark of the covenant (Rev. 11:19). The existence of the heavenly sanctuary could not be clearer than when John states in the verse above that John saw “the temple of God was opened in heaven.” This was well after crucifixion and the ascension of Jesus. The book of Revelation is an end-time book with an end-time message. Each sanctuary scene progressing through the book of Revelation implies that the heavenly sanctuary could not be more relevant to God’s end-time people.

How does God residing and ministering in the heavenly sanctuary affect your personal and spiritual life?
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Exodus 29:38-46
Exodus 30:10
Leviticus 4:6, 7
Jeremiah 17:1
Leviticus 16
Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-28

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 8?

Review your memorized verse from Daniel 8.
THE FINAL STAGE

The sanctuary reveals that God is a God of process and transparency to ensure that sin will never arise again. The sanctuary theme and the great controversy theme parallel each other. The sanctuary provides a framework for understanding the work of Christ in restoring that which was lost in Eden. The great controversy theme is the backdrop against which the sanctuary’s plan of restoration is given. The plan of redemption as illustrated in the sanctuary reveals God’s way of forever dealing with the issues that caused sin to spring up in heaven with Lucifer. When the final stage of the sanctuary service is completed in the Most Holy Place, every question that the universe had in regards to the claims put forth by Lucifer will be forever settled.

The sanctuary illustrates how Jesus removes sin from the universe. Jesus plays the role of the Lamb. He dies on our behalf. Jesus as our Lamb earned the right to remove the penalty of sin. Then after His ascension, Jesus became our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Jesus as the High Priest has the right to apply the benefits of salvation to us and in us including the delivering us from the power of sin. The cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven is the process of God forever removing the record of sin.

The cleansing of the record of sin from heaven is the final stage of the process. Jesus as our High Priest in Heaven entered the Most Holy Place and began His work in the antitypical Day of Atonement. While Jesus is in the work of cleansing the sanctuary in heaven, through the Holy Spirit He is cleansing of the temple of our hearts here on earth. The righteousness of Christ covers us and the righteousness of Christ through the Spirit working in and through us cleanses us.
ERROR LEADS TO DISAPPOINTMENT

The subject of the sanctuary was the key which unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of His people. As the disciples of Jesus after the terrible night of their anguish and disappointment were “glad when they saw the Lord,” so did those now rejoice who had looked in faith for His second coming. They had expected Him to appear in glory to give reward to His servants. As their hopes were disappointed, they had lost sight of Jesus, and with Mary at the sepulcher they cried: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” Now in the holy of holies they again beheld Him, their compassionate High Priest, soon to appear as their king and deliverer. Light from the sanctuary illumined the past, the present, and the future. They knew that God had led them by His unerring providence. Though, like the first disciples, they themselves had failed to understand the message which they bore, yet it had been in every respect correct. In proclaiming it they had fulfilled the purpose of God, and their labor had not been in vain in the Lord. Begotten “again unto a lively hope,” they rejoiced “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Both the prophecy of Daniel 8:14, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,” and the first angel’s message, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come,” pointed to Christ’s ministration in the most holy place, to the investigative judgment, and not to the coming of Christ for the redemption of His people and the destruction of the wicked. The mistake had not been in the reckoning of the prophetic periods, but in the event to take place at the end of the 2300 days. Through this error the believers had suffered disappointment, yet all that was foretold by the prophecy, and all that they had any Scripture warrant to expect, had been accomplished. At the very time when they were lamenting the failure of their hopes, the event had taken place which was foretold by the message, and which must be fulfilled before the Lord could appear to give reward to His servants. (The Great Controversy by Ellen G. White, p. 424.)
InQuire

Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

What is society’s attitude about sin? What is the Christian community’s attitude about sin?

What does God keeping a record of forgiven sins indicate about the nature of sin?

What is the difference between the sanctuary understanding of the removal of sin and the popular understanding of how God removes sin?

How does one reconcile the assurance of salvation with the idea of the judgment?

What could be the benefits of the heavenly sanctuary to the inhabitants of the universe?

What does the way that God removes the record of sin reveal about the issues in the great controversy?