

The Sanctuary and the Endtime Generation¹

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In the years following 1888, some proponents of Christian assurance (e.g., Albion Ballenger) felt that the doctrine of assurance of salvation could not be reconciled with the Adventist teaching concerning the pre-Advent investigative judgment of the saints, and consequently chose to retain the former and reject the latter.² This view has again been championed by some Adventists in recent years. But the biblical evidence forthcoming (especially since 1980) from the Daniel and Revelation Committee and other sources is persuasive: it is not a matter of choosing either Christian assurance or the investigative judgment. Both are solid biblical doctrines.³ What is more, the judgment involves an examination of the saints' works, as Adventists have consistently maintained.⁴

The Christian church has long wrestled with how we can have assurance of salvation totally by grace, and yet be judged by our works. But I have become convinced that Seventh-day Adventists, with their unique message of the antitypical Day of Atonement now in heavenly session, can preach these two doctrines with greater harmony, clarity, and power than any preceding generation. The Day of Atonement contains the key to holding in balance the relationship between grace and works, assurance and judgment.

This balance is illustrated by the literary placement of the most crucial Day of Atonement passage, Leviticus 16. Recent studies have shown how the entire Pentateuch (five books of Moses) is arranged in a chiasmic, or "mountain" structure, in which the two "sides" of the Pentateuchal "mountain" match each other and the apex of the "mountain" contains the central focusing point of the whole.⁵

Observe the following diagram:

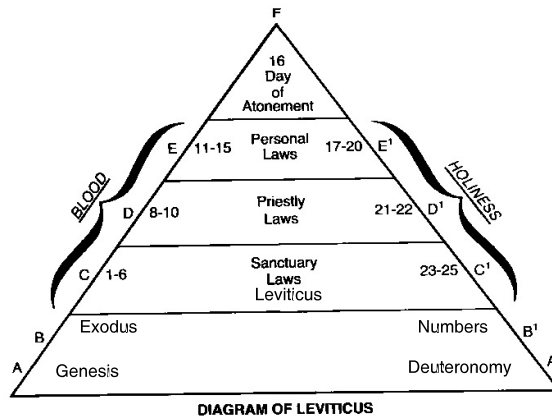
¹This paper is a revised excerpt from an article, "The Good News of Yom Kippur," from the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 2/2 (1991):4-27.

²See the analysis and critique of Ballenger's view in Roy Adams, *The Sanctuary Doctrine: Three Approaches in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), pp. 91-164.

³See especially Ivan Blazen, "Justification and Judgment," in the *Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, ed. Frank Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), pp.339-388.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 353-368, examines the major passages supporting this position (2 Cor 5:9-10; Rom 14:10, 12; Rom 2:16; 1 Cor 3:13; 4:5; Col 3:5-6; 1 Thess 4:6; Gal 5:21; 1 Cor 6:9; Eph 5:5-6; Gal 6:7-8; Rom 8:5-13; Heb 2:1-3; 10:26-31), and also reviews various attempts to resolve the tension between justification and judgment, and shows the biblical mandate to retain the tension and understand it in terms of the "dynamic, salvation-historical" perspective of the "already" and the "not yet" which we have discussed above.

⁵See Yehuda Radday, "Chiasm in Tora," *Linguistica Biblica* 19 (1972): 21-23; *idem*, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, ed. John Welch (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg Verlag, 1981), pp. 84-86; and William Shea, "Literary Form and Theological Function in Leviticus," in *Seventy Weeks*, pp. 131-168.



Note that the central chapter of the book of Leviticus, and of the whole Pentateuch, is Leviticus 16, which focuses upon the Day of Atonement. Here in the Torah, the foundational revelation for all of Scripture that follows, Yom Kippur is the focal point, the apex!

This should not really surprise us if we think about the importance of this day in the Israelite calendar. Yom Kippur was the holiest day of all the year, in which the holiest person of all Israel (the high priest) went into the holiest place on earth (the Most Holy Place) to perform the holiest work of all (the cleansing of the sanctuary, the work of final atonement).

If Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement, forms the apex of the entire Torah given to ancient Israel, certainly we as spiritual Israel need not be ashamed to proclaim the antitypical Day of Atonement as the crucial and unique present truth for the end of time. Think of it--the holiest period of salvation history, in which the holiest Person of all intelligences, goes into the holiest Place in all the universe, to do the holiest work of all time--and we have the privilege of preaching this message to the world!

But the placement of the Day of Atonement in the heart of the Pentateuch has more to say to us than underscoring its importance. Notice from the diagram that the book of Leviticus is divided into two halves, each with a different emphasis. In chapters 1-15 the underlying theme is blood. Almost everywhere we find blood, sacrifice, substitutionary atonement. But in the latter half of the book, chapters 17 and onward, blood is almost never mentioned. Instead, the overriding theme becomes holiness. And right in the middle stands chapter 16, the Day of Atonement.

I am convinced that we can only fully appreciate the *significance* of the Day of Atonement when we see it in its setting in Leviticus. Building up to the Day of Atonement, we see blood, substitutionary sacrifice--in New Testament terms, justification. Assurance on the Day of Atonement is based solely upon the blood of the substitute. Yet from Leviticus 16 onward, the

rest of the book presents a call to holiness, to sanctification. The Day of Atonement thus ties together blood and holiness, justification and sanctification.

The very structural setting of Leviticus underscores the balanced gospel message: we are saved by blood, by grace, alone; but we are judged by our works of holiness, the natural fruit of atoning grace. The efficacy of the blood becomes manifest to all by its holy fruit.⁶

Assurance and judgment--in the Day of Atonement these two concepts meet and take on ultimate meaning. This balance between root and fruit, justification and judgment, is found not only in the structural placement of Leviticus 16, but also in the *theological content* of this chapter and its companion, Leviticus 23. Here we have not only the priestly ritual to be followed on the Day of Atonement, but also the specific responsibilities of the congregation on that day.

Most of the recent scholarly discussion of these chapters has focused upon demonstrating the theoretical biblical basis for the investigative judgment. But both Leviticus 16 and 23 also contain information concerning the experiential relevance of the pre-Advent judgment. Here we have instruction for the congregation of ancient Israel as they approached the Day of Atonement. Here in the type we have answers to the practical questions: so what if the historic Adventist message concerning the antitypical Day of Atonement is true? What difference does it make in our personal lives? How does the doctrine of the investigative judgment impinge upon our life style, upon our posture as a church since 1844?

There is no better place to find the answer to these practical "so what?" questions than in Leviticus 16 and 23, where the role of the congregation is so clearly spelled out. These chapters outline five duties of the people of Israel during the Day of Atonement, each of which is instructive for spiritual Israel in the antitypical Yom Kippur.

The five activities are as follows: (1) gather at the sanctuary for a holy convocation (Lev 23:27); (2) identify with the ritual of the priest as he presents an offering by fire (Lev 23:27); (3) refrain from work (Lev 16:29; 23:28, 30, 31); (4) engage in affliction of soul (Lev 16:29, 31; 23:27, 29, 32); and (5) undergo a work of cleansing (Lev 16:30). Let us explore each of these in turn, with a view toward its application at the present time in the antitypical Day of Atonement. In particular we will note how each maintains a balance of faith and works.

The first responsibility is come to the sanctuary! As ancient Israel gathered at the sanctuary on Yom Kippur for a holy convocation, antitypical Israel has the privilege of coming by faith to the heavenly sanctuary. Here is the call to turn away from ourselves to Jesus, to focus upon Him and His work in our behalf. Now is the time for riveting our minds upon the present truth of the sanctuary and its meaning for our lives.

⁶Cf. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312 (discussing the investigative judgment): "Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine."

Blazen, *Seventy Weeks*, pp. 379-380, summarizes succinctly: "The investigative judgment, rightly understood, is in harmony with justification by faith and judgment according to works. It encompasses within itself the ingredients of these two fundamental teachings. . . . Plainly, the investigative judgment does not deal merely with the sins of mankind but with the forgiveness of Christ. Consequently, when the whole package is put together, and justification by faith and future judgment according to works are seen as the content of the investigative judgment, it can be stated that there are two questions this judgment answers. First, has the sinner sought and received Christ's forgiveness of his sins? Second, has this forgiveness brought forth good fruit in his life? . . . Only when the answer to such questions is a fundamental Yes can the final revelation of God's forgiveness and mercy be extended to believers . . ."

"God's people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary, where the final ministration of our great High Priest in the work of the judgment is going forward, where He is interceding for His people."⁷

"The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment should be clearly understood by the people of God. All need a knowledge for themselves of the position and work of their great High Priest. Otherwise, it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill."⁸ Since "The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith,"⁹ it behooves us to make it the focus of our study.

In particular, as a second activity, we are to identify with the priest's offering by fire. We are to focus upon our Substitute, who "so immortalized Calvary that though He liveth unto God, He dies continually to sin."¹⁰ Only in Christ's substitutionary sacrifice is found the basis of our assurance and joy in the judgment. As we will see shortly, only here is the secret of successfully accomplishing the other responsibilities devolving upon us on the Day of Atonement. Only by focusing upon Christ our sacrifice will we be able to offer ourselves a living sacrifice to God (Rom 12:1).

Thirdly, we are to observe a "sabbath of solemn rest." Obviously this does not mean that since 1844 Christians are to do no physical labor. Hebrews 4 is helpful at this point in explaining the attitude of "sabbath rest" that should pervade the Christian's life. Here again we have the emphasis upon justification by faith, laying the glory of man in the dust,¹¹ experiencing the rest of grace,¹² ceasing from our own works.

The special kind of Sabbath reform appropriate for the time of the Day of Atonement is also set forth in Isaiah 58. As I have shown elsewhere¹³ this chapter is set in the context of the Day of Atonement. The antitypical Day of Atonement will involve a "repairing of the breach" in the divine law by the restoration of the Sabbath truth.¹⁴ Isaiah 58 describes in detail Day-of-Atonement style Sabbath keeping (vs. 13). The implication of this chapter (especially vs. 14) is that the weekly Sabbath experience of exquisite delight in the holy fellowship with the Lord will spill over into all of life.¹⁵

The fourth activity of the congregation on Yom Kippur is afflicting of soul. The Hebrew word for "afflict" (*anah*) literally means "to abase, lower, humble," and thus we here have

⁷Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches*, p. 278.

⁸Ellen G. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 313.

⁹Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 221.

¹⁰White, *Selected Messages*, 1:343.

¹¹White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

¹²White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:928.

¹³Richard M. Davidson, *A Love Song for the Sabbath* (Washington, DC, Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Assoc., 1988), pp. 91, 107.

¹⁴The LXX translation of Isa 58:12 and the consonantal Hebrew text supports the connection of vs. 12 with the Sabbath instruction in the following verse. See the discussion in the unpublished paper by Ron du Preez, "Isaiah 58:13, 14: Its Unity with the Rest of the Chapter, Its Meaning and Implications for Sabbath Observance," 1988, TMs [photocopy], pp. 17-23, Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI; and White, *Great Controversy*, Chapters 25-26, pp. 433-460. Note further that the First Angel's Message (Rev 14:6-7) also connects the judgment with the Sabbath--see Davidson, *Love Song*, pp. 77-78.

¹⁵See the discussion and substantiation of this point in Davidson, *Love Song*, pp. 118-121.

another affirmation of justification by faith. In the time of the judgment we are to "lay the glory of man in the dust"¹⁶ by ceasing to trust our own works and looking unto our perfect Substitute.

The "affliction of soul" is a posture of humble submission before God, both in attitude and action. It involves fasting and prayer, deep searching of heart, sorrow for sin, and sincere repentance.¹⁷

It is a time of solemnity, realizing the seriousness, the heinousness, of sin. There is a recognition that one *cherished* sin can neutralize the whole power of the gospel, and can make it possible for Satan to take control of the mind and life.¹⁸ This is the reason for Ellen White's strong appeals and warnings in her descriptions of the investigative judgment.

At the same time, "The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds or occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts."¹⁹ This balancing perspective is dramatically illustrated in Ellen White's 1879 vision of the investigative judgment recorded in *Life Sketches*, pp. 241-244. In this vision, people were classified under different headings that best represented the trend of their lives. For example, "One class were registered as cumberers of the ground"; and on the positive side Ellen White wrote, "Upon one page of the ledger, under the head of 'Fidelity,' was the name of my husband."²⁰ Even though in James White "Self has at times been mingled with the work,"²¹ yet the trend of his life was one of fidelity.

The solemn work of humble repentance does not mitigate against the joy of Christian assurance. David, in Psalm 51 shows how the believer's life is a spiral of ever-deepening repentance and ever-increasing joy. The closer we come to Jesus and gaze upon His loveliness, the more we see our own sinfulness by contrast, and this drives us back in deeper repentance to Jesus for pardon and cleansing, which once received, leads to greater joy.²² Isaiah 58, which gives an inspired interpretation of the true fast during the time of the Day of Atonement,²³ shows how the liberating, redemptive activities that lead to an experience of joy, light, healing, satisfaction, and yes, even holy celebration!²⁴

¹⁶White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

¹⁷See especially Ps 35:13; White, *Great Controversy*, pp. 420, 490.

¹⁸White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 452; idem, *Steps to Christ*, p. 34; idem, *Great Controversy*, p. 489.

¹⁹White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 57-58.

²⁰White, *Life Sketches*, p. 242.

²¹Ibid., p. 243.

²²Note how David's prayer in vss. 9-10 for forgiveness and cleansing leads to joy of salvation (vs. 12) and to deeper contrition (vs. 17). Cf. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561; idem, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 160; idem, *Steps to Christ*, p. 65 for descriptions of this spiral.

²³See note No. 30 above.

²⁴See Isa 58:6-14. Those who take the position that during the antitypical Day of Atonement there is "no time to celebrate" have not grasped the balanced perspective of Scripture and the writings of Ellen White. Isa 58:13-14 shows the mood of "exquisite delight" that accompanies Day of Atonement Sabbath keeping. We celebrate in fellowship with God our Creator, Redeemer, Sanctified, and Glorifier. [See Davidson, *Love Song*, passim.] Jesus' parable concerning the investigative judgment (Matt 22) shows the *wedding* context of the Day of Atonement. Those invited to the feast who have accepted the King's gift of the wedding garment may begin celebrating even as the King inspects the guests. Ellen White clearly points out the seriousness of the investigative judgment and just as clearly calls us to times of celebration. For example, "well would it be for the people of God at the present time [during the investigative judgment!] to have a Feast of Tabernacles--a joyous commemoration of the

This fourth posture of soul affliction during the antitypical Day of Atonement is perhaps more instructive than has been generally recognized with regard to particular lifestyle issues currently being discussed in the church. Just as the first three duties of the congregation involve experiential issues--the sanctuary focus, justification by faith, and Sabbath reform--so the call to afflict our souls seems to point to specific areas of Christian behavior.

For ancient Israel "the affliction of soul" was regarded as a call to fasting [Ps 35:13; Isa 58:3, 5] and in the antitype we may see a parallel in the message of health reform. God calls his endtime remnant to a life of true temperance, abstaining from everything hurtful and using judiciously that which is healthful.²⁵ Besides all the other good biblical and scientific reasons for abstaining from alcohol, is there an additional one in the sanctuary message? After the death of Aaron's inebriated sons who brazenly ventured into the sanctuary, God instructed that no one entering the sanctuary was to partake of strong drink. It is particularly noteworthy that this whole incident is then explicitly connected with the revelation concerning the Day of Atonement (Lev 10:1-2; 16:1). Should we who by faith join Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, particularly in the time of the Day of Atonement, adopt the appropriate posture of sobriety, signaling our identification with the work that is going on there?

The Day of Atonement posture may also provide further substantiation for the historic Adventist position regarding adornment, and in particular, the wearing of jewelry. Our church has rightly explored underlying principles of modesty and economy and humility. But perhaps there is an even deeper theological issue at stake. First we must correct the mistaken notion too common among many that jewelry per se is somehow "filthy," defiling, cheap, or bad. The Bible is plain: jewelry is beautiful. God made it. And He loves it! Before sin arose in the universe Lucifer was decked with jewels; "every precious stone was . . . [his] covering"; it was beautiful, splendid, and it was prepared by God (Ezek 28:13). In the Old Testament God likens His salvation to the ornaments of a bride (Isa 49:18; 61:10). At the end of the millennium the holy city will descend, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2).

A primary principle then is that jewelry is beautiful and approved by God. But to this must be added another principle. From the Old Testament record it appears that in a time of corporate investigative and/or executive judgment God regularly asks His people to remove their ornaments as an outward symbol of the special judgment setting.

The clearest example of this is recorded in Exodus 33:5, 6. After Israel's idolatry at Mt. Sinai, God commanded: "So now put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what to do with you [this last phrase indicates the investigative judgment setting]. Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments from Mt. Horeb onward."²⁶

blessings of God to them." (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 540-541; cf. Ellen G. White, *That I May Know Him*, p. 105) Though we live in the antitypical Day of Atonement, we may also *proleptically* (in anticipation) celebrate the joys of the Feast of Tabernacles. In fact, true "celebration" is the reason for existence! Ellen White wrote to S. N. Haskell, "we can sympathize and unite in the grand work that you and I love, and which is the one great object ever before us, the enlargement of the kingdom and the *celebration of His glory*." (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies on Sexual Behavior*, p. 33) By faith we already "have come to Mount Zion . . . to innumerable angels in *festal gathering*!" (Heb 12:22)

²⁵White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 562; Ellen G. White, *Temperance*, p. 138.

²⁶Note that the NIV incorrectly reads "at Mt. Horeb" whereas the *mem* prefix clearly indicates "from Mt. Horeb [onward]", as rendered by the RSV. It appears that much of this jewelry was devoted to the building of the sanctuary (Exod 35:22). Throughout most of Israel's wilderness sojourn the people were in a period of judgment: there was no circumcision nor keeping of the Passover for 38 years after Kadesh till they entered the Promised Land under Joshua (Josh 5:2-12; cf. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 485-486).

Jewish interpreters have recognized that the principle set forth in this passage applies to the Day of Atonement. Observant Jews still today wear no ornaments of gold on Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Judgment par excellence.

Other Old Testament passages seem to reinforce this principle. In the time of the Divided Monarchy as the Northern Kingdom faced imminent judgment by captivity, in a setting of divine covenant lawsuit or investigative judgment, God indicates that he will take away the finery of the daughters of Zion, including in particular their jewelry (Isa 3:13-14, 16-23).²⁷ The same pronouncement is given in the investigative judgment upon the Southern Kingdom two centuries later (Ezek 16).²⁸

At the same time these latter passages introduce a final principle. Jewelry in ancient Israel, when mentioned favorably, is almost always connected with bridal ornaments.²⁹ For example, in the allegory of Ezekiel 16 God marries Israel, and then adorns her with the bridal jewels (vss. 8-14).

Putting these principles together, is it possible that since 1844 Seventh-day Adventists have the privilege of refraining from wearing jewelry as a special outward sign of the unique present truth that they are Laodicea, "people of the Judgment," that they live in the time of the investigative judgment? Is it possible that Adventists adopt this posture also because, although the church is spiritually espoused to Christ (Eph 5; 2 Cor 11:2), the wedding is not yet consummated (Rev 19:7-8)? For those who understand the deeper issues, taking on the bridal ornaments before the wedding is the posture of Babylon the harlot (Rev 17:4-5) not the true church (Rev 12:1). It is not at all that wearing jewelry is wrong--but we have the privilege of waiting till the wedding feast, when Jesus Himself will adorn His bride with jewels!³⁰ This discussion calls for further investigation, but it perhaps illustrates how the posture of "afflicting our souls" on the Day of Atonement may inform the practical life style issues in our church.

The fifth and final responsibility devolving upon the congregation of Israel during the Day of Atonement was a work of cleansing. As the heavenly sanctuary is being cleansed there is a corresponding work of cleansing to be accomplished in the soul temple of each individual worshiper.³¹ Malachi 3:1-3 describes this special work, as does Ezekiel 36:25-28.

The Day of Atonement brings a call to holiness. But we must immediately add that even the life of holiness is rooted in justification by faith in the atoning blood of Christ.³² Only as we trust wholly in the merits of our Substitute and Surety can we truly obey God in spirit as well as in letter.

Before internalizing the good news of justification by faith, I had tried to "depend upon watchfulness against temptation, and performance of certain duties for acceptance with Him," and discovered that indeed "there are no victories in this kind of faith." Then came the glorious revelation: "There is need of constant watchfulness, and of earnest, loving devotion; but these

²⁷Note the explicit reference to the covenant *rîb* in Isa 3:13-14.

²⁸The whole chapter follows the classic structure of the covenant lawsuit or investigative judgment: preamble (vs. 1); historical prologue (vss. 3-14); indictments (vss. 15-34); judicial sentence of covenant curses (vss. 35-52); witnesses (vs. 37). The trial is explicitly mentioned in vs. 38.

²⁹E.g., Isa 49:8; 61:10; Jer 2:32; Ezek 16:8-14.

³⁰Rev 21:2; cf. Rev 2:10; 4:4, 10; 1 Pet 5:4; Jas 1:12; Zech 9:16; Dan 12:3; Ellen G. White, *Early Writings*, p. 288.

³¹Lev 16:30; White, *Testimonies*, 5:214)

³²See Lev 16:30, where it states that "on this day [Yom Kippur] shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord." Note that the focus of even the people's "cleansing" is upon the atonement made by the blood of the Substitute.

will come *naturally* when the soul is kept by the power of God through faith. . . . God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour. Love springs up in the heart. . . . Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure."³³

It is also crucial to note that the call to cleansing of the soul temple does not rob us of our assurance nor detract from the basis of our salvation. The Christian life is a matter of continual growth, and if in the growing process I make mistakes, this does not destroy my assurance. Just as a child taking his first steps is not disowned by his father when he trips and tumbles, so my heavenly Father does not cast me off when I slip and fall (see Ps 37:24).

I've often had to bow down and weep at Jesus' feet because of my shortcomings and mistakes, yet on divine authority I am not to be discouraged. Even if I am overcome by the enemy, I am not cast off, not forsaken, not rejected by God.³⁴ Christ's perfect holiness atones for my shortcomings; when I do my best, He becomes my righteousness.³⁵ The Father beholds not my faulty character, but sees me as clothed in Christ's perfection.³⁶

As John the beloved put it: "I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1 RSV). What reassurance of assurance God has given!

I am thankful that this assurance is not dependent upon my feelings. I cannot look within myself for evidence of my acceptance with God, for I will find there nothing but that which will discourage. My only hope lies in looking to Jesus, my righteousness, my consolation, and my rejoicing.³⁷

As a final, and probably the most important point regarding the cleansing work of the investigative judgment, we must note *who* does the cleansing. Leviticus 16:30: "on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you." Malachi 3:2-3: "for He [the messenger of the covenant] is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord." And Ezekiel 36:25-27:

"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."

The good news of Yom Kippur is that God Himself will take responsibility for the cleansing work!

What a marvelous work He promises to accomplish! At every stage of our growth in grace we are perfect in Christ,³⁸ but at the consummation of history, in the investigative judgment, God promises to bring the complete fulfillment of the new covenant blessings for those living during this time. He promises to pour out the latter rain to make the harvest "fully ripe" (Rev 14:15). As we continue to focus upon Christ our righteousness, the assured result is inevitable: by beholding we will become changed--"transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" (2 Cor 3:18, NIV).³⁹ We will become fully settled into the truth as it is in Jesus so that we would rather die than disobey our loving Lord. Sealed as the spiritual 144,000, we will have the name

³³White, *Selected Messages*, 1:353, 354.

³⁴See White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 64.

³⁵See White, *Selected Messages*, p. 368.

⁰See White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 357.

³⁷See White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 64, 65; cf. Ps 51; Isa 6.

³⁸White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 65.

³⁹See White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 160; idem, *Steps to Christ*, p. 65.

(or character) of the Lamb and the Father written on our foreheads (Rev 7:4; 14:1). Then the investigative judgment can close for the living⁴⁰ and Christ can come to put the finishing touch of immortality and glorification upon His faithful saints (1 Cor 15:35-58). What glorious good news!

This good news of cleansing on Yom Kippur has implications far beyond our personal experience. The plan of redemption focuses not only (or even primarily) upon our personal salvation. The Bible presents a theocentric view of salvation history. For example, Ezekiel, in the larger context of the earthly type of the investigative judgment⁴¹ underscores the "big issue"--the cosmic dimension. In Ezekiel 36:22-23 (and again in 39:27-28), God reveals to Judah the ultimate result of their judgment: "through you I will vindicate my holiness before their eyes [the eyes of the onlooking nations]." It is for their sakes, to vindicate His character before the onlooking intelligences, that God acts. The investigative judgment is not conducted to reveal to God who are His and who are not. He who is omniscient knows who are His (John 10:4, 14, 27; Isa 46:9, 10; Heb 4:13; 2 Tim 2:19). It is for the sake of the onlooking universe who serve as the jury in the cosmic review. God, who through history has consistently set forth the evidence in open court before closing probation upon any individuals or nations,⁴² does not depart from this procedure in the final review.⁴³ At the end of the Great Controversy, all the universe will have opportunity to witness "one great and final reaffirmation of all that He [Christ] has accomplished through the plan of salvation";⁴⁴ and they will be able to attest to the justice and truthfulness of God's dealings with mankind. Satan's charges against God will be demonstrated to be false.

The mind-boggling aspect about this cosmic courtroom scene is that we have a part in God's vindicating of His character. Note how in Ezekiel 36:23 (RSV) God says that "*through you* I vindicate my holiness before their eyes," and then in succeeding verses He describes the work of cleansing that He will perform for His people.

In the type, Israel's sins and the resulting captivity caused surrounding nations to charge that God could not keep His promises to His people. In gathering them from captivity and

⁴⁰See Doug Bennett, "The Good News About the Judgment of the Living," *Adventist Review*, June 16, 1983, pp. 14-15, for evidence that probation does not close upon the living until *after* the latter rain and the sealing; cf. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:66; idem, *Early Writings*, pp. 85-86.

⁴¹See Richard M. Davidson, "In Confirmation of the Sanctuary Message," in *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 2/1 (Spring 1991): 97-100.

⁴²See Davidson, "In Confirmation of the Sanctuary Message," pp. 96-100, for discussion of this consistent procedure of God throughout history.

⁴³In a sense the investigative judgment may also be viewed as an accountant's *final audit* at the end of the year. The records are faithfully kept throughout the year, and the auditor verifies the completeness and accuracy of the accounts. The audit is a public vindication of the one being audited, that he has conducted his affairs with integrity, in accordance with accepted business practices. At the end of history, God opens the books, as it were, and conducts a public audit of heavenly records. As the divine Auditor, God reveals His *impeccable integrity* in dealing with humanity.

⁴⁴William Shea, "Theological Importance of the Preadvent Judgment," in *Seventy Weeks*, p. 327. Richard Rice, "The Relevance of the Investigative Judgment," *Spectrum*, 14/1 (1983): 32-38, rightly emphasizes the larger issue in the Great Controversy of demonstrating the character of God rightly and show how this must take place at the end of history to reveal the *ultimate effect* of God's saving work in the light of the whole of history that precedes. Unfortunately, Rice goes contrary to the biblical evidence by further insisting that the investigative judgment is also necessary to inform God, because He is not all-knowing with regard to the future.

cleansing them He vindicated his holy character from the false accusations (Ezek 26:17-32). So in the antitype, against Satan's false claim that God cannot fulfill His new covenant promises, God gathers a whole generation to Himself at the consummation of history who demonstrate the ultimate effectiveness of the gospel. The new covenant promise--"I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances"--will find complete fulfillment among God's remnant people. No glory will accrue to the people--"It is not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord God; let that be known to you" (Ezek 36:32). To God alone be the glory!

Not only does God vindicate His character through His *saints*. Ezekiel 38:16, 23 uses the same language to describe the final judgment upon the *wicked*, and in particular their leader:

"In the latter days I will bring you [Gog, symbol of Satan leading his wicked hordes] against my land, that the nations may know me, when *through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes*. . . . With pestilence and bloodshed I will enter into judgment with him [Gog]; and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples that are with him, torrential rains and hailstones, fire and brimstone. So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

The final judgment reveals not only the ultimate effectiveness of the gospel but also the full ripening of iniquity. In Revelation 16 the seven last plagues serve the purpose of revealing that God's final judgments find no answering chord of repentance in the hearts of the wicked--they only curse God all the more (Rev 16:9, 11). God reveals Himself to be just and yes, merciful, in bringing the Great Controversy to an end. Before it is all over, even the rebels, though still unrepentant, will admit that God is just (Rom 14:11; Isa 45:20-23; Phil 2:10-11).

At the grand climax to the Great Controversy, there will be a time of great rejoicing--and the good news will be about God's vindication of His character in the judgment! The redeemed will sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! (Rev 15:3). The angel of the water will say, "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was, and who is to be" (Rev 16:5). The altar will cry, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and just are Your judgments!" (Rev 16:7).

After this "the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying, 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just. . .'" (Rev 19:1-2).

The message of Yom Kippur--of the whole final judgment including the investigative trial, millennial review, and execution of the sentence--is good news vindicating our great God!

In this paper we have explored three major reasons why Yom Kippur is Good News. It is good news because: (1) it restores the gospel to its rightful place, bringing to the believer assurance and vindication in the judgment; (2) it accomplishes the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and its earthly counterpart, the soul temples of the saints; and (3) it vindicates the character of God. This three-fold glad tidings is summarized in Daniel 8:14 in a single word: "unto two thousand and three hundred evening-mornings, then shall the sanctuary be *nitsdaq*." As we have seen in a previous paper, the three extended meanings of *nitsdaq* are "restore, cleanse, and vindicate,"⁴⁵ and they match the three problems mentioned in the previous verse (vs. 13). The gospel of justification by faith--the daily ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary which was eclipsed by the little horn--is to be *restored*. The transgression of the saints which causes horror in the heavenly sanctuary, is to be *cleansed*. And the character of God which is defamed by the downtrodding of the saints and sanctuary, is to be *vindicated*. Praise God for the restoring, cleansing, vindicating good news of Yom Kippur!

⁴⁵Davidson, "In Confirmation of the Sanctuary Message," pp. 105-106.