

Sanctuary Events after the Crucifixion

What happened in A.D. 31, shortly after Calvary? Some are saying that, at that time, Christ entered the Most Holy Place, sat down, became supreme king, and began His reign. This brief study is intended to explain the truth about this matter.

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Of course, if the above assertion is correct, then there was no mediation in the first apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary after Calvary for 18 centuries; and Christ did not enter the Most Holy Place in 1844 and begin the Investigative Judgment. It will not end with a close of probation; and we are all saved at the cross. Some are even declaring that Christ's kingship on His throne of glory began on Resurrection Day.

At issue here are five points and their timing: The kingdom, the enthronement, the work in the two apartments, the mediation of Christ, and His coronation.

This study will primarily focus on information from the Spirit of Prophecy; I have thoroughly covered every aspect of this from a Biblical standpoint in my low-cost book, *Biblical Defense*. If you do not have a copy, purchase one. Better yet, buy a small, low-cost boxful and share them with fellow Advent believers.

Where did Christ go Sunday morning after He arose, and why?

Early on the morning of the first day of the week, when Mary met Christ in the garden, He said to her, "Touch Me not; for I have not yet ascended to My Father" (*John 20:17*). The Greek word for "touch me" is mistranslated in the KJV. *Apto* means "touch." But *aptomai* is reflexive and, instead of meaning "touch me," it means "detain me." Although not knowing the original language of the New Testament, Ellen White gave the correct meaning of *aptomai* in *DA 790*. When Mary fell at His feet ("springing toward Him," as she worshiped him), Ellen White accurately quoted the verse as "detain Me not."

Christ said that He went all the way to heaven that day! It was not until late that afternoon that He walked with the two disciples to Emmaus and afterward appeared to most of the disciples in the upper room.

When Christ went to heaven that day, did He receive the kingdom? No. Was He enthroned? No. Was He made king? No. The rumors you are hearing are not true.

We are told why Christ went to heaven: to hear the assurance from the Father that His sacrifice was accepted. Then He returned to earth for a time.

"Jesus refused to receive the homage of His people until He had the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted by the Father. He ascended to the heavenly courts, and from God Himself heard the assurance that His atonement for the sins of men had been ample, that through His blood all might gain

eternal life."—*Desire of Ages*, 790.

Does Christ have a kingdom now?

Yes, He does. He now rules on a throne; but it is not a throne of glory as you may be told. It is a mediatorial throne.

"The work of Christ as man's intercessor is presented in that beautiful prophecy of Zechariah concerning Him 'whose name is the Branch.' Says the prophet: 'He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His [the Father's] throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between Them both.' Zechariah 6:12, 13."—*Great Controversy 415-416*.

Not until later will He sit on a throne of glory.

"He 'shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.' Not now 'upon the throne of His glory'; the kingdom of glory has not yet been ushered in. Not until His work as a mediator shall be ended will God 'give unto Him the throne of His father David,' a kingdom of which 'there shall be no end.' Luke 1:32, 33. As a priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne." Revelation 3:21.—*Ibid.*, 416.

When did Christ begin to sit upon that throne?

When He ascended, forty days later. But it was not, at that time, His own throne.

"Christ had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. The disciples had beheld the cloud receive Him. The same Jesus who had walked and talked and prayed with them; who had broken bread with them; who had been with them in their boats on the lake; and who had that very day toiled with them up the ascent of Olivet,—the same Jesus had now gone to share His Father's throne."—*Desire of Ages*, 832.

According to that, Christ began ruling in His kingdom in A.D. 31.

His kingdom is not, at this time, a literal kingdom—but a spiritual kingdom. Christ rules it as a mediator.

"Before leaving His disciples, Christ plainly stated the nature of His kingdom. He called to their minds what He had previously told them concerning it. He declared that it was not His purpose to establish in this world a temporal, but a spiritual kingdom. He was not to reign as an earthly king on David's throne."—*Ibid.*, 820.

For more on this mediatorial, spiritual kingdom, read

Acts of the Apostles, 30, and Desire of Ages, 333.

So then, this spiritual kingdom actually began in A.D. 31. Is it the only kingdom Christ ever rules over?

No, Although the spiritual kingdom was instituted immediately after man's fall, it was not established until Christ's death, when the basis for it was laid. But there is also a second, later kingdom that Christ will one day rule over. Here is a passage which clearly explains about both kingdoms:

"As used in the Bible, the expression 'kingdom of God' is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace is brought to view by Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews. After pointing to Christ, the compassionate intercessor who is 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' the apostle says: 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace.' Hebrews 4:15, 16. The throne of grace represents the kingdom of grace; for the existence of a throne implies the existence of a kingdom. In many of His parables Christ uses the expression 'the kingdom of heaven' to designate the work of divine grace upon the hearts of men.

"So the throne of glory represents the kingdom of glory; and this kingdom is referred to in the Saviour's words: 'When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations.' Matthew 25:31, 32. This kingdom is yet future. It is not to be set up until the second advent of Christ.

"The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man, when a plan was devised for the redemption of the guilty race. It then existed in the purpose and by the promise of God; and through faith, men could become its subjects. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ."—*Great Controversy, 347-348.*

So Christ receives the kingdom of glory at His Second Advent?

He will actually receive it at the close of human probation, when He forever ends His mediatorial work. But it is not set up—that is, does not actually begin—until Christ returns to earth for the subjects of that kingdom.

"And, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away.' Daniel 7:13, 14. The coming of Christ here described is not His second coming to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator."—*Great Controversy, 479-480.*

Thus we see that it is when the spiritual kingdom ends, the mediatorial kingdom,—that Christ receives

the literal kingdom.

The end of Christ's kingdom of grace is also called "the marriage." Prior to that, the wedding guests (the ten virgins) go into the wedding. But it is not completed until the end of Christ's mediation and investigative judgment. For a better understanding of this, read *Great Controversy, 426-427.*

Will Christ share this literal kingdom with us? And, if so, when will that happen?

Here is the answer. Notice that everything Ellen White writes is in total agreement with the Bible:

"Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom. The Saviour said: 'When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Matthew 25:31-34.

"We have seen by the scriptures just given that when the Son of man comes, the dead are raised incorruptible and the living are changed. By this great change they are prepared to receive the kingdom; for Paul says: 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' 1 Corinthians 15:50. Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore man in his present state cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs."—*Great Controversy, 322-323.*

I want to have a part in that kingdom! How can I be ready?

"We believe without a doubt that Christ is soon coming. This is not a fable to us; it is a reality. We have no doubt, neither have we had a doubt for years, that the doctrines we hold today are present truth, and that we are nearing the judgment. We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the finishing touch of immortality.

"When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time.

"When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still. Those who have preserved their bodies and spirits in holiness, in sanctification and honor, will then receive the finishing touch of immortality. But those who are unjust, unsanctified, and filthy will remain so forever. No work will then

be done for them to remove their defects and give them holy characters. The Refiner does not then sit to pursue His refining process and remove their sins and their corruption. This is all to be done in these hours of probation. It is now that this work is to be accomplished for us.”—2 *Testimonies*, 355.

Oh, how we all want to be there!

“The white-robed ones who surround the throne of God are not composed of that company who were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and who choose to drift with the current rather than to breast the waves of opposition. All who remain pure and uncorrupted from the spirit and influence prevailing at this time will have stern conflicts. They will come through great tribulations; they will wash their robes of character, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. These will sing the song of triumph in the kingdom of glory. Those who suffer with Christ will be partakers of His glory.”—*Counsels on Health*, 264.

But I heard that Christ received His coronation on His resurrection day?

In a sense, Christ’s true coronation day was when He died on Calvary; for it laid the basis for His kingdom of grace and later kingdom of glory.

“In the place of His exaltation to the throne of David they were to witness His crucifixion. This was to be indeed His true coronation.”—*Desire of Ages*, 379.

But, although Christ’s kingdom of glory begins at the Second Advent, His final coronation does not occur until after His third advent, just before those who have proven themselves to be incorrigibly wicked perish forever.

“As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God.”—*Great Controversy*, 668.

“In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people.”—*Great Controversy*, 666.

But that is not the end of the matter. Christ, our wonderful Redeemer, also places crowns on the heads of His faithful ones—so they can reign with Him in the eternal kingdom of peace and light!

He gives the crowns to His beloved as soon as they reach heaven after the Second Advent, when He entered upon His kingdom of glory.

“Then I saw a very great number of angels bring from the city glorious crowns—a crown for every saint, with his name written thereon. As Jesus called for the crowns, angels presented them to Him, and with His own right hand, the lovely Jesus placed the crowns on the heads of the saints. In the same manner the angels brought the harps, and Jesus presented them also to the saints. The commanding angels first struck the note, and then every voice

was raised in grateful, happy praise, and every hand skillfully swept over the strings of the harp, sending forth melodious music in rich and perfect strains. Then I saw Jesus lead the redeemed company to the gate of the city. He laid hold of the gate and swung it back on its glittering hinges and bade the nations that had kept the truth enter in.”—*Early Writings*, 288. (Also see *GC* 645-646.)

That kingdom will embrace all the kingdoms of the world.

“His kingdom would not be established in earthly triumph and with worldly honor and display . . . This kingdom would embrace all the kingdoms of the world, and then the power and glory of Satan would cease.”—5 *Bible Commentary* 1079.

If Christ begins His mediatorial work after Calvary—but not on His ascension day—when does it actually begin? What is the timing when Christ enters the Sanctuary in heaven to begin His work?

Christ died on Friday and arose early on the first day of the week. After speaking with Mary, He went to heaven and received from the Father the assurance that His sacrifice was acceptable as the basis for a complete atonement. He then returned to earth and appeared that evening to two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and then to the disciples in the upper room.

But the atonement was not yet completed. It had to be individually applied to those who would accept it. More on this later.

Forty days elapsed between Christ’s resurrection and His ascension. His mediation in the first apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary was soon to begin; but first He had to be “enthroned” into that ministry. As soon as this ceremony was completed, He began His ministry as our great High Priest.

“Christ’s ascension to heaven was the signal that His followers were to receive the promised blessing. For this they were to wait before they entered upon their work. When Christ passed within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels. As soon as this ceremony was completed, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in rich currents, and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 38-39.

Well, then, how long did that preparatory ceremony take?

We know its length from the book of Acts. After Christ ascended to heaven (*Acts* 1:9), His disciples gathered together and earnestly prayed for guidance and help in carrying forward the awesome task before them: telling all the world about salvation through their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. They had been told to “wait” for the promised Holy Spirit (*Acts* 1:4, 8).

This prayer session was interspersed with daily witnessing in Jerusalem (*Luke 24:50-53*). We are specifically told that ten days after the ascension, there occurred a dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

That correlates with the above-quoted passage (*AA 38-39*), which explains that this outpouring came when the preparatory, mediatorial enthronement ceremony had been completed in heaven. On that tenth day, Christ actually began His first apartment mediation.

“The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven’s communication that the Redeemer’s inauguration was accomplished.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 39.

Many had assumed that the ten-day interlude was solely to provide time for the disciples to earnestly pray for help. But, in reality, a second objective—the preparatory ceremony preceding Christ’s Sanctuary priesthood—also needed to be fulfilled.

As usual, Ellen White’s explanation in *Acts of the Apostles*, 38-39, carefully agrees with Scripture.

I agree that ten days was needed for the disciples to get ready; but where in Scripture does it say that the priest could not begin his work in the Sanctuary until the tenth day?

We find it in the book of Leviticus, which carefully describes, in detail, many aspects of the earthly ministry of the priests in the tabernacle.

The ceremony was different in various aspects (because it was earthly and involved washings of sinful priests and sacrifices of animal blood for them); yet the timing is identical. You will find the passage in *Leviticus 8:1 to 9:24*, which describes the dedicatory service to prepare earthly priests for their work, prior to beginning it. The events of the first day in the earthly tabernacle are explained in *8:1-34*. The next seven days are described in *8:35*. The eighth of those seven days (day two to eight) is detailed in *chapter 9* (especially note *9:1*). That totals ten days.

On that tenth day, after the final offerings to cover his own sinfulness were offered, the high priest did something very significant:

“And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.”—*Leviticus 9:23-24*.

Christ’s enthronement, that is, the beginning of His mediatorial work in the first apartment, was signaled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples.

“After Christ’s ascension His enthronement in His mediatorial kingdom was signaled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit was given.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 120. (*Similar: My Life Today*, 47.)

In the typical service, on the tenth day, fire came

from the Lord and burned up the sacrifice on the altar of burnt offering in the outer court. In the antitypical service, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit, amid an appearance of fire, on the disciples. This symbolism is rich in meaning. Not only was Christ dedicated to His work, but also His disciples, who that day became Apostles. We too can yield our lives anew to Christ’s service and be used in His service. But remember that a single dedication is not enough; it must be renewed daily, hourly.

I want to understand more about the mediation of Christ, what He did in the first apartment, when He entered the second apartment, and what is being done during the investigative judgment now in progress. Where can I learn this?

Beware of the theologians! What you want is Inspired counsel. A clear, concise—yet nicely detailed—explanation is to be found in *chapters 23, 24, and 28 of Great Controversy*. Pray for guidance, read it carefully, and then read it several more times.

“For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ’s work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary.

“As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering 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. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of the books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement. The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12.”—*Great Controversy*, 421-422.

Read *Early Writings*, 55-56. May our kind Father bless you in your continued study of His Word.

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