

At-One-Ment in the Sanctuary and the Root of Pollution

Description

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by [Trent Wilde](#)

Unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed. – Dan. 8:14

The cleansing of the sanctuary is in many ways the centerpiece of the third angel's message and is the only truly unique doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The importance of this pillar truth is well expressed in the following lines penned by [V.T. Houteff](#):

Though it is the crowning work of our salvation and of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ upon earth, yet the "investi-gative judgment" is one of the least understood and most mystified and confused Bible subjects of the age. Were it not essential to our salvation, the enemy would not have expended every possible effort to envelop it in darkness. Imperative, then, is the unremitting need to search the Scriptures "as for hidden treasure," and to beseech God for the guidance of His Spirit in order rightly to understand this all-important subject. In vain though, is any search for truth unless the motive be to learn and to do the will of God. Hence, "if any man," says Jesus, "will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." John 7:17. – [The Judgment and the Harvest, Tract No. 3](#), p. 3

As we enter into investigation of this little-understood reality, let us purpose in our hearts (Dan. 1:8) to obey any instruction from the Spirit that comes to light herein. Let us also keep in mind that much light is yet to be shed upon this subject and that this realization should only serve to stimulate us to study it all the more urgently as we are greatly behind in our understanding.

Prior to threshing out the main substance of this short article, we want to remind our readers of some foundational points which will help to keep the whole thing in perspective. First, as we have well learned in the third angel's message, the earthly sanctuary was made "according to the pattern" of the heavenly sanctuary (Ex. 25:9, 40; Heb. 8:5), and thus stands as a type of it. Also, the purpose and services of the earthly sanctuary typify the purpose and services of the heavenly sanctuary (GC 420).

This brings us to our second foundational point; that being, the purpose of the sanctuary. The importance of grasping its purpose is at least somewhat discovered while reflecting upon the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness when the sanctuary service was first instituted. In addition to this, think of the experience of their descendants who, over the next two thousand years, had their lives revolving around the cycles of the sanctuary system. Imagine what it must

have been like to be surrounded day after day by a culture that had its epicenter at the Jerusalem temple. No person in all Israel could escape the knowledge of the sanctuary, for it was an integral part of their lives. What would have been their understanding of this system which they knew had been given to them by God Himself?

Since the system of sacrifices and temple offerings had become such an enormous part of the lives of the Jews, the devil could not altogether remove the awareness of it from their minds. Even the seventy-year captivity in Babylon and the subsequent satanically induced delays in building the second temple could not utterly remove the sanctuary from the people. The enemy did succeed though, to a large extent, in covering the meaning of the various rites and ceremonies with a thick cloud of mystery, which still remains even to this day. By the time the Son of God arrived on the scene, the Jews had become so blind to the truth of the meaning of these symbols, and the whole system had become such a dead form to them, that they did not perceive the grand fulfillment of many of the rites taking place before their very eyes.

For the Netzarim¹This was the name for the original followers of Christ (Acts 24:5, 14). though, it was another story. Bright rays of light flashed forward from the ceremonial system such as they had never before beheld. They were amazed at the wonderful simplicity of the truths taught in the message of righteousness (the gospel), and how this message, in connection with the prophecies, unlocked for them the meaning of the once-dead forms with which they were so familiar. They realized that the very purpose of the Son of God becoming flesh – becoming one of us – was *in order* “that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest” (Heb. 2:17). They understood that the Levitical order was only temporary (Heb. 10:9) and that a different order had been established (Heb. 7:12). Christ had become “a minister of the sanctuary, the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2).

As you can see, the sanctuary and its services was not only the center of the Jewish economy as given to them by our Heavenly Family, but was also the center of the message of the followers of Christ. For the former, it was a message of types and symbols, and for the latter, it was the message of the transferal of the system from type to anti-type, from the earthly shadow to the heavenly reality. With this in mind, one can see that to miss the truth of the sanctuary is nothing less than to miss *the truth*. Let us now consider, with eyes keen to see, and ears keen to hear, what the purpose of the sanctuary is:

And let them make me a sanctuary *that* I may dwell among them. – Ex. 25:8

Though this statement on its own is thoroughly clear in answering the question at hand, a brief look at the context will only serve to make it all the more plain. In Exodus 19 and 20 we have the record of events leading up to, including, and succeeding the giving of the ten commandments on mount Sinai. After the ten “words” were spoken, the people said to Moses,

You speak with us, and we will hear, but do not let Elohim speak with us, lest we die. –
Ex. 20:19

Following this, Yahweh explained a number of judgments to Moses which he was to relate to the people (Ex. 20:22-23:33). After this, Yahweh commanded Moses to take Aaron, Nadab, and

Abihu, along with the seventy elders up to see Yahweh (Ex. 24:1, 9).

And they saw the Goddess (Elohi) of Israel: and there was under her feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the body of heaven for clearness ... and they also saw the Gods (ha Elohim) and did eat and drink.²For the translation *Goddess* and *the Gods* in this passage please see *Divine Plurality*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1-2 – Ex. 24:10-11

Moses then went up into the cloud to talk with Yahweh. Yahweh commanded him to tell the children of Israel to bring an offering of gold, silver, brass, etc. in order to build a sanctuary for Her to dwell in.

From this broader context, we learn that the children of Israel actually did not want to hear or see Yahweh, but that Yahweh wanted to dwell among them anyway. This brings to mind what took place in the garden of Eden when “Adam and his wife hid themselves from the *Presence* of Yahweh Elohim amid the trees of the garden.” (Gen. 3:8) The fact is that sin cannot dwell in the Presence of Yahweh (Isa. 59:2).

For perverse thoughts separate people from God, and when his power is tested, it exposes the foolish: because Wisdom will not live with a deceitful soul, or dwell with a body enslaved to sin. For the Holy Spirit of instruction will flee from deceit, and will leave foolish thoughts behind, and not abide at the approach of unrighteousness. – Wisdom of Solomon 1:3-5

Though Wisdom was rejected (1 En. 42:2), even from Eden, Her delight was still among the children of men (Prov. 8:31) and She eventually found a resting place:

Among all these [the nations] I [Wisdom] sought a resting place; in whose territory should I abide? Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my maker chose the place for my tent. He said, ‘Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.’ Before the ages, in the beginning, he made me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. In the holy tent I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion. Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my dominion. I took root in an honored people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage. – Sirach 24:7-12

Unmistakably then, Wisdom – our Sister (Prov. 7:4) was the Goddess who dwelt among the children of Israel in the wilderness tabernacle. Exodus 25:8 informs us that the sanctuary was made in order for Her to dwell among them. Since She cannot dwell with sin (Wis. 1:3-5), the sanctuary system was necessarily given for the purpose of cleansing the people from sin in order that She might dwell among them as well as to shield them and Her from each other’s presence while sin remained. Let us keep in mind though that “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4) but that it is the “better sacrifices” (Heb. 9:23) which are able to “purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14). This is to say that the typical system itself was only symbolic and that only as people perceived the meaning

of the symbols could they grasp the reality and be saved from their sins.

The idea that the purpose of the sanctuary was to cleanse from sin is also emphasized by the fact that the first instructions given concerning its building pertained to the ark of the covenant and the “mercy seat,” better translated “atonement plate.” The ark of the covenant was to contain the law of the ten commandments, the breaking of which is sin (1 John. 3:4). On top of this ark was to be placed the atonement plate, with its cherubim, upon which sat the Shekinah (Wisdom). The reason why this lid was called “the atonement plate” or “atonement lid” is because that was where the true source of atonement resided. The word *atonement* literally means at-one-ment; or, the condition of being “at one.” The idea of being “at one” in a scriptural context is to be “at one” with the Godhead, as They are one with each other.³ See John 17. Since, as we have seen, it is sin that separates us from our Heavenly Family, it can only be the removal of sin which can make us “at one” with Them. This same thought is conveyed in the following verses:

He touched my mouth with it and said, “Look, this coal has touched your lips. Your evil is removed; your sin is atoned for.” – Isa. 6:7

So, in this way Jacob’s sins will be atoned for, and this is all the fruit of removing his sin. – Isa. 27:9

These scriptures do indeed teach that to be atoned for is to have your sins removed,⁴ This is further supported by the fact that the primary meaning of the Hebrew word for atonement (??? – kipper) means “wiping away.” and that this is done by the Shekinah, the life-giver, the Spirit of truth.⁵ There are many other passages of scripture which teach this same truth – that the Wisdom is the life-giver, the giver of righteousness, but we will only mention a few of them here – Prov. 3:18; Eze. 37:9; John 4:14; 7:38-39. One of the important truths which the sanctuary service was to reveal is that when sin is removed, it is removed to somewhere, or rather, to something. A clear example of this is the removal of the sin to an animal when it is about to be sacrificed:

He must lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted for him to make atonement (removal of sin) on his behalf. – Lev. 1:3

Aaron is to lay his two hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the Israelites and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins, and thus he has put them on the head of the goat... – Lev. 16:21

The sin itself (the act of breaking the law) being a thing of the past, cannot actually be transmitted from one thing to another. The only way in which the past sin can now be transmitted is as guilt – as a record of sin. For a yet clearer understanding of the transferal of the record of sin we will quote a couple of verses pertaining to sin offerings:

Why did you not eat the sin offering in the sanctuary? For it is most holy and he gave it to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement on their behalf before Yahweh. – Lev. 10:17

But any sin offering from which some of its blood is brought into the Meeting Tent to make atonement in the sanctuary must not be eaten. It must be burned up in the fire. – Lev. 6:30

We see that in the first instance, the record of sin was transferred from the people to the animal and then from the animal to the priests when they ate it. Later it was to be transferred to another animal and from there to the sanctuary, and finally to be carried away by the scape-goat on the Day of Atonement. In the second instance we see that the atonement was made by the transfer of the record of sin by the blood to the furniture of the sanctuary, particularly the horns of the altar of incense, the base of the altar of burnt offering, and toward the most holy place (Lev. 4:6-7, 16-18). Again, from there it would eventually be removed on the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement is truly the day of removing, or “wiping away” sin and the record of it. Since sin is recorded in the heavenly sanctuary by means of the books of record,⁶ Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28; Isa. 4:3; Dan. 7:10; 12:1; Mal. 3:16; Luke 10:20; Ph. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 2 Esdras 6:18-20; 1 En. 47:3; 81:2; 90:20; 97:6; 98:7-8; 104:1; 106:19; 107:1; 108:3, 7; Jub. 30:22; 36:10; 2 Bar. 24:1 it is only natural that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary consists of cleansing the books of record, which includes removing the record of sins for the repentant as well as removing the names of the unrepentant.

Daniel 7:10 and Revelation 5:1 point to the great anti-typical Day of Atonement as being one of book work. The seven seals of Revelation unfold the history of the world from beginning to end,⁷ See [To the Seven Churches, Tract No. 15](#) by [Victor Houteff](#). and thus, they are the overview of the cases of all mankind, which is the investigative judgment. As we have learned in the Branch message, the investigative judgment for the dead ended and the investigative judgment for the living began in 1955.⁸ See [The End of Davidian Quiescence](#) by [Trent Wilde](#) and [When the “Siege” has Ended](#) by [Doug Mitchell](#). So long as Gods’ professed people continue to sin, their sins will continue to be recorded in the heavenly sanctuary. Since the cases of those who lived prior to 1955 have now already been investigated, the only sins remaining which delay the finishing up of this anti-typical Day of Atonement are the sins of those who are now alive. Imperative it is then, that we take to heart the system of salvation which our Heavenly Family has given to us that we may stop sinning, and finally allow the sins of all to be carried away.

Now that we have summarized a few foundational points and have hopefully brought them out with additional clarity, let us turn to the consideration of the purpose for instituting the Day of Atonement in the typical system in order to further understand why there is a need for cleansing the sanctuary in the anti-typical system.

You must not offer strange incense on it [the altar of incense], nor burnt offering, nor meal offering, and you must not pour out a drink offering on it. Aaron is to make atonement on its horns once in the year [on the day of atonement] with some of the blood of the sin offering for atonements; once in the year he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Yahweh. – Ex. 30:9-10

Yahweh spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron’s two sons when they approached the presence of Yahweh and died, and Yahweh said to Moses: “Tell Aaron your brother that he must not enter at any time into the holy place within the veil in front of the atonement plate that is on the ark so that he may not die, for I will appear in the cloud over the atonement plate. – Lev. 16:1-2

[9](#)The remainder of Leviticus 16 describes the activity of the high priest and others on the Day of Atonement.

What is interesting about both of these references is that they connect the Day of Atonement with the sin of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons. Surely there is a reason why Yahweh gave directions for conducting the Day of Atonement ceremonies immediately following the death of Nadab and Abihu. And surely there is a reason for mentioning the offering of "strange incense" just prior to the very first reference to the Day of Atonement, as recorded in Exodus 30. Let us take a closer look at the circumstance to better understand the connection:

Then Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his fire pan and put fire in it, set incense on it, and presented strange fire before Yahweh, which he had not commanded them to do. So fire went out from the presence of Yahweh and consumed them so that they died before Yahweh. Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what Yahweh spoke: 'Among the ones close to me I will show myself holy, and in the presence of all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron kept silent. Moses then called to Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, Aaron's uncle, and said to them, "Come near, carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary to a place outside the camp." So they came near and carried them away in their tunics to a place outside the camp just as Moses had spoken. Then Moses said to Aaron and to Eleazar and Ithamar his other two sons, "Do not dishevel the hair of your heads and do not tear your garments, so that you do not die and so that wrath does not come on the whole congregation. Your brothers, all the house of Israel, are to mourn the burning which Yahweh has caused, but you must not go out from the entrance of the Meeting Tent lest you die, for the Lord's anointing oil is on you." So they acted according to the word of Moses. Then Yahweh spoke to Aaron, "Do not drink wine or strong drink, you and your sons with you, when you enter into the Meeting Tent, so that you do not die, which is a perpetual statute throughout your generations, as well as to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean, and to teach the Israelites all the statutes that Yahweh has spoken to them through Moses." – Lev. 10:1-11

We can learn from this passage that Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, they drank strong drink, [10](#)This is apparent from the command to abstain from strong drink immediately following their death. See also *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 361. and they did not distinguish between the holy and the common. Each of these sins which they committed have anti-typical application to sins which we must avoid at all costs today, otherwise, our fate will be no different than theirs.

STRANGE FIRE

The "strange fire" was fire which Yahweh had not commanded (Lev. 10:1). The sacred fire is a symbol of the Spirit of Truth (Ex. 3:2; Acts 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:19). This strange fire must then represent another spirit, one not commanded by Yahweh.

What man knows the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? – 1 Cor.

2:11

He will represent the sacredness of the work, he will magnify the truth, and will ever present before men and angels the holy perfume of the character of Christ. This is the sacred fire of God's own kindling. Anything aside from this is strange fire, abhorrent to God... – *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 357

This strange fire, then, is anything which someone may say or do which does not come through inspiration. It is guile in the mouth. Nadab and Abihu chose to not use the fire which Yahweh Himself had kindled, but rather chose to use fire of their own kindling. Our own ideas will only get us as far as theirs got them.

Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that encircle yourselves with sparks: walking in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled. This shall you have of my hand; you shall lie down in sorrow. – Isa. 50:11

STRONG DRINK

Strong drink is used in the scriptures as a symbol of false doctrine – doctrine which clouds our understanding and numbs our senses.

The great sin charged against Babylon is that she “made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world represents the false doctrines that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. – *The Great Controversy*, p. 388

Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine! ... The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden underfoot: ... these men stagger because of wine, they stumble because of strong drink – priests and prophets stagger because of strong drink, they are confused because of wine, they stumble around because of strong drink; they stagger while seeing visions, they totter while making decisions. – Isa. 28:1, 3, 7

MINGLING THE COMMON WITH THE HOLY

As we learned in the last issue of *The Silver Trumpet*,

there is truly no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, nor between light and darkness (2 Cor. 6:14). There is no concord with Christ and Belial (2 Cor. 6:15); you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too (1 Cor. 10:21); you cannot serve two masters (Matt. 6:24); if you are not for Christ you are against him; if you gather not with him you scatter abroad (Matt. 12:30). – *The Silver Trumpet*, Vol. 1, No. 1 p. 10

To mingle the sacred with the common, the clean with the unclean, is to loosen our grip of the above stated truth. To illustrate: If we were to sanction the thought that someone could be sinning

and yet serving Christ, we would be mixing the clean with the unclean. Likewise, if we profess to be a “branch” yet practice unrighteousness, we would be mingling the clean with the unclean. Again, if we were to advocate the message of present truth to someone and then proceed to promote to them the writings of uninspired men, or their teachings in any form, we would be mixing the clean with the unclean.

We need to learn that none can become clean by touching the unclean. We each need to undergo the experience of Isaiah – we need to view Christ in the sanctuary doing His work on our behalf, see our sinfulness, and then come in contact with the coals from the altar.¹¹ See Isa. 6:5-7 and Ex. 29:37.

The sins of Nadab and Abihu are to be a lesson for us today. They brought their sin into the sanctuary, the dwelling place of the Shekinah. Their fate was death which only served to further pollute the sanctuary, bringing about the definite need for its cleansing. The lesson is that our sins reach unto heaven and that the sanctuary will continue to be in need of cleansing so long as we remain unclean. Let us then accept the inspired truth of the fiery coal and put aside all private interpretation (strange fire), teachings from uninspired men (strong drink), and half-hearted convictions and positions (mingling the sacred and common) in the work of our Heavenly Family. If these sins and their effect left such a sad story in relation to the typical Day of Atonement, how much more sad would it be for those of us now in the finishing up of the anti-typical Day of Atonement to perpetuate its duration by committing those same sins.

The fact that these are the sins specifically pointed out as instigating the institution of the Day of Atonement should settle in our minds forever that they lie at the root of polluting the sanctuary. If we forsake all private interpretation, doctrines of men, and double-mindedness, we will surely forsake all other sin.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto Yahweh and he will have mercy upon him; and to our Gods, for he will abundantly pardon. – Isa. 55:7

- 1
This was the name for the original followers of Christ (Acts 24:5, 14).
- 2
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12:23; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 2 Esdras 6:18-20; 1 En. 47:3; 81:2; 90:20; 97:6; 98:7-8; 104:1; 106:19; 107:1; 108:3, 7; Jub. 30:22; 36:10; 2 Bar. 24:1

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See [To the Seven Churches, Tract No. 15](#) by [Victor Houteff](#).

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See [The End of Davidian Quiescence](#) by [Trent Wilde](#) and [When the "Siege" has Ended](#) by [Doug Mitchell](#).

- 9

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