

The Cleansing of the Sanctuary



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Preface

This study examines the topic of the cleansing of the sanctuary as mentioned in Daniel 8:14: "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." That has long been regarded as a process of cleansing heaven's record books of the record of our sins – a judicial process in the final judgment. Here, a careful evaluation is made of what the Bible says about the sanctuary and exploration is made of the meaning of important words to come to a better understanding of the cleansing process.

The cleansing of your sanctuary involves the "renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2) especially in regard to your understanding of and attitude towards God so that you may become a fit vessel or sanctuary for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27) and reflecting the character of God in your life is the goal.

The material herein was first presented before a weekly study group and has not been highly edited. It does contain some new ideas but attempts to be Biblically-based and does come to some different conclusions.

Each part of the study also appears as a separate web page at www.characterofGod.org. Please visit that site and its resources page for mention of any updates of this e-book and explore the site for much more information on the character of God.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 1

Overview

Part one is a quick summary to provide an overview of a completely-different but Bible-based and exciting perspective on the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Daniel 8:14 says:

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (Dan 8:14)

The cleansing of the sanctuary foretold in Daniel 8:14 is an important Biblical concept. It relates to the character of God in that, correctly understood, it reveals what sanctuary God is most concerned with cleansing. That and how He achieves the cleansing very much reflects on His character and how He relates to us.

This study will closely examine the concept of the cleansing of the sanctuary including what sanctuary is really being cleansed, how that process works and how it can impact our daily lives. We will get into some genetics and psychology and very practical applications to our own lives and our cleansing because we all need that – because we are all dirty.

Note that in this first part there are links to other parts of the study. Part 1 can be read as an overview and used as a way to find material within the study.

We will start by defining what a sanctuary is. **Part 2 [Sanctuary – definition](#)** looks at the definition of the word sanctuary. (That part is from [The Character of God and The Gospel Glossary](#) where many scriptural terms are defined primarily by allowing the Bible to define its own terms by how it uses them.) The Bible often uses sanctuary as a dwelling place and includes the concept of a place of safety. We will continue looking at the meaning of a sanctuary as referred to by Daniel and how it has been understood over time.

Long before Daniel 8:14 was written, Moses described a sanctuary in the desert which had very much of a teaching role for the children of Israel and is illustrative also for us of how the plan of salvation works. We can see that the [Old Testament Sanctuary \(part 3\)](#) was very much like a theater and that, on its own, it could not accomplish the cleansing that was needed (could not take away sins – Heb 10:4). Clearly, it was meant to point to a greater reality. Following parts will identify the true sanctuary and show, in detail, the process of cleansing the sanctuary.

There is considerable history associated with the understanding of Daniel 8:14. In the early 1800's it came to the attention of people who assumed that the sanctuary was the Earth itself which would be cleansed at the Second Coming of Christ. When a prediction for that event did not happen, the focus shifted to the idea of a [Heavenly Sanctuary \(part 4\)](#). While there is some (but surprising little) direct evidence of a sanctuary in heaven, there is a scarcity of evidence that there is anything in heaven in need of cleansing.

More recently, starting in the last half of the twentieth century, attention has shifted back to the Earth, not as the sanctuary itself, but to an expected physical [Earthly Sanctuary \(part 5\)](#) expected to be built in Jerusalem – the third Jewish Temple. Reading that part, we can see the possibility of a third temple yet to be built on earth but also evidence that it could not be the true temple or sanctuary to be cleansed.

So the true tabernacle:

- is not the Old Testament sanctuary
- is not the Earth itself as some believed almost 200 years ago
- is not a heavenly sanctuary as we saw there is little evidence for
- is not a yet-to-be-built third temple in Israel in the near future

Then what is the true tabernacle or sanctuary? Where is it? When is it to be cleansed?

Scripture has much to say about yet another temple/sanctuary which I believe is the one heaven is really concerned about. See this detailed look at [The True Sanctuary \(part 6\)](#) and note the considerable Bible evidence pointing to where God most wants to abide.

The Bible shows that the sanctuary or tabernacle where God really wants to dwell is in us; we are the tabernacle. But how does that work? Christ living in us sounds rather mysterious. It helps make sense of this to look at how this would work physically. If in us, then where in us? Scripture often uses the term “heart” to refer to the mind as in writing laws in our minds/hearts. See the [Sanctuary of the Heart \(part 7\)](#) for evidence that God wants to dwell in our minds – the part of us that makes us who we are as individuals; the part of us that can actually welcome Him in.

So when Daniel 8:14 says “... then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (Dan 8:14) we can understand that it is talking about the sanctuary that is our hearts or minds. But how is it that [The Sanctuary of the Mind Needs Cleansing \(part 8\)](#)? The Bible describes the state of man's heart/mind as being in need of cleansing right from the start – scripture calls it “the carnal mind.” Part 8 shows that whether we completely trust God or not is greatly

dependent on our perception of and knowledge of Him. It doesn't even make sense to ask the average worldly person to trust in God. You wouldn't necessarily expect someone to trust in a complete stranger. Trust comes with familiarity; with knowledge of character – are they, in fact, trustworthy?

As noted in that discussion of the sanctuary of the mind needing cleansing, there are three levels of sin:

- sinful attitude (distrust towards God)
- sinful flesh (fallen human nature)
- sinful acts

Next we want to consider [How Does the Mind/Heart Get Dirty? \(part 9\)](#) We can see and we probably all know that the contamination is largely through our senses. That, of course, is the reasoning behind the expression “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil” and the need to guard our senses.

Before getting to the details of the cleansing process we should consider a couple of other factors. While cleansing of the sanctuary can be an individual process, there is a timing aspect, suggested by Daniel 8:14. The question is: how can an individual process that is needed by every person who has ever lived be consistent with a start time at some point in history? Perhaps there is more than one sense in which cleansing happens. Looking at [The Timing of the Cleansing \(part 10\)](#) as mentioned in Daniel 8:14 in its place in history will help to make that distinction.

Now we can see that there is a special cleansing in an end-time setting that is especially significant and that this cleansing of the sanctuary is dependent, in large part, on a better understanding of the character of God – our judgment of God.

The term “end-time” suggests a time of judgment so we also need to consider how the judgment is involved and look at the question [Is Cleansing the Same as Judgment? \(part 11\)](#). A careful comparison of verses shows that judgment and cleansing are two different processes. Judgment could be said to be an evaluation or verification of the cleansing (or healing) process – was it successful or not? Clearly, judgment is entirely dependent on the results of the cleansing process.

Another aspect of judgment of great interest is the suggestion that the character of God Himself is to be judged as suggested in Romans 3:4 “... when thou (God) art judged.” Judgment or evaluation of God is suggested by a number of verses in Revelation such as Rev 14:7, 15:3, 16:5,7.

When the decision (judgment) of anyone is finalized it needs to be based on real evidence. The question is: where is that evidence? What form is it in? How will it be used? **Part 12** ([The Books/Records of Heaven](#) which is also part of [The Character of God and the Gospel Glossary](#)) defines the meaning of the books.

It is very interesting to consider what is written, where it is written and for what purpose. While the omniscient God remembers everything, He “forgets” our sins only in the sense of not remembering for the purpose of dealing out retributive punishment (which He never does). He does not remember in the sense we do if we should say to someone who has wronged us (“I’ll remember that” – in a certain, very emphatic tone of voice.) So who really needs to remember our sins and where is that record stored?

We can now see that cleansing of the sanctuary, most importantly, refers to the cleansing of human minds. What exactly is involved? How does the process work? It turns out that we are each [A Being of Two Minds](#) (part 13). Knowing the different roles of the conscious and subconscious minds will be key to our further understanding of the cleansing process. Cleansing of the one is very much dependent on the cleansing of the other.

As mentioned in Part 8, since sin exists on three levels: 1) the sinful attitude; 2) the sinful flesh; and 3) sinful acts, the cleansing must take that into account. To understand that we need to understand [Humanity’s First Infection](#) (part 14) and the order in which those levels of sins occurred even back in the Garden of Eden.



Trying to clean up the sins in our lives will never work if we don’t attend to the root of the problem. The cleansing of the sanctuary must proceed in the right order or it will never get the job done.

The right attitude towards God can only happen with a correct understanding and appreciation of His character. Knowing what the problem is, with anything in life, is a good start to resolving it. What we also need is the motivation to take the steps required to fix the situation.

Fear is known to be a good motivator. For our safety, the fear response can move us to life-saving action. However, even in the face of fear, [The Motivation of Love](#) (part 15) can overcome that fear and move us to do something that, from love, we want to do even in

the face of fear screaming at us not to do it. Oh, to get to that point of having perfect love and no fear (1 John 4:18)!

This will be important when people are brought to the moment of having to make a decision between worshipping the beast or not. Compare:

“And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.” (Rev 13:15)

and

“And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God ...” (Rev 14:9–10)

Having the right motivation actuated by the right attitude towards God is crucial. That needs to be followed by a renewing of our minds that are so affected by long-held beliefs. They are wired (they have actually been rewired – since being perfectly created – as a result of man’s fallen nature) for failure. Cleansing of what the Bible calls the flesh involves an actual, physical (can be seen under a microscope) rewiring of brain circuits. Only then can we effectively begin to "clean up our act" and our acts of sin.

The levels of sin in our lives must be dealt with in the right order:

- sinful attitude
- sinful flesh
- sinful acts

We will never succeed in mopping up the mess of sin in our lives if we don’t deal with the source of the problem first.

So once the attitude is adjusted, we can begin to focus on [Renewing the Mind \(part 16\)](#). The mind is referred to as the sinful flesh as it resides in the flesh. The flesh itself as in arms and legs etc is not sinful; it is only the mind which has the capacity to makes moral choices.

We are well-aware of our need for this change to happen by way of something called our conscience ([A Clear Conscience, part 17](#)) which, unless we have been stifling its voice,

reminds us of past wrongs, tells us when we are doing wrong and, when more finely-tuned, warns when we are in danger of doing wrong.

When we are aware that we are on a sinful path we need to turn to the remedy found in the Word of God. [Cleansing by the Word \(part 18\)](#) is a process by which, with our permission, God writes His law in our hearts. That word, implanted in our hearts, will result in perfect love and the casting out of fear.

So many people attempt to get right with God by first cleaning up their outward behavior – the sinful acts. While it is not wrong to do that, it is tackling the problem in the wrong order and leads to little, if any, real success. Once a person corrects their sinful attitude (the source of the problem) by appreciating the true character of God and the mind (the sinful flesh) is renewed, then and only then will they be equipped to finish [Mopping up the Mess \(part 19\)](#) of acts of sin in the life.

It is important to recognize that “Thy way, O God *is* in the sanctuary ...” (Psa 77:13). Not understanding what that means can lead to confusion over how God deals with sin. Does God require sacrificial offerings for sin to appease His wrath? Has He ever? Isn’t He ever-merciful? “His mercy endureth for ever” is a phrase that occurs 41 times in the Bible. [Thy Way is in the Sanctuary \(part 20\)](#) explains the purpose of the sanctuary and how the cleansing of the sanctuary works.

When we understand all that is involved in the cleansing of the sanctuary of our mind we will have additional motivation to engage in the process and realize the [Benefits of Cleansing \(part 21\)](#). Those benefits are for not just for us but extend to those around us and far beyond.

The cleansing process fits us for a place in [The Kingdom of Heaven \(Part 22\)](#). But is that kingdom simply heaven itself – the physical place? Or does it even include a mindset, a way of thinking and understanding the kingdom? We can be citizens of the heavenly kingdom while not actually physically in heaven.

Since our minds are housed in our bodies and the two are so intimately connected, as God takes such an active role (if we will let Him) in the cleansing process, another question could be asked. If He wants to make our minds a sanctuary/dwelling place/habitation for Himself will He also take some responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the flesh where this sanctuary is housed. [A Fit Temple \(part 23\)](#) gives us some surprising clues that, yes, He will.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 2

Sanctuary Definition

Note: “sanctuary” can have a few meanings. The sanctuary this part is most concerned with is that most often referred to as the heavenly sanctuary that is to be cleansed as in Daniel 8:14 “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

Traditional Legal Model – The sanctuary is heaven or a part thereof where Jesus, in some understandings, carries on the legal aspect of the work of salvation by cleansing the **heavenly books** of the record of people’s confessed sins. This work was prefigured by the earthly sanctuary built by Moses in which the people were “cleansed” by the application of sacrificial blood – but only typically: “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” (Heb 10:4)

Biblical Healing Model – While Jesus, in human form, is physically in the heavenly sanctuary, through His omnipresent spirit, He aids each of us as we cooperate with Him in the process of cleansing the sanctuary heaven is most concerned with – the minds of His people on earth.

From a Modern Dictionary

Sanctuary (noun)

1. a sacred or holy place.
2. Judaism.
 - a. the Biblical tabernacle or the Temple in Jerusalem.
 - b. the holy of holies of these places of worship.
3. an especially holy place in a temple or church.
- 4 a church or other sacred place where fugitives were formerly entitled to immunity from arrest
5. any place of refuge; asylum.
6. a tract of land where birds and wildlife, especially those hunted for sport, can breed and take refuge in safety from hunters.

(www.dictionary.com, accessed Nov. 5, 2019)

Webster’s 1828 Dictionary

Sanctuary (noun)

1. A sacred place; particularly among the Israelites, the most retired part of the temple at Jerusalem, called the Holy of Holies, in which was kept the ark of the covenant, and into which no person was permitted to enter except the high priest,

and that only once a year to intercede for the people. The same name was given to the most sacred part of the tabernacle. Leviticus 4:6. Hebrews 9:1.

2. The temple at Jerusalem. 2 Chronicles 20:8.

3. A house consecrated to the worship of God; a place where divine service is performed. Psalms 73:17. Hence sanctuary is used for a church.

4. A place of protection; a sacred asylum. Hence a sanctuary-man is one that resorts to a sanctuary for protection.

5. Shelter; protection.

(<http://webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/sanctuary>, accessed Nov. 5, 2019)

Sanctuary Definition – Synonyms

Let's establish that the terms sanctuary, tabernacle and temple are all somewhat synonymous. There are a number of verses that seem to make these equivalent terms:

“And they [the Levites] shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die.” (Num 18:3)

“Afterward he brought me to the temple, and measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, *which was* the breadth of the tabernacle.” (Eze 41:1)

“The posts of the temple were squared, and the face of the sanctuary; the appearance of the one as the appearance of the other.” Eze 41:21)

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb 8:2)

“For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.” (Heb 9:2)

The words “house” and “habitation” are also, at times, used with a meaning like the other terms:

“Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.” (Dan 5:3)

“In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph 2:21–22)

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as *in* a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.” (Heb 11:8–9)

It says Abraham lived in “tabernacles” but, of course, we would call that a tent. The original Greek word is “skene” (Strong’s G4633) which can mean a tent.

“Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles (G4633); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” (Matt 17:4)

Peter would have been proposing to make tents, not something as elaborate as the tabernacle Moses had built, certainly not a place for sacrifice. Matthew used the same word and it is used again in Acts to refer to what Moses had built:

“Our fathers had the tabernacle (G4633) of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.” (Acts 7:44)

Sanctuary Definition – A Safe and Holy Place

So we have the somewhat similar terms: dwelling, habitation, house, sanctuary, tabernacle, temple, tent. The most significant term (and the one we are focusing on) is “sanctuary.” The other terms all have the meaning of a place to live or to house something. A sanctuary is that and more. It implies the idea of a place of safety and security, as given in the dictionary definitions above.

It also implies a place of holiness as the word sanctuary is from the Hebrew word “miqdash” (Strong’s H4720) which is related to the Hebrew verb “qodesh” (Strong’s H6944) as used in “holy habitation” (Deut 26:15, quoted below).

“The word ‘sanctuary’ signifies ‘holy place,’ and every abiding place of God is necessarily holy. The sanctuary of God is therefore His dwelling–place.” (E.J. Waggoner, *The Everlasting Covenant*, p367)

The quotation above suggests that any sanctuary or place God is to abide must be holy. This corresponds with verses describing God’s habitation as holy as in:

“Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.” (Deut 26:15)

The word “holy,” in that verse, is a translation from the Hebrew word “qodesh” (H6944) which is based upon the Hebrew verb “qadash” (H6942) meaning to sanctify. It is interesting that the word “sanctuary” as in this verse:

“Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.” (Lev 19:30)

which is the Hebrew word miqdash” (H4720) is also from the word qadash. As “sanctuary” is based on a word meaning to sanctify or make holy, it makes sense that a sanctuary is to be a holy place.

Thus the need for cleansing the sanctuary for God’s abiding presence. Here are verses connecting God’s abiding place to the human sanctuary:

“I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

“And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.” (1 John 3:24)

Further studies on other options for the meaning of the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 will show that the best option is the human heart.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 3

The Old Testament Sanctuary

In this part of the **Cleansing of the Sanctuary Series** (see the **introduction/overview**) the Old Testament Sanctuary is examined to see if it could be the sanctuary referred to in Daniel 8:14; the one that is to be cleansed.

“Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary: who *is so* great a God as *our* God?” (Psa 77:13)

This verse suggests that God’s way of doing things in the plan of salvation is centered in the sanctuary. It certainly seems to be how He dealt with the sin problem in Old Testament times. Let’s review the role of the Old Testament Sanctuary.

What did Moses See?

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” (Heb 8:5)

But Moses was shown a “pattern” while he was in the mount. That does not say he saw anything in heaven. Could he not have been shown the equivalent of a blueprint? It was, after all, instructions about what he was to build. The pattern was likely different than anything a heavenly sanctuary would look like. Heaven does not contain an altar for the burning of animal sacrifices. Any heavenly sanctuary would be on a much larger scale than what Moses built. Consider the numbers of beings involved in heaven:

“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;” (Rev 5:11)

What was the Purpose of the Old Testament Sanctuary?

Here is Paul’s statement about the role of “the first tabernacle” (v8):

“Which [‘the first tabernacle,’ verse 8] *was a figure* [symbol or illustration] for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;” (Heb 9:9)

He called it “a figure” which, according to Webster, is:

12 In theology, type; representative. Who was the figure of him that was to come.
Romans 5:14. (webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/figure)

The Old Testament sanctuary represented a greater reality; it was not necessarily a copy in detail.

The Old Testament Sanctuary a Teaching Tool

We recognize that it was all meant to teach a greater reality. Essentially, it was theater, with:

- A playwright – God Himself
- A producer – Jesus
- A director – Moses
- A script – scripture, especially Exodus to Deuteronomy
- A star actor – the high priest
- Supporting actors – the priests
- Stagehands – the Levites
- Costumes – the priestly robes
- Props – the articles of furniture
- Curtains – to separate the scenes
- A live audience – the Israelites

And, while it is no longer playing live, up to this day we still have:

- Professional theater critics – theologians
- Readers of the play’s script – us

This is not “theater” in a demeaning sense (like “it’s all just an act”) but as a teaching tool. In New Testament times this was continued:

“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” (1 Cor 4:9)

The word “spectacle” is from the Greek word “theatron.” Its other two uses (Acts 19:29, 31) are translated as “theatre.”

Hebrews 9:9, quoted earlier, said that the service of the tabernacle “could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience.” It could not relieve a person’s conscience from the effects of sin. (But it pointed to something that could.) The New Testament is clear that the Old Testament sanctuary with its services were not, on their own, effective:

“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”
(Heb 10:4)

Old Testament Sacrifices not God’s Ideal

There are other verses that imply the ineffectiveness of sacrifices by indicating God’s dissatisfaction with them:

“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering.” (Psa 51:16)

“To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.” (Isa 1:11)

Most versions for “I am full of” say “I have had enough of.” The New Living Translation says “I am sick of.”

“For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:” (Jer 7:22)

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?” (Micah 6:7)

The implied answer to that question is “no.” The next verse tells us what God is much more interested in:

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8)

“And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:33)

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:” (Heb 10:11)

We can conclude that the Old Testament sanctuary did not achieve the goal of cleansing the sanctuary but was meant to be a teaching tool to show us God’s way of dealing with the sin problem; to reconcile us to Himself.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 4

The Heavenly Sanctuary

Is the sanctuary that is to be cleansed (referred to in Daniel 8:14) located in heaven? Is there anything in heaven that needs cleansing?

In this series, we are studying to identify the sanctuary that is to be cleansed and to understand that process. Before looking at the possibility of a heavenly sanctuary we should first look briefly at another option and some of the history that led to the idea of a heavenly sanctuary.

Expecting the Second Coming Two Centuries Ago

William Miller, an American Baptist minister, in the early 19th century, studied the prophecies of Daniel and concluded that the sanctuary was the Earth to be cleansed at the Second Coming of Christ. He started preaching in the 1830s and finally settled on an exact date – **October 22, 1844**. His message spread rapidly and contributed greatly to what is called **The Great Second Advent Awakening**.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Great_Awakening

Those who believed his message (the Millerites) expected Jesus to return to the Earth (the sanctuary, in their understanding) on October 22, 1844. But what happened that day? Nothing – as far as the expected Second Coming happening. Many gave up their faith in the message but others concluded the problem was not with God's word but with their understanding of it.

Then They Looked Up

One early Advent believer, Hiram Edson, claimed to have had a revelation showing that the sanctuary was not the Earth but a sanctuary in heaven. From that, the concept of a heavenly sanctuary as a place for a work of judgment – a review of **the record books** of heaven ([part 12](#)) – soon developed and is held by many today.

There are certainly verses that could be seen as supporting that there is a sanctuary in heaven:

“I saw in the night visions, 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.” (Dan 7:13)

Does that tell us there is a sanctuary in heaven like the one on earth? It doesn't say that or even use the word “sanctuary” but many have seen similarities between things represented as being in heaven and the earthly sanctuary. For example:

“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” (Rev 1:13)

The connection is sometimes used as evidence that the earthly sanctuary is a copy of the heavenly sanctuary because they both contain the candlesticks. However, we are told that:

“... the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.” (Rev 1:20)

So the seven candlesticks are a symbol of the seven churches described in Revelation chapters two and three. If the candles in the earthly sanctuary are a symbol of those in the heavenly then they are a symbol of a symbol rather than a symbol of a reality. I'm not sure scripture does that. John did not go to heaven. He saw, in vision, a representation in symbolic form. The candlestick in the earthly sanctuary could also represent Christ the light of the world. The presence of candlesticks in the earthly sanctuary does not prove that there is a sanctuary in heaven.

Is Christ Ministering in the Heavenly Sanctuary?

The Ancient of Days (The Father) is in heaven (Dan 7:13), but that is not saying that heaven is somehow contaminated or needing to be cleansed. Hebrews chapter 9 describes the earthly tabernacle and its work then says:

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building,” (Heb 9:11)

Of 19 verses using the original Greek word “ktisis” (G2937) that is the only verse where it is translated as “building.” It is usually “creature” (11 times) or “creation” (6 times) which is how most versions render it in this verse. Some say “not of this world” or “not of this created world.” Hebrews chapter 8 helps us with the location of where Christ as high priest is:

“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb 8:1–2)

So where is Jesus located? – in the heavens. Of what tabernacle or sanctuary is He the minister? – the true one. Jesus (in human form remember) is at the right hand of the throne. That is His physical location. But what/where is the tabernacle/sanctuary for which He is ministering? Is it in heaven? It doesn't say that. It seems obvious but that is not the only possibility.

Hebrews 8:1–2 says Jesus is a minister “of the true tabernacle,” not that He is a minister in the true tabernacle. There is a difference. For example, a person could be an ambassador of the United States to a foreign country but that does not mean he is ministering in the United States. Rather, the ministering, while being done in behalf of the United States, is actually conducted outside of the United States.

The Heavenly Sanctuary – More Questions

The focus of the Millerite believers after 1844 shifted to a heavenly sanctuary and further study brought out much understanding of the whole sanctuary system. However, we have no indication from scripture that Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 8:14) has been fulfilled at this point. So the questions remain:

- What happened in 1844, if anything?
- What sanctuary is being referred to?
- What is the nature of the cleansing?
- What about the timing? Is it still future?

Mentions of a Heavenly Sanctuary

We saw in part 3 that Moses likely did not even see a sanctuary in heaven. The phrases “heavenly sanctuary” or “sanctuary in heaven” do not even appear in the King James Version of the Bible. “Sanctuary” appears in 128 Old Testament verses and in four New Testament verses of which three are referring to the Old Testament sanctuary which Moses built.

The one use of “sanctuary” in the New Testament that does not refer to the Old Testament sanctuary is:

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb 8:2)

That verse is not referring to the Old Testament sanctuary as Jesus never officiated there in the role of a priest. Here is one verse that does indicate a sanctuary in heaven:

“For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth;” (Psa 102:19)

We make an assumption to make that sanctuary equivalent in furnishings etc to the earthly tabernacle. However, “sanctuary,” in that verse, is actually from the Hebrew word “qodesh” which, in the majority of uses, is translated as “holy.” The original does not say “sanctuary.” Here is one version using a more–correct translation:

“that he looked down from his holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth.” (Psa 102:19, ESV)

There are a few verses that speak of where God is but with no details of anything equivalent to the earthly sanctuary:

“The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD’S throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.” (Psa 11:4)

“But the LORD *is* in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” (Hab 2:20)

“Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.” (Zech 2:13)

There is not really much in scripture that points directly to a heavenly sanctuary equivalent to Moses’ sanctuary on Earth. Please note that I am not saying there is no sanctuary in heaven. A question one could ask is “was there an altar of burnt offering in heaven?” We could say that the altar of burnt offering in the heavenly system was where Christ died but that was the cross of Calvary which was on Earth. Also, would there have been any need of a sanctuary in heaven equivalent to the earthly sanctuary if there had been no sin?

As noted above, Jesus is physically located in heaven while He is ministering on behalf of the true tabernacle but it does not say where that tabernacle or sanctuary is located. Nor does it identify the nature of that tabernacle – we’ll get to that in part 6.

Ministering in and from the Heavenly Sanctuary

We know that Jesus (our advocate and the representative or ambassador of the Father) promised to be with His followers on Earth which He can do while physically in heaven via His omnipresent Spirit. So the work He is doing has at least some of its effect on earth. Jesus promised His disciples that He would be with them:

“I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ... If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:18,23)

Wouldn't we classify Jesus being with them (in spirit) and comforting them as ministering to them? I think we are starting to see some connection to this verse:

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb 8:2)

The Millerites initially thought of the sanctuary (of Daniel 8:14) as the Earth. They soon realized they were mistaken and, to their credit, did not give up. Their focus changed towards heaven. I am more convinced than ever that God had a part in the Second Advent movement; that God was leading willing people for a purpose. But they did not have everything in regard to the sanctuary sorted out. Perhaps we don't yet.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 5

The Earthly Sanctuary

Today, much of Christianity is looking for an earthly sanctuary or temple – not the Earth itself as in the days of William Miller (mentioned in part 4) but a building, a third temple to be built once again in Jerusalem. There are hints of this possibility in scripture. Paul wrote (~60 AD) that the man of sin would arise and set himself in God’s temple:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (2 Thess 2:3–4)

There is no indication that this was fulfilled between the writing of Hebrews and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. The man of sin is not going to heaven to do this. There must be another temple that is being referred to. Is there to be a rebuilt physical temple on Earth in the future sometime before the Second Coming? It seems so. This sounds also like Satan’s aspirations:

“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:” (Isa 14:13)

The Much–anticipated Third Temple

There is much speculation in spiritual circles of a future temple (referred to as the third temple) to be built in Jerusalem. The Bible hints of a temple structure to be built providing the stage for the deception mentioned in the passage quoted above to the Thessalonians. There are certainly plans and preparations for it spearheaded by **The Temple Institute** and supported by many earthly governments and by many within in evangelical Christianity who expect Christ to return to a rebuilt temple.

The Temple Institute’s [web page](#) states:

“The Temple Institute’s ultimate goal is to see Israel rebuild the Holy Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, in accord with the Biblical commandments.”

Israel has even produced coins to promote this process:



“The Trump Temple Coins are not just medallions or souvenirs. They are precious coins that have an entire story to tell. The main idea conveyed by these coins is that President Trump is initiating a prophetic process that will eventually facilitate, when the time comes, the rebuilding of the Third Temple. His actions mirror those of King Cyrus who declared to the Jewish people, in exile for 70 years, that ‘*Hashem, The Lord of the World, charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem.*’”

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/259984>

The Earthly Sanctuary is Not the True One

Many people are looking eagerly for the construction of an earthly sanctuary to fulfill their understanding of Bible prophecy. However, scripture seems to be describing something more significant than a physical sanctuary on Earth. Paul wrote of a deceptive danger in a wrong understanding of the sanctuary as suggested above in the verses to the Thessalonians. He also penned this verse:

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb 8:2)

The suggestion is that there is a true tabernacle or sanctuary (present when Hebrews was written) and all others are either false or at least lesser and not the sanctuary heaven is most concerned about. It certainly rules out a rebuilt sanctuary on earth, built by humans.

Note carefully: the true tabernacle is one pitched by the Lord. Here is a similar verse which sounds like it is speaking of that same true tabernacle and, again, not a man-made one.

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;”
(Heb 9:11)

(That verse was discussed more in part 4.) So we need to look further for the true sanctuary, a tabernacle or temple that is not man-made and where Christ is ministering.

There is a dire need among Christians to know what constitutes the true temple of God so they can understand that other claims as to the identity of that temple or sanctuary are false. The passage in Thessalonians is very important for that. And so is the truth of the identity of the true sanctuary – the one of which Jesus is the minister, the one that is to be cleansed, and the one He wants to inhabit.

Naturally, Satan is going to do all he can to distract from the true cleansing of the true sanctuary even to the extent of seeing that there is the diversion of an earthly sanctuary reconstructed in Jerusalem – one that will be very visible and that everyone will be looking towards.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 6

The True Sanctuary

This verse strongly suggests that there is one sanctuary in particular that heaven is especially concerned about:

“A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” (Heb 8:2)

This verse seems to equate sanctuary and tabernacle. Jesus is a minister in one place not two. “The true tabernacle” implies that there is only one tabernacle and any other “tabernacles” are not true. We saw that there is actually very little in scripture about a physical temple or sanctuary in heaven (see [part 4 The Heavenly Sanctuary](#)). It is also possible that the two terms are distinct in that Jesus is a minister of the sanctuary in the sense of ministering in behalf of the sanctuary (function) while, at the same time, he is a minister of the true tabernacle in the sense of ministering in the location of the true tabernacle (location).

This could make sense as it seems almost silly to say that He ministers in the sanctuary of the mind of man which man did not pitch – of course man did not make himself!

Note that I do believe there is a physical place called heaven which is basically God’s dwelling place, including His throne room. We know very little about it and are not given much physical description. It would be where the meetings in Job occurred:

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.” (Job 1:6, also Job 2:1)

We could call it the headquarters of the universe but does it correspond to the sanctuary Moses built in the wilderness or is the true tabernacle/sanctuary referred to in Hebrews 8:2 something else? Scripture actually has much to say about a sanctuary we have not yet looked at.

Location of the True Sanctuary

“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name *is* Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble

spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” (Isa 57:15)

We need to look carefully at that. It is describing where God lives in terms of time: “eternity” meaning no beginning or end. Also, in terms of location: “the high and holy place.” But note that “place” is a supplied word so the location He inhabits could be a physical location or a person as suggested by the next phrase – “with him also that is of a contrite.” All those eight words are from the one word “dakka” (Strong’s H1793) meaning “contrite.” The word “also,” in some versions, is “even;” so not indicating two distinct places. Here is an interesting translation:

“The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: “I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.” (Isa 57:15, NLT)

We could have something like:

“I dwell in the high and holy, contrite and humble spirit,”

So He dwells with those (persons) having certain characteristics; for what purpose?

“to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.”

Here is a passage that reinforces this idea:

“Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest? For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” (Isa 66:1–2)

The LORD here asks a question and provides the answer. The question is where is His place of rest, His house? The answer is that He will look to him that is of a contrite spirit matching Isaiah 57:15 quoted above.

To “restore” and “revive” is starting to sound like a work of cleansing a sanctuary (place to dwell). Does “revive the heart” sound kind of like:

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;” (Eph 4:23) ?

Here is an interesting transition going from Old Testament to New Testament:

“And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.” (Lev 26:11–12)

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” (2 Cor 6:16)

While 2 Corinthians is quoting Leviticus, it changes the picture from dwelling “among” to dwelling “in.” It is not speaking of dwelling in a structure such as a building but in people. Is there evidence in scripture of God dwelling in or wanting to dwell in people?

"Ye are the Temple"

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1 Cor 3:16–17)

Some notes about that passage:

- How God destroys needs to be correctly understood.
- The last use of “temple” in verse 17 is supplied so “which ye are” could refer to “holy” although Paul was writing to the Corinthians who seemed to have their problems.
- The words “defile” and “destroy” in that passage are from the same Greek word which is translated as “destroy” only in this instance. All other cases are “corrupt” or some variation. The meaning could be if any man defiles his earthly temple, he is defiling himself (and God, honoring man’s free will, allows it – the consequences).

Here are two passages that, when compared, further establish the connection:

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:11–12)

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Cor 5:1)

A Prophecy of Building the True Sanctuary

“And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” (Zech 6:12–13)

Jesus is “the Branch,” who “will branch out from his place” in heaven in order to “build the temple of the LORD” which obviously did not already exist or He wouldn’t have had to build it. As there was a temple (the second temple) in existence when Zechariah wrote (about 500 years before Christ) the prophecy could not be referring to that. It was also not referring to a temple in heaven as He was leaving heaven to build it.

So this prophecy was about bringing forth the BRANCH:

“Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they *are* men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.” (Zech 3:8)

Who would “grow up” (as in Zech 6:12):

“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.” (Isa 53:2)

And build the house:

“For this *man* [Christ Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house (Heb 3:3)

Which is directly referred to as not a physical structure but one built of people:

“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Heb 3:6)

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” (1 Cor 3:9)

We are Each a Temple

There are many verses that say or suggest that the temple/sanctuary referred to is ourselves. God wants to dwell in us through His Spirit:

“He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” (John 6:56)

“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” (John 14:17)

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom 8:9–11)

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” (1 Cor 3:9)

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Cor 6:19)

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Gal 2:20)

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph 2:20–22)

“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.” (2 Tim 1:14)

“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Heb 3:6)

“Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.” (2 Pet 1:13–14)

Was Peter in a tent? No, he was referring to the “tabernacle” of his body.

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet 2:5)

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Pet 4:17)

“No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” (1 John 4:12)

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:15–16)

“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” (Rev 3:12)

“Go no more out”? What? – Never leave? Will the saved be restricted to a temple, a building for eternity? – No, the temple is built of living beings. Where they are, the temple is present.

The Focus of God’s Work of Cleansing

There are plenty of verses indicating that God’s people themselves are the temple He is most concerned about. He wants us to be cleansed so that He can dwell within each one of us. Here is one commentator’s comparison of Jesus cleansing the temple during His ministry on earth to the cleansing of His people:

“In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin,

humanity ceased to be a temple for God. ... In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin ..." (The Desire of Ages, 161)

But does Him dwelling in us refer to our body in general or a specific part thereof? How can He dwell in us?

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 7

The Sanctuary of the Heart

Are we – our physical bodies – likened to the sanctuary with its different apartments?

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” (Rom 7:18)

Evidently, Paul had a problem which he describes in detail:

“22 For I **delight** in the **law of God** after the **inward man**: 23 But I see **another law** in **my members**, warring against the **law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the **law of sin** which is in **my members**. 24 O **wretched** man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the **mind** I myself serve the **law of God**; but with the **flesh** the **law of sin**.” (Rom 7:22–25)

That passage is diagrammed below to make clear the struggle Paul had.

Paul's reaction	to what	located in	served by
delight (22)	law of God (22, 25) law of my mind (23)	inward man (22)	mind (25)
	↑ at war (23)		
wretched (24)	another law (23) law of sin (23, 25)	my members (23)	flesh (25)

What does he mean “another law in my members warring against the law of my mind”? – Paul had an inner conflict between wanting to do the will of God and having flesh programmed to do otherwise. But not programmed by God. Rather, programmed by what he had inherited, learned and habitually cultivated within himself.

Notice the distinction:

The **mind** in the **inward man** **delights** in the **law of God**.
The **flesh** in **Paul's members** is **wretched** while serving **sin**.

Those desires can be at peace with each other if they are the same. A carnally-minded man living the carnal lifestyle will have no conflict between the two. But when a person's mind

comes under conviction of the law of God, then there is a war – a war in the conscience. A war between the mind (the inward man) now under conviction of the law of God and the flesh which is still following the law of sin.

Flesh itself (what we normally think of – parts of the body such as arms and legs etc) does not desire anything nor is it sinful. Desire is a function of the mind. Sinful flesh refers to that part of the mind (mainly the subconscious mind) which, if not renewed, desires the things of the flesh.

Jesus' Flesh

We can know that the flesh itself is not sinful as Jesus Himself came with flesh like ours:

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:” (Rom 8:3)

His flesh was weakened by the same 4,000 years of accumulated defects since creation as anyone else in His day. Yet there was no sin in Him because He never chose to sin (a function of the mind).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;” (Heb 2:14)

While He had the same flesh as us, He had, by choice, a different mind:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:” (Phil 2:5)

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Rom 5:19)

All of Adam’s descendants were made sinners in that they had sinful flesh (the genetic predisposition to selfishness etc) as that is all that Adam had to pass on to them.

“Were made sinners” is referring to the wiring in the mind that causes us to naturally be self-centered and alienated from God. It is not an outwardly physical change in the body. The many becoming righteous is also a change that happens in the wiring of the mind and it is the reverse of the previous state.

The Law in the Heart to Change the Mind

To whom did God propose that He would write His law in their hearts? – the Israelites. Did they know the law as in having it memorized? Sure. So if they already had it in their brains (stored in memory) where was He going to write it?

"Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart."
(Job 22:22)

There are a number of verses referring to the law in the heart. What is the difference? Think of the Pharisees. They knew the letters of the law very well but did not have the spirit of the law. The law in the heart includes the motive to obey its principles.

Paul's inward self had been changed – he consciously delighted in the law while, at the same time, there were the desires of his flesh that were not pure. Here we see two parts of him – the flesh (subconscious) and the inward man, the heart or mind (conscious).

In the brain, there are two apartments as this suggests – the subconscious and the “heart” or the conscious mind.

Where was the written law in the earthly sanctuary? – the most holy place.

Where is the law written in our body sanctuary? It is written in the heart which is often equated with the mind.

Could the most holy place be equivalent to our mind/heart?

Many people have studied the sanctuary and its parallels to the human body/mind. This even seems to apply to angels including Satan himself:

“Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” (Eze 28:18)

“Sanctuaries” should be in the singular. This is no reference to God's sanctuary in heaven it is “thy” – Satan's – sanctuary. This would be Satan's own mind (where God was once able to dwell) but could no longer once it was defiled. It is the evil thoughts, the misconceptions of God's character that he has stored in his mind – these will, in the end, come forth and devour him. He will not be destroyed by a force coming from outside of him as in from God.

A Progression

The sanctuary model illustrates a progression of understanding of truth from the outer court to the most holy place.

Intellect The understanding is enlightened by the light (candlestick) and the word (table of showbread) of God.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor 4:6)

That was for the purpose of helping us to understand the true character of God as revealed in the life (face or presence) of Jesus.

Heart When that knowledge is truly appreciated and finds a place in our hearts the result is that we will value His law. It will not just be memorized but it will be loved and cherished as the rule of life.

“For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my **laws** into their **mind**, and write them in their **hearts**: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:” (Heb 8:10)

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,” (Eph 3:17)

“By faith” whose faith? – ours; faith is our action. Faith and trust are similar. If we will trust Him enough to invite Him in; He certainly will come in. It is our act of faith that makes room (a welcome place) for Him in our hearts.

So we have established that the human heart is a sanctuary; a place for God to dwell safely and a place for His law.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 8

The Sanctuary of the Mind Needs Cleansing

Ask anyone what the human temple needs to be cleansed of and the likely answer would be? – sin. It is useful in this discussion to understand what sin is. Knowing what we need to be cleansed from will help us to know what cleansing agent(s) we need. An important question is “what constitutes ‘the dirt?’”

We have heard the terms “dirty mind” or “filthy mind.” It wasn’t too many generations after creation before mankind reached a very sorry state:

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.” (Gen 6:5)

That could be describing a dirty mind. With such a state of mind, the tendency is to partake in much sin:

“How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” (Job 15:16)

The Three Levels of Sin

Sin, can be thought of as existing on three levels:

- Sinful acts
- Sinful flesh
- Sinful attitude

Let’s briefly look at each of these.

Sinful acts – these (lying, stealing etc) are what naturally come to mind first; they are what we tend to focus on as the problem. We might think of God as keeping an account of sins. When people confess to God, generally they are confessing their sinful acts: “Please forgive me for ...”

Sinful flesh – the flesh is really a reference to the mind. Most people think that they are a good person but the Bible says otherwise:

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer 17:9)

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt 12:34)

The problem in our hearts (minds) leads to our sinful acts/words. That is obvious from scripture. And the problem starts very early; in fact, from conception:

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psa 51:5)

“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.” (Psa 58:3)

“What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous?” (Job 15:14)

Those verses speak of the general tendency towards sin which even has a genetic component (more about that in a later part of this series). Of course, a baby is not, at birth, guilty of having committed any sins.

So, we tend to get dirty very early in life. Among other evils, there is selfishness. Is there anything more selfish than a very young child? And there is a strong tendency for this to continue throughout life.

“Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom 8:7)

The carnal mind cannot keep the law of God but – take heart – law keeping is possible by first changing the heart. This was, finally, the state of David’s heart:

“For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.” (1 Kings 11:4)

Sinful Attitude – we have an attitude about something or someone.

Attitude (noun)

“manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind: a negative attitude; group attitudes.” (www.dictionary.com)

Attitudes are often expressed as positive or negative; regarding people, we could use trust or distrust. Our attitude towards someone (trust or distrust) is formed from our concept (good/worthy or bad/unworthy) and the concept is formed from the information we have about the person.

That is where the cleansing first needs to happen – in our hearts, really our minds. If our misconceptions about God could be cleansed we could trust Him, even learn to love Him.

Sin Began in the Sanctuary of the Mind

Really that was Eve's initial problem. She accepted misinformation about God which led to distrust of the word of God in preference to the lies of Satan. When that is cleansed and we have a clear and accurate understanding of Who God is and what He is really like, our sanctuary will be ready for Him to come in and begin the next stage of cleansing. This first stage involves, it could fairly be said, our judgment of Him – is He good? Is He worthy? Does He really love me?

So it is a wrong concept of God that messes up our thinking which then leaves us susceptible to sin. Thus, it would be better to categorize sin in this order:

- sinful attitude (distrust towards God)
- sinful flesh (fallen human nature)
- sinful acts

There is more about this (and Eve's experience) in part 14. That more-correct order is the order in which sin entered the human family and is reflected in this verse speaking of the Day of Atonement:

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.” (Lev 16:30)

Notice the order clearly laid out in that verse:

1. **“make an atonement for you”** (so that you may be in a state of oneness “at-one” with God)
2. (in order) **“to cleanse you”** (the habits etc of the mind)
3. (so) **“that ye may be clean from all your sins”** (stop sinning)

That shows the order in which the cleansing needs to happen. The work of atonement is done by someone else for you so that another work can be done – your cleansing – also by the action of someone else but with your permission.

You Can't Clean Yourself Up

That the cleansing is not our own work is supported by a number of verses:

“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Pro 20:9)

Who can say “I am pure” (condition) as a result of what I have done (“I have made”)? This is a rhetorical question the answer to which is: no one can.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” (Titus 3:5)

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14)

It is not you who purges your conscience but it is the work of Christ, specifically the effect of “the blood of Christ,” the blood representing the life (Lev 17:11).

Atonement is the First Step

Atonement is describing reconciliation, the state of being at-one. (See the definition/word study of [atonement](#). That is a choice we make – to have a positive attitude about God. Then we are willing to look at God with more of a realization that He is indeed good in every way. An appreciation of that will change us (really our mind) so that we will have the motivation to change our thinking and do right and therefore sin in our lives will be curbed.

Often people will express that they love God, that they believe He is good but this is often done with incomplete information. They have been taught or conditioned to see God as good but have not formed that opinion based on their own reasoning and correct data. Therefore it does not have the effect on the level of trust that it could. If a person professes that God is love, that they love God and also hold the belief that if they reject Him, He will burn them forever, they have not thought it through very carefully.

Would it make sense for God to, however He does it, get people to the point of not sinning anymore including rewiring their minds so there is no more habitual tendency to fall into sin if, at that point, they still did not trust Him and really appreciate His goodness? What kind of relationship would that be?

Wouldn't we, as parents, prefer to have our young children love and trust us even if they occasionally make mistakes rather than be perfectly obedient but fear and distrust us?

While we can and should do all we can to cleanse and maintain our physical body, there are limits to how far we can go with that. Not until the Second Coming will we receive our immortal bodies. We should also refrain from sin and follow God's ways the best we can with His help. But even there we are handicapped by our fallen flesh, the habits we have and many other factors. Paul himself found that as he related the struggles he had with his flesh (Romans 7).

It is in our attitude towards God (really, do we trust in Him or not) where we can have the most success (because we can control that) at first and that will then aid our attempts in overcoming sinful thoughts and acts.

The sin (attitude) of unbelief = not trusting

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, **because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”
(John 3:18–20)

Consider that verse. Does it say “he that believeth not is condemned already, because he committed a sin”? No. Does it say “he that believeth not is condemned already, because he forgot to confess and repent of a sin”? No. It is because he hath not believed.”

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 9

How Does the Mind/Heart Get Dirty?

Temptation definition – the process whereby we are enticed to sin resulting in the mind being contaminated with its results.

As mentioned in [part 8](#), we start life, we could say, with compromised hardware (our brains) but the software (the mind) has not yet committed what would commonly be called sin – an actual sinful act. The Bible makes a distinction between physical and spiritual uncleanness:

“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.” (Matt 15:18–20)

Unwashed hands is mere external uncleanness; it does not affect the internal character. The two can be confused:

“Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.” (1 Cor 8:7)

Indeed the Pharisees, in Christ’s day, had this totally backwards:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. ... Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” (Matt 23:25,28)

We all know there is lots of dirt out there. Our world is filled with contaminants of both the spiritual and the physical varieties. We are not so concerned here with the variety of sources of contamination in the world. We can isolate ourselves to some degree from it but while we are living in this world there is no escaping some contact. The question here is how does it get in? How do our hearts become infected and then become sources of evil thoughts and all those things that defile a person; we could say from the inside out?

The Avenues of the Soul

The primary input to our minds is via our senses:

- Sight
- Hearing
- Taste
- Smell
- Touch



Most everyone has heard what started as a Japanese proverb: “**see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil**” although “speak no evil” refers to what comes out of the heart but, of course, it goes into someone else. Guarding against sin with emphasis on the senses has often been portrayed by that saying which corresponds to this verse:

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.” (Psa 101:3)

Everything we say and do has an effect so be careful what you expose yourself to and what you share with others.

A bit of humor once in a while doesn't hurt and I am a gardener so:



"Don't tell secrets in the garden. The potatoes have eyes, the corn has ears, and the beanstalk."

The senses are major sources of temptation to us and, if not properly managed, can result in many sins. Seeing something evil, in itself, is not a sin but it can easily trigger something within the human heart that leads to a sinful action.

The Mind in Control?

Having a thought is not sin. It is only when we dwell on questionable thoughts that they become, for example, lust. You have to train your mind (much like a muscle is trained to get stronger) to deal with those thoughts when they come to mind – rebuke them, replace them, choose not to dwell on them. By consistently taking action we will form an automatic habit of dealing with what could otherwise lead to sin. That could be averting the eyes from possible temptation:

“Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.” (Psa 119:37)

“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?” (Job 31:1)

If the eyes do not behold evil, the heart is less likely to covet. Isaiah describes a person who avoids exposure to evil:

“He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil,” (Isa 33:15)

With what result?

“He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.” (Isa 33:16)

Even more surprising are the questions in the verse before it:

“The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” (Isa 33:14)

It is the righteous who will dwell in everlasting burnings. The "fire" of God's love. Most of Christianity has that teaching backwards with the doctrine of hell fire. The whole passage speaks to the need of guarding the senses.

Internal Sources of Temptation

In addition to external sources of temptation, our evil hearts produce their own temptations:

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” (Mark 7:21–23)

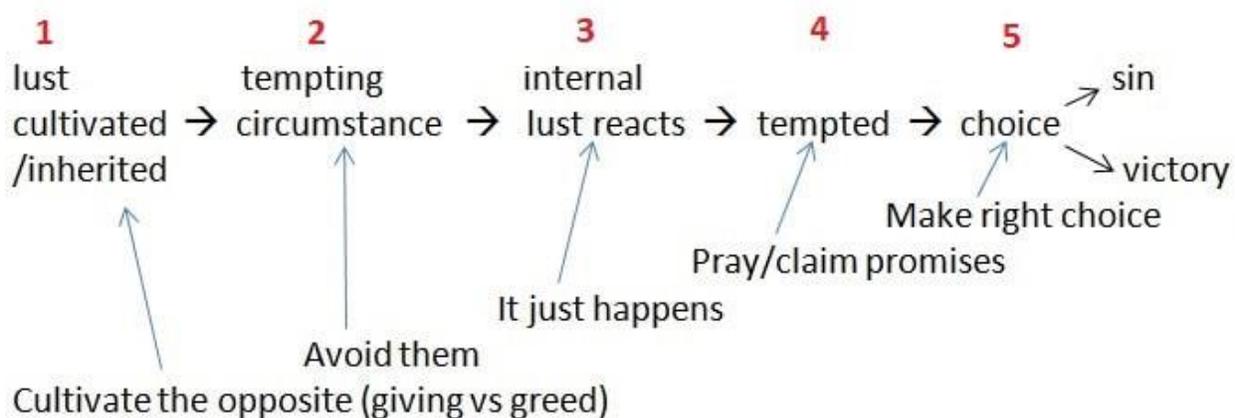
So once the mind has become contaminated, evil thoughts can come into our conscious thinking because of memories of past events past without any present external input.

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” (James 1:14)

Not all “lust” is bad. The word “lust” in the verse above is from the Greek word “epithumia” (G1939). Jesus used it in reference to Himself with the meaning of strong desire, in His case, for something good:

“And he said unto them, With desire [epithumia] I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:” (Luke 22:15)

The “his own lust” James wrote of is the lust for evil things that man has cultivated within himself. Let’s consider how this works:



What are the steps leading to sin or victory? Let’s try to understand this. Further references to these stages will be keyed with **red** numbers to the diagram above. We’ll use stealing as example.

1. a lust (desire) from within (in the subconscious mind) such as greed already exists due to many past factors. (mainly our choices to cultivate our sinful desires).
2. a tempting circumstance such as an opportunity to steal and get away with it.
3. a reaction to the perceived opportunity such as "I want that." If the trait exists in the subconscious and a tempting circumstance occurs it will automatically manifest as conscious thought – a desire for that particular item.
4. a struggle with the temptation in the conscious mind weighing the options of whether to act or not. This is where prayer for help or claiming scripture promises could (and should) come in.
5. a decision is made to act (steal) or not.
6. action is taken (outward sin) or not (victory?).

The result at stage **6** will either reinforce the lust within (1) or tend to turn it down. This is related to the formation or breaking of habits which will be discussed later in this series. Notice the question mark with the word "victory." While not doing the outward may avoid some negative circumstances there is still a reinforcing of the desire to carry out the act if the decision was made to act (perhaps someone was looking at the critical moment so the action (although intended) was abandoned. Really the victory needs to happen earlier in the process than that.

Overcoming Temptation

In seeking to overcome at any stage it would be helpful to look to Jesus, our example who:

“... was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15)

Especially was this true of his 40-day trial in the wilderness.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”
(Matt 4:1)

This shows that it is not a sin to be tempted.

In Jesus' case:

1. He had no sinful lust within His mind to prompt Him to sin.
“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” (John 14:30)

There was nothing in Him, He had not previously fallen for any temptation, He had no stored selfish thoughts that could be activated by an external temptation. Yet He was exposed to temptation through the senses like anyone living on Planet Earth would have been. His heart was always pure whereas, because of our choices:

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”
(Jer 17:9)

2. We are always best to avoid tempting circumstances. However, it was within God’s plan that Jesus should be subjected to Satan’s temptations so that He could overcome them.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”
(Matt 4:1)

3. One might say that there had to be something in Jesus that could react to temptation or it would not be temptation. As stated earlier, Jesus didn’t have that. Then how could He be tempted? It is possible to have a desire for something good that, if acted upon, leads to sin. Let’s look at each of His temptations and how He met them:

Lust of the Flesh Being genuinely hungry (a lust or desire of the flesh) is not sinful and Jesus had been fasting for 40 days. Since He was showing us the way to meet temptation – to rely on God – He could not use any means of escape not available to us.

1. He had a desire for what was offered
2. The opportunity was there
3. Internally, He may well have thought “that would taste good”
4. In weighing the pros and cons involved in following Satan’s suggestion He would have realized all the implications and effects on others of using His divine power. He cut off the process using scripture (“It is written ...”).

Lust of the Eyes Jesus was sent to rescue the world from its captivity by Satan. Satan was offering Jesus something He desired (the kingdoms of the world or at least the people in those kingdoms) but it came at a price which included a direct sin:

“If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” (Luke 4:7)

Jesus would not do that and again used scripture to ward off the temptation:

“Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (Luke 4:8)

In His case, there was (non-sinful) lust or desire for legitimate wants/needs.

Pride of Life Casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple would have been a very public display meeting the expectation of many who believed that was how the Messiah would manifest Himself at the temple. Of course, He wanted the acceptance of the people but not because of their reaction to a display of power. Again, the temptation was met by quoting scripture.

4. Jesus met each temptation with “It is written ...” which is a powerful lesson for us to do the same. His belief in and reliance on the Word of God then easily led to a choice against the temptation and to victory over Satan.

Clearly, it is important to use scripture in our defense. To assume we can, by sheer will power, make the right decision at stage 5 in every temptation would be folly. We have way too much of that “lust within” (1) and such a strong tendency to act in self-interest. However, there is hope if we can understand the cleansing process.

We also must remember that, on this earth, we will continue to be subject to temptation. That is why we must, in addition to being cleansed, be well able to use what we learn to cope with temptation – especially the promises of God.

The other thing that can help us is to reduce the lust within (1) so that there is less reaction (3) to the temptations (2). That process is the cleansing of the sanctuary which we will continue to investigate in this series.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 10

The Timing of the Cleansing

While every heart (sanctuary) needs cleansing, the opening verse of this whole series (Daniel 8:14) indicates a specific point in time for the cleansing process.

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (Dan 8:14)

We might learn something from understanding the timing of the event prophesied. Here is a related passage:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” (Dan 9:24–25)

That commandment was issued in 457 BC by Artaxerxes, King of Persia (detailed evidence of this date [here](#)). Another version of verse 24 shows that the “seventy weeks” of the KJV are often understood to be weeks of years:

“Seven times seventy years [using the principle of a day representing a year in prophecy] is the length of time God has set for freeing your people and your holy city from sin and evil. Sin will be forgiven and eternal justice established, so that the vision and the prophecy will come true, and the holy Temple will be rededicated.” (Dan 9:24, Good News Translation)

“Seventy Weeks”

Seven times seventy years = $7 \times 70 = 490$ years. The calculation of going forward 490 years from the starting point of 457 BC looks like this:

490
 - 457 BC "the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem"
 33 AD
+ 1 to account for the fact that there was no year 0
 34 AD

"Are determined upon thy people" Who's people? - Daniel's people - the Jews. This was a time set for certain things (listed in verse 24) to happen. "Determined upon" = cut off from - from what? - from the 2300 years of Dan 8:14

"Seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks"

That adds up to 69 weeks or years; 69 weeks of years = 69 x 7 = 483 years

483
 - 457 BC
 26 AD
+ 1 to account for no year 0
 27 AD

"Unto the Messiah the Prince"

Until what? The arrival of the Messiah in 27 AD. The meaning of "messiah" is anointed, anointed one. The prophecy points not to Jesus' birth but to the point where He became the Messiah at His baptism in 27 AD. This historical fact affirms the accuracy of the starting point of 457 BC. Going forward the full period of 2300 years brings us to another significant date:

2300 years
 - 457 BC
 1843 AD
+ 1 to account for no year 0
 1844 AD

So God said, through His prophet Daniel, thousands of years in advance, when this cleansing process would commence. But what sanctuary was being referred to?

The Old Testament sanctuary on earth (either the first or the second temple in Jerusalem) did not exist in 1844 so it could not have been referring to either of those. Actually, there

was no temple building standing in Daniel's time either. The first temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar years before and wasn't rebuilt until after the end of the captivity in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

This study has shown that the sanctuary referred to was not:

- the Old Testament sanctuary (part 3)
- the Planet Earth as a sanctuary or a physical sanctuary in heaven (part 4)
- a yet-to-be-rebuilt temple on Earth (part 5)

Part 6 identified the true sanctuary as the God's people and, more specifically, the hearts and minds of those people (part 7). But why wait so many centuries before starting this process? If it was just a matter of legal accounting to forgive sins and adjust heavenly records, couldn't it have started long ago? And couldn't it be done in a very short time with the technology of heaven?

If it actually involves correcting people's attitudes towards God and cleansing minds of sinful ways of thinking so that even their acts of sins could be stopped then we could reason that the process had to wait. But for what? Perhaps for:

- further understanding and developments of truth such as "the just shall live by faith" that came with the Reformation and others since.
- the Bible to become more readily available to the common people.
- research tools (concordances etc) to become more available.
- electronic aids, the internet and efficient sharing of information.
- a time given for the manifestation of the results of Satan's rule. Think of the 1260-year prophetic period (538-1798), in which "they [the saints of the most High] shall be **given into his hand** until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan 7:25). Satan was given one year for each day of Jesus' ministry. That ended in 1798 with the French Revolution and an interruption of papal rule as the pope was taken prisoner and exiled.

For whatever reason, God, in His wisdom, appointed this time. So in 1844, God began, at an accelerated pace, to make knowledge of truth available especially with light concerning Himself and His character. In fact, exactly on time, right at the end of the 2300-year period the revelation came that the sanctuary was to be cleansed. Within a short time, through careful Bible study and Divine guidance, this process became better understood. Unfortunately, over the years, it has been largely forgotten.

God has to do things in the right order. It would not be entirely effective to try to cleanse people from sin before cleansing our misconceptions of His character. It is an understanding of that character that will draw us (John 12:32) to Him to help us even want to obey. The cleansing really had to start with fixing our concept of Him. Remember from part 8 the levels of sin:

- sinful attitude (distrust towards God)
- sinful flesh (fallen human nature)
- sinful acts

It is like the illustration of people trying to mop water off the floor while the sink is still overflowing. Better to first turn off the water; the source of the problem.



Forty and Six Years was this Temple in Building

It is interesting to consider the time from another important prophetic event to the beginning of the cleansing process.

1844 "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"
– 1798 the end of the 1260 years of persecution
= 46 years

"Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" (John 2:20)

This conversation occurred right after Jesus cleansed the temple at the start of His ministry. In cleansing the temple He was effectively announcing His mission to (as Daniel prophesied):

- finish the transgression
- make an end of sins
- make reconciliation for iniquity
- bring in everlasting righteousness

His mission was not to physically cleanse the temple which, of course, was totally destroyed in 70 AD. The Jews' question was prompted by Jesus' statement:

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” (John 2:19)

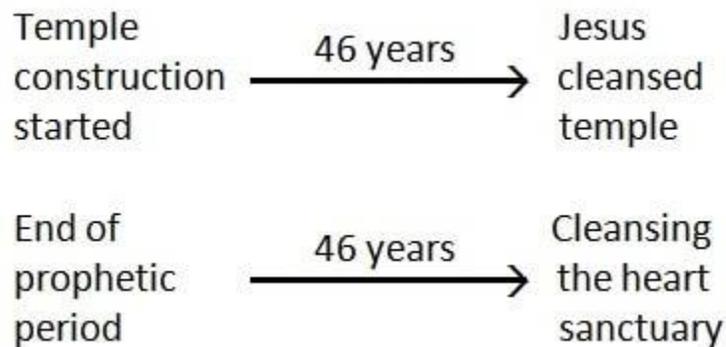
This verse tells us plainly that He was referring to Himself:

“But he spake of the temple of his body.” (John 2:21)

His mission was especially for the Jews, Daniel’s people (“upon thy people” – Dan 9:24) so that they could then effectively fulfill their task of witnessing to the rest of the world.

The Jew's statement was made because, in Jesus’ day, the temple had been under construction (referring to the extensive renovations by King Herod) for forty–six years before Jesus cleansed it in John 2.

In recent history, there was a forty–six year period after the significant event of 1798 before the cleansing of the temple/sanctuary of God’s people on earth began in 1844.



During that recent 46–year period there was an increase in activity of Bible societies:

“The first Bible Society was the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), founded in 1804; its aim was to *‘translate, print and distribute the Bible, without any notes or commentary, throughout the British Isles and the whole world’*.”

Soon there were other European Bible Societies, in Switzerland (1804), Scotland (1809), Finland, Hungary (1812), Holland (1814), Sweden (1815) and France (1818).” ([www.museeprotestant.org/en/notice/the–beginning–of–the–bible–societies/](http://www.museeprotestant.org/en/notice/the-beginning-of-the-bible-societies/))

With more Bibles available and more interest in understanding it, came systematic study and methods of learning how to understand the Bible such as the [15 rules for Bible study](#) developed by William Miller early in the 19th century. There is probably more to be understood in this parallel. If anyone has any thoughts to contribute, please let me know.

When Does that Judgment Happen?

People have always been making up their minds about God; whether to trust Him or not. But there is to be a special time, preparatory to God indwelling His people in the greatest extent of that word, for that to happen. It is about His work to vindicate His own name and character. It seems He may have had a definite plan for when and how to facilitate that work. This verse is interesting:

“For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Pet 4:17)

The words “is come” are supplied in the King James Version. It could be paraphrased as:

“Because it is appropriate that the time of judgment should begin at the house of God ...” (1 Pet 4:17, paraphrased)

In that verse, “judgment” is a noun but it is not specified whether those in the house of God are the objects of the judgment or the ones doing the judging. Grammatically, it could be either – or, it could be both.

The Beginning of the Judgment

It seems that God appointed a time, when He would begin that process, to reveal Himself more fully to His bride, the church (Ephesians 5). That process would cleanse the bride’s mind (sanctuary, most holy place) of any misconceptions about her future husband. After all, there was someone who, for his own reasons, did not want the marriage to take place and had been spreading lies about the groom.

Starting in 1844, there began a process of recovery of truth about the character of God. It was prophesied long ago by the prophet Daniel. He was not talking about an earthly sanctuary. He was not talking about cleansing records of sins in some heavenly accounting system.

It is abundantly clear in the Bible that each person will be judged. But it is not only people who are to be judged. There is a sense in which God Himself is to be judged – people are making up their mind about Him and what He is like, leading them to follow or reject Him.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 11

Is Cleansing the Same as Judgment?

“... then shall **the sanctuary be cleansed.**” (Dan 8:14)
“... **the judgment was set,** and the books were opened.” (Dan 7:9–10)

In many minds, the heavenly sanctuary is closely associated with the process of judgment and scripture says plainly that the sanctuary is to be cleansed. So cleansing has naturally been equated to judgment.

There are many verses that speak of a cleansed people:

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” (Eph 1:4)

“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph 5:27)

“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:” (Col 1:22)

“Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” (2 Pet 3:14)

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” (Jude 1:24)

The question is: are those people cleansed as a result of judgment or are they first cleansed and then judged? We have looked at verses in earlier parts of this study that associate cleansing with the sanctuary; especially this verse:

“And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” (Dan 8:14)

There are also verses that link judgment with the sanctuary such as:

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne

was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” (Dan 7:9–10)

Those who think in terms of a sanctuary picture this as happening in a sanctuary in heaven. We tend to put these passages (Dan 7:9–10 and Dan 8:14) together and conclude that the cleansing of the sanctuary is a work of judgment of people. But is it?

Who Gets Judged?

What does “judgment” mean? **The Character of God and the Gospel Glossary** gives more information on [the meaning of judgment](#). Watch the first three minutes of the video at the bottom of that page for a picture of what God’s judgment looks like.

The Bible is clear that there will be some kind of a judgment process in regards to the case of every person.

Note: numbers appearing in parenthesis before some verses below will show their position in a table that follows.

(1) “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Cor 5:10)

It is quite clear in that verse who is subject to judgment (“every one”) – we all are.

The Bible also makes this very interesting statement:

(2) “God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” (Rom 3:4)

Some versions say “... let God be found true ...” implying information is learned by some who did not previously know it. This version makes it sound even more like it is God that is being judged:

“Of course not! Even if everyone else is a liar, God is true. As the Scriptures say about him, “You will be proved right in what you say, and you will win your case in court.” (Rom 3:4, New Living Translation)

Here are verses indicating that God Himself is subject to judgment and verses that show the result of that judgment or evaluation:

(2) "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev 14:7)

Grammatically, that could be speaking either of God actively judging or of Him as the object of judgment.

(2) "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints." (Rev 15:3)

(2) "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus." (Rev 16:5)

(2) "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments." (Rev 16:7)

There is a sense in which God Himself is to be judged; the Bible clearly says it. He may be judged by heavenly beings in terms of His actions in regard to sin – has He always been fair? etc. In our cases, it has much to do with whether we judge Him to be worthy of our trust or not. The character of God and His trustworthiness is the issue.

It happens sometimes in court cases that the whole case is dismissed because of seemingly minor things such as the judge incorrectly instructing the jury. It seems that even judges are subject to judgment.

It is starting to look like everyone gets judged – even angels at some point:

(3) "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor 6:3)

That will happen during the millennium – a study on its own. So if we are to be judged what does that mean? Is it the same as the cleansing? We'll answer that later? And does God judge us? That seems the most likely. Let's look at some scripture in hopes of sorting this out. There are verses that speak of God judging us:

(4) "The Lord shall judge (G2919) his people." (Heb 10:30)

But then consider this verse:

(5) "For the Father judgeth (G2919) no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" (John 5:22)

So, according to that, who does the Father judge? No one. Who does all the judging? It sounds like the Son does. Yet the Son says:

(6) "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man." (John 8:15)

How many people does Jesus judge according to that verse? None.

(7) "She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:11)

"Condemn" there is the Greek "katakrino" (G2632) which means "to give judgment against, to judge worthy of punishment." He was not doing that. Yet He said in that incident:

(8) "... He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7)

He didn't say "she is innocent." It rather seemed like He was condemning her. Obviously, He was not (v11) but He was helping her to realize she was guilty and in need of mercy.

In the next chapter, He made this statement:

(9)"And Jesus said, For judgment [G2917; related to the word G2632 above] I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." (John 9:39)

Meaning of Judgment

Confused yet? It can help to understand that judgment can mean different things; it does in English. It can be to judge as in:

- to condemn as in to take a negative attitude towards.
- to judicially decide a case by either declaring the defendant innocent or declaring him guilty and deserving of punishment.
- to make an observation, a judgment call ("yes, the ball did go in the net" or "yes, she did it").
- to make a comparison (this is better than that).
- to govern (as done by the various judges in the book of Judges).

In what sense did Jesus judge or not judge the woman caught in adultery in John chapter 8? We have to decide the meaning of a particular word such as “judgment” by the immediate context or, if that doesn’t make it clear, by the whole Bible and its principles. Watch a short video illustrating Jesus’ treatment of this woman [here](#).

He did not have a negative attitude; it was one of only mercy and compassion. Did He declare the woman worthy of punishment? Only in the sense of making her realize she was guilty and thus to open to her the opportunity of accepting mercy. He never intended that she should be stoned as evidenced by His following words. Indeed, she had already suffered much for her indiscretion. His object was to heal and restore her.

A few verses after saying to her “Neither do I condemn thee,” (v11) He said “I judge no man” (v15). That was the sense in which He did not judge her and He had just given a demonstration of it.

God’s Judgment Not Arbitrary

But obviously, some judgement (in the sense of a decision) has to be made before the Second Coming as to who is going to be raised in the first resurrection. But that is not like:

- I judge you condemned
- I have decided to save you
- I judge you condemned because I don’t like you

God is not making arbitrary decisions when He separates the sheep from the goats. He is not saying “you’re a goat; you’re a sheep.” That is only a metaphorical description of each person’s condition which they have determined. He can “see” (by knowing their hearts) who is “a goat” and who is “a sheep.”

People condemn or judge themselves:

(10) “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:17)

(11) “He that believeth on him is not condemned [by Him]: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

How can a person be not condemned and condemned already? Because, while they are not condemned by Him, they are self-condemned.

Light Allows Judgment

We need light (knowledge of truth) in order to judge correctly. Let's look again at John 9 and we can see this more clearly:

“And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.” (John 9:39)

“Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind [did not know], ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” (John 9:41)

While not saying this difference was a 100% separation between the common people and the Pharisees as below, this would have been the general tendency.

Common people	Pharisees
v39) "... they which see not might see ..." [receive spiritual light which they had not yet had opportunity to receive]	"... they which [say they] see [claim to be enlightened but don't show it in their lives] might be made blind."
v41) "... If ye were blind [did not know], ye should have no [guilt of] sin ..." [are not held responsible]	"... ye say, We see [claim to have the light]; therefore your sin remaineth." [they are guilty of rejecting the light they had]

Jesus came to help people make up their minds; to make decisions.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law." (Matt 10:34–35)

This seems like a strange statement from the “Prince of Peace.” (Isa 9:6) However, the setting of people against family members was not the object of His coming but the almost-inevitable result. Any divisions were the result of people making up their minds – some for and some against truth

Paul and Barnabas replied to those opposing their preaching:

(12) "... It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you [to give you the light to make your decision]: but seeing ye put it [the word of God] from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life ..." (Acts 13:46)

So we judge ourselves. Jesus said again that He did not judge any man:

(13) "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." (John 12:47)

To summarize the numbered verses above:

Judgment and Cleansing

(1) "... we must all appear before the judgment seat ..." (2 Cor 5:10)

(2) "... when thou (God) art judged." (Rom 3:4) - Rev 14:7, 15:3, 16:5,7

(3) "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? ..." (1 Cor 6:3)

Judged/Condemned	Not Judged/Not Condemned
(4) "The Lord shall judge his people." (Heb 10:30)	(5) "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" (John 5:22)
(8) "... He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." (John 8:7)	(6) "... I judge no man." (John 8:15)
(9) "... For judgment I am come into this world ... " (John 9:39)	(7) "... Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:11)
(11) "... he that believeth not is condemned already ... " (John 3:18)	(10) "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ... " (John 3:17)
(12) "... ye ... <u>judge yourselves</u> unworthy of everlasting life ..." (Acts 13:46)	(13) "... <u>I came not to judge</u> the world ..." (John 12:47)

So, going back to 2 Cor 5:10: "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," any judgment of us by Him amounts to a diagnosis of our condition as reflected in this version which has very much of a healing model of the gospel viewpoint:

"for we will all appear in Christ's examining room so that each one may be accurately diagnosed and receive what their condition warrants, whether from compliance or non-compliance with God's treatment plan." (2 Cor 5:10, The Remedy New Testament paraphrase)

Is Judgment Bi-directional?

I would like to introduce another question; another way of looking at this. Could the judgment process be bi-directional? There is much scripture that also refers to God's people as His bride.

"... that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead ... " (Rom 7:4)

This is not to be a forced or arranged marriage. The bride must also be willing. The bride needs to know what she is getting into and accept all that is involved. She must make a judgement call based on her understanding of the character of her prospective husband.

“And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.” (Hosea 2:16–20)

The word “Ishi” means “husband” and the word “Baali” means “master.” It is really pointing to a change in relationship. A change even more significant than what Jesus spoke of to His disciples:

“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.” (John 15:15)

God wants a very close relationship with us. We are waiting for Jesus to return from His Father’s house to the earth to pick up His bride – the bride is already married (or, at least espoused) to Him by the time of the Second Coming (as in Jewish marriage customs):

“For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.” (Isa 54:5)

“And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.” (Hos 2:19)

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Cor 11:2)

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Eph 5:31–32)

So the judgment – our judgment of Him – needs to be completed before the Second Coming.

We have seen that there is actually little evidence for God arbitrarily judging His people. He is merely confirming the decisions of those who have chosen to be connected to Him. And those decisions are based on their judgment of Him. God could not be rightly judged by His people (His prospective bride) without them having the right information about Him, the right picture of what He is like. The Groom (Jesus), being at a distance, had to send some information on ahead of His arrival that the bride might understand what she was going to be getting into and consent to it – again, it is not forced marriage.

The point is that if God does not judge us then the cleansing of the sanctuary is not about judgment – maybe it is about cleansing.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 12

The Books/Records of Heaven

Traditional Legal Model – a legal account of every sin a person has committed and whether it has been pardoned or not to be used as the basis for judgment (Rev 20:12). “Better remember and confess every sin.”

Biblical Healing Model – a record of each person’s:

- acts, good and bad
- choices, especially to love and trust God or not
- individuality and character

The books/records are involved in determining (largely a self-determination) if a person is healed of their sin sickness and thus are safe to save.

The Records of Heaven are NOT for Legal Accounting Purposes

Does God keep records in order to execute retributive justice; to get even or even the score? Scripture says no:

“Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;” ([1 Cor 13:5](#))

The Strong’s definitions for “thinketh” (logizomai; G3049) include:

- 1) to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over
- 1a) to take into account, to make an account of

God does not keep a record of sins in order to ensure that a penalty is [imposed](#) for every sin. Here are some other versions of that verse:

“... does not take into account a wrong suffered.”(1 Cor 13:5 NASB)

“... does not keep a record of wrongs.” (1 Cor 13:5 Holman Christian Study Bible)

We are also told that sins are removed far from us:

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” (Psa 103:12)

“... thou hast in love to my soul *delivered it* from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.” (Isa 38:17)

“He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” (Micah 7:19)

Of course, this is not referring to the act of sin itself. Nor is it referring to God’s memory of sins. The omniscient God does not forget as in not being able to remember (“... God ... knoweth all things.” 1 John 3:20) but He chooses to not “remember” sins as in “I will make you pay for that.”

What is in the Books/Records of Heaven?

Before going further let’s look at what is contained in the records. This verse will be helpful:

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Rev 20:12)

Helpful because it makes a distinction between one book called the Book of Life and other books presumably with different content. Each of those will be discussed in its own section below

The Book of Life

These two verses indicate a direct relationship between a name being in the book of life and final destiny:

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev 20:15)

“And there shall in no wise enter into it [into the New Jerusalem] any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev 21:27)

There are a number of verses indicating that names can be blotted out of the book of life such as:

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” (Rev 3:5)

Other verses speaking of the book of life and names being blotted out include: Deut 9:14, Psa 69:28, Rev 13:8, 17:8, 22:19.

This verse could be seen as a problem:

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.” (Exo 32:33)

A problem because, as Romans 3:23 says, “all have sinned.” This is a good clue that “sin” can mean more than simply breaking one of the Ten Commandments.

The Books (Other than the Book of Life)

Rev 20:12, quoted above, indicates that the contents of the books are used in judgment. The contents of the books are also clearly connected to people’s acts. This shows that our acts are not forgotten; information is not lost. The books are records of information in some form, not necessarily in the bound format we are familiar with. What do those records include?

A record of each person’s acts not for the purpose of deciding fate (salvation or not) as that is determined by their decisions but to determine rewards:

“For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.” (Mark 9:41)

Rewards are distinct from the gift of eternal life (Rom 6:23). One must receive the free gift in order to be there (in heaven) to get the rewards.

A record of each person’s choices especially whether they have chosen to love and trust God or not.

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the

flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Josh 24:15)

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” (Pro 3:5)

To choose to trust in God is to deem Him worthy of trust. It could be seen as a record of each person’s judgment of God.

“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” (Rom 3:4)

Those choices should/will result in a change of character into one that heavenly beings would be willing to live with. Essentially, the question is “were they healed?” or “are they safe to take to heaven?”

A record of each person’s character particularly how it was at the end of their life. Character, along with identity and individuality, must be on record in some way so that when each person is resurrected they are raised as the same person. Think of it: when you are raised to life, will you still be you?

Who are the Records For?

A key question here is to ask “who needs to see the records?”

Does God need records? When we think of judgment we normally think of God judging us. See the [judgment definition](#) page for some discussion on this. Obviously, God needs to know who to raise in each resurrection:

“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:28–29)

So God needs to know but He does not need anything like a written record for that purpose. He also needs to know us – our identity, individuality, character so that when you are resurrected, you are you. But, again, He knows all things. Any “books” in heaven are not because He needs them. There are a few other verses referencing books:

“Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?” (Psa 56:8)

“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.” (Psa 139:16)

“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.” (Mal 3:16)

These may be simply using the metaphor of books to refer to the fact that God knows and remembers all things.

Do we need records? There is a sense in which we judge ourselves:

“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” (Acts 13:46)

Why did Jesus say it would be hard for those who have riches to enter heaven (Mark 10:23)? He restated in Mark like this:

“... Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” (Mark 10:24)

It is largely a matter of whether or not a person trusts God and His promises or trusts to his own resources. It is not a matter of whether God forgives sin or not; He freely offers forgiveness to all. The question is whether or not each person has received that forgiveness. Remember, forgiveness is a two-part transaction.

Really, each one decides his own fate through the choices made before death. The judgement only verifies it. In the final judgment, each person’s record comes into His own mind and, ultimately, the lost will see where they went wrong. Paul relates God as saying (in the context of final judgment):

“For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” (Rom 14:11)

This can most easily be understood as every person acknowledging that God has been right in what He has done in regard to the plan of salvation and especially in His assessment of people’s characters.

Do others need to see our records? Do others need to see the record of our lives in the judgment? We can reason that people will want to have many questions answered. Questions like “why wasn’t my loved one saved?” The Bible does not say much about that but there is a clue in this verse:

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Rev 21:4)

This final reference to wiping away tears applies to after the thousand years of the millennium. You might think that the saved would have nothing but happiness after being taken to heaven, however, there will certainly be moments of sadness as people learn the details of why certain loved ones are not there. Also, the lost will finally experience the second death at the end of the millennium and that will certainly be a very sad experience. But then – on to eternity and those “pleasures for evermore” (Psa 16:11).

Where are the Records?

God knows everything but it need not be in any written form for His use. Will there be a record for others to see? We are not sure (except there are the clues mentioned earlier). What is most needed is for **us** to see the justice of our own fate. For that purpose, our life’s record needs to be available. Job wished that there was a permanent record of his words:

“Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!” (Job 19:23–24)

It is interesting that scripture says that sins are recorded something like that:

“The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron, *and* with the point of a diamond: *it is graven upon the table of their heart*, and upon the horns of your altars;” (Jer 17:1)

The verse specifies where the record is; symbolically upon the horns of altars and literally in the heart or mind. Sin can be brought to the attention (conscience) of a person by certain actions such as:

“Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” (Rom 12:20)

Of course, there are no literal coals of fire involved but the record of sin goes into the mind (the memory) and will be brought forth (recalled) in the final events. Science records the reality of LREs (life–review experiences, distinct from near–death experiences) where a

person, in extreme threat of imminent death, will have their life “[flash before their eyes](#).” See Wikipedia on [life–review experiences](#).

The subconscious stores all life experiences even if, under normal circumstances, they can't all be recalled. There are clues in scripture that something resulting from sin is stored up (recorded) to finally have its effect. The Bible speaks of the wicked “conceiving” (in a metaphorical sense) combustible material (sin or something resulting from it) as chaff:

“Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.” (Isa 33:11)

They don't suddenly become fire–breathing. “Breath” is the Hebrew word “ruach” most commonly translated as “spirit.”

“None calleth for justice, nor *any* pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.” (Isa 59:4)

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:15)

What brings forth death? – sin coming from their own spirit; essentially it is self–destruction.

This could sound like the lost are being physically burned alive. While there is burning it is with fire in a symbolic sense – at first. The literal, physical, cleansing fire will soon follow to clean up the corpses. The final fate of the lost and how all this happens is described in my ebook [The Lake of Fire and the Second Death](#).

It is what is in our own hearts (or minds, memory – the record) that condemns us:

“For if our heart [or conscience] condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.” (1 John 3:20–21)

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 13

A Being of Two Minds

We can only use our minds or think because we have a brain. Thinking is based on the firing of neural circuits. That’s why a dead person cannot think – the neural circuits are no longer functional. Scripture says:

“For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” (Eccl 9:5)

The dead do not know anything (according to Bible teaching and contrary to popular understanding) because the hardware is no longer working and the mind, the memory etc (the software) needs the hardware in order to function. It can be very helpful to consider the computer metaphor:

Computer "parts"	Human equivalents	Greek words	English examples
Hardware	body/brain	soma (G4983)	somatic
Software	soul/mind	psyche (G5590)	psychiatry
Electric power	spirit/breath	pneuma (G4151)	pneumatic

Here is a verse that uses all three terms:

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole **spirit [pneuma]** and **soul [psyche]** and **body [soma]** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess 5:23)

We know that we are tripartite beings – we have three “parts:” body, soul and spirit as shown in this verse:

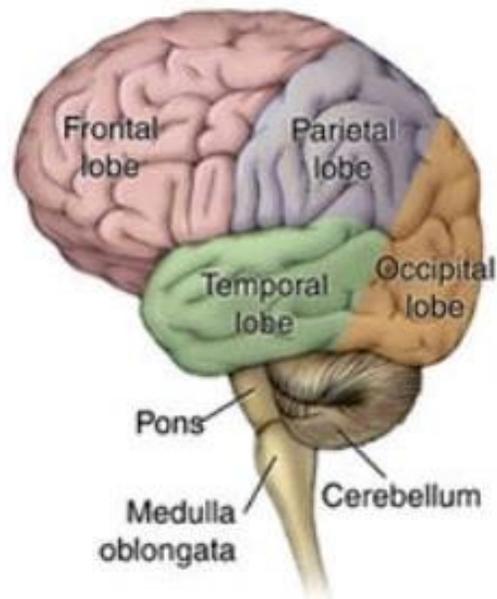
“And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen 2:7)

While man is a soul (Hebrew nephesh, H5315) the existence of a soul results from the combination of the body and the breath. So living people are often referred to as souls:

“And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls <05315> that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” (Gen 12:5)

The Hardware

Since our thinking is so dependent on our brains – the hardware – let’s take a look at it. The structure and function (anatomy and physiology) of our brain (the hardware) is genetically determined. Our mind (thoughts, feelings, character etc) is largely determined by our environment, all the influences that come to us via our senses, the choices we make and, of course, the physical condition of the brain itself. Any defect in the brain’s hardware will certainly affect its function as would be the case with a computer. This points to the importance of keeping our “hardware” – the brain (and the body that it depends so much upon) in the best working order we can. If we are going to have any success in cleansing the sanctuary of our mind/heart we should have an idea how it works and how to keep it working well.



Note that the Bible sometimes uses the term “reins” to refer to the mind:

“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” (Jer 17:10)

This is because, anciently, the reins (kidneys, inner man) were considered the location of human emotions.

The human brain is the most complex thing we have direct knowledge of.

- There are 85 – 120 billion neurons.
- Connections between them are estimated at from 100 trillion to 1 quadrillion.
- The human brain does 10 quadrillion operations/second.
- The brain composes 2% of body weight but uses 20% of its energy.

In understanding the function of the brain, how it gets “dirty” and how the cleansing process works it is fundamental to recognize the major division of the brain into the conscious and subconscious minds.

The Software – The Conscious Mind

The Bible uses the “mind” to refer to the conscious thoughts. The prefrontal cortex is where we reason, plan, organize, focus, concentrate, exercise self-restraint and worship. It is the area of the conscience. A part of it, called the anterior cingulate cortex is our neurological “heart” where we experience emotions such as love, compassion, empathy, sympathy, benevolence. It is also the location of the will where we choose right from wrong.

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.” (Pro 23:7)

The proverb, “As a man thinks in his heart so is he ...” (Pro 23:7) is referring to the anterior cingulate cortex. This is all part of the conscious mind. Here is a significant verse connected to the pre-frontal cortex:

“Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Rev 7:3)

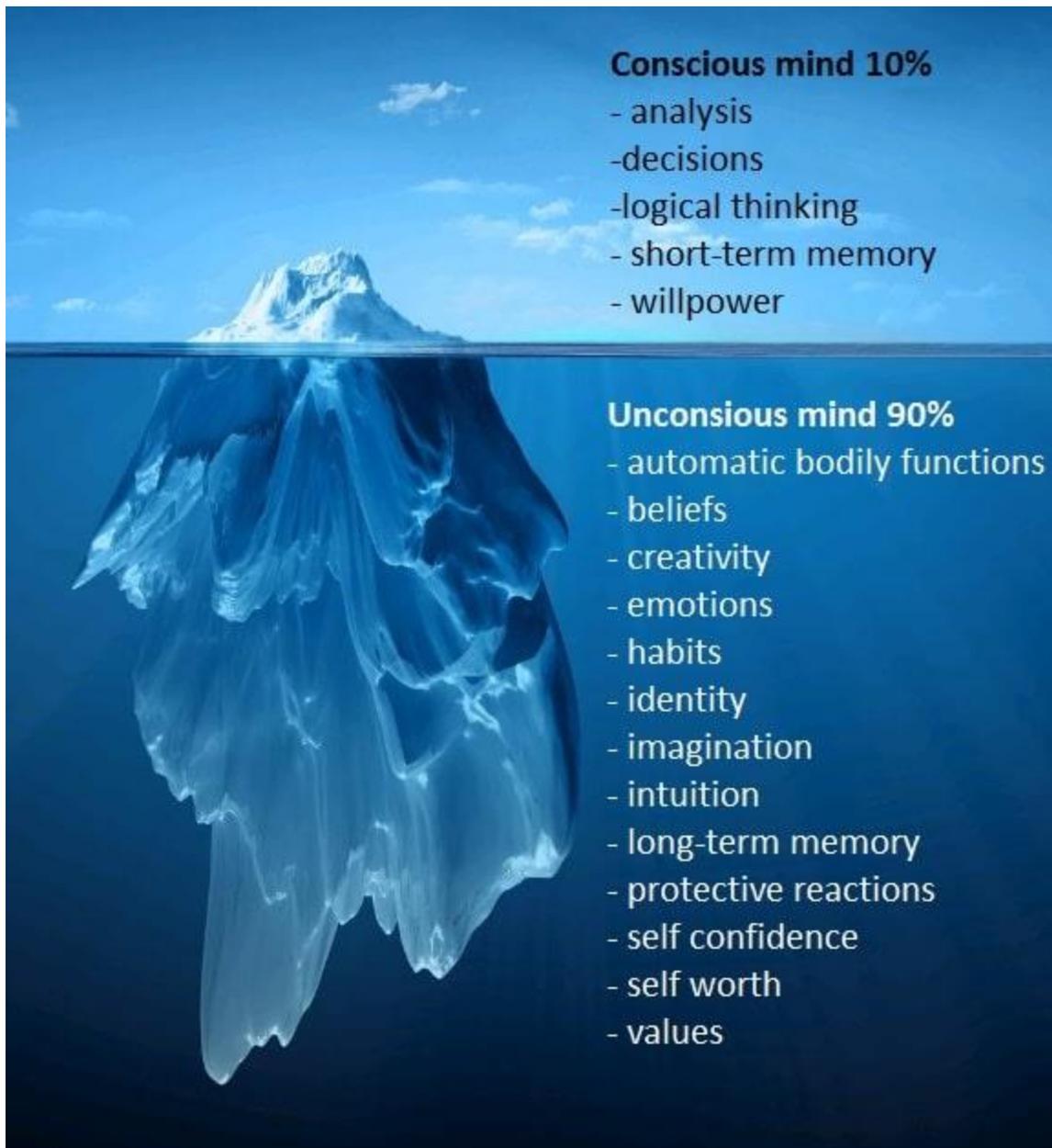
This is not talking about a seal on the exterior of the forehead but to something that happens in the conscious mind of God’s servants, something in their thinking.

The Operating System – The Subconscious Mind

What does it mean to be double-minded or to be of two minds? This refers to a state of indecision; to not be able to choose between two options. As in “I’m of **two minds** about where to go.” The Bible refers to this state:

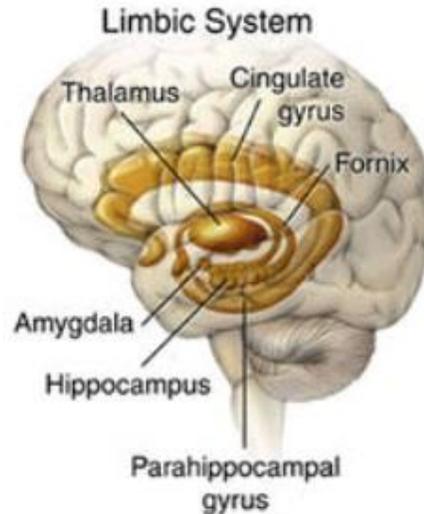
“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. ... Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.” (James 1:8, 4:8)

Being double-minded does not sound good but we actually could be said to have two minds at all times – our conscious mind (our thinking mind), discussed above and our subconscious mind. Various estimates say our conscious mind represents 10% or less of brain function. The subconscious mind involves a much larger proportion of brain activity including bodily functions and more.



So 90% or more is controlled by the subconscious and some estimates say as high as 95–99.5%. Note that the unconscious mind refers to the conscious mind in a state of inactivity. When a person is unconscious, their subconscious mind is still functioning as it controls heartbeat, breathing and many other bodily functions.

The subconscious mind includes the **limbic system** where we experience aggression, anger, irritability, insecurity, lust, envy, jealousy, arrogance, selfishness and the me-first instinct of survival-of-the-fittest. Many people would call it the “reptilian brain” thinking it first developed in some reptilian ancestor of man. Of course, we know that is not true but, considering all the negative traits associated with it, we could link it to one particular reptile – that serpent in the tree.



One part of the limbic system is the **amygdala**, (the “alarm” or fear center) where we experience fear, anxiety, panic, the classic adrenalin rush, as well as worry, insecurity, and dread. Many relaxation techniques are meant to “calm” or reduce the activity of the amygdala.

But don’t think the subconscious mind is all bad. There are many important and very necessary things happening there. Here are some features of the subconscious mind worth knowing about. The subconscious mind:

- holds in storage everything that is not in your conscious mind – your beliefs, memories, learned skills.
- only thinks in the present; does not distinguish between past, present and future.
- only “sees” in pictures.
- doesn’t know the difference between real and imagined.
- accepts anything whether it makes sense or not.
- is illogical, irrational and non-analytical, That does not mean it is stupid – it just does not use the processes of logic, rationalization and analysis – those are functions of the conscious mind.
- does not understand negative.
- is the source of the majority of thoughts.
- controls most of your habitual behaviors – eg driving.
- triggers feelings and emotions in various situations.
- controls bodily functions – breathing, pulse etc – very important, obviously for life itself.

Some of these points and the role of the subconscious mind can be quite important to the process of cleansing the mind.

The Power of the Subconscious Mind

Is getting into the subconscious mind important for cleansing us? Look at this quote:

“Your subconscious mind is far more powerful than your conscious mind. By learning how to train and use your subconscious mind you will be able to control your behavior, break bad habits, get rid of unwanted emotions and fix your belief system.” (quoted from [this site](#) which explains more about the subconscious mind).

Let's try, with our conscious minds, to better understand the subconscious mind by looking at some of its features as listed above.

Learning Skills

When learning to drive, you are using conscious effort. I remember very consciously looking back and forth at the edges of the road and thinking of how far to turn the wheel in each direction to keep the car in the middle of the lane. Now, peripheral vision seems to be connected directly to my hands with nothing going on in between as far as thinking about that. But is that true? No, the process is being handled automatically by the subconscious so I don't have to think about it.

Experiences are transferred to the subconscious for long-term storage while you sleep. You want the skill to be in the subconscious mind along with other learned behaviors so that you can use consciousness for other purposes. Thus, it is better to learn to drive in a lesson a day for a week or more rather than all in one day. Each day it gets easier as you build on the basics of the skills which were stored in the subconscious the night before.

Sensing the Environment

The cells in your body cannot tell what is happening outside of the body but they receive chemical messages secreted from the brain which is responsible for interpreting the outside environment and any threat of danger.

If you are walking in a field and out of the corner of your eye you see something long and thin in the grass, your brain, specifically the amygdala – the fear center – senses that and pumps adrenalin into your blood stream and the message gets to the body's cells very quickly. Then your eyes distinguish that it is not a rattlesnake and your brain sends a different signal (via chemical messengers) to the cells of your body. So your subconscious mind interprets the outside environment.

It also interprets what is happening within your body. For example, you can, even if in a rotten mood, choose to put a smile on your face. Sensors (proprioceptors) will pick that up and send a message that things are good, the brain will secrete the appropriate chemistry and you will start to feel better.

When Logic Doesn't Work

Trying to get through to your subconscious mind using logic may not work. For example, when you experience anxiety before giving a speech you won't be able to logically (because the subconscious is illogical) convince yourself that there is no need to be afraid.

The subconscious mind reads all your sensory input. So, rather than logic, controlled, relaxed breathing can help as it will be interpreted as a more-relaxed state and therefore anxiety can be reduced.

Controlling Emotions

Our emotions are subconscious. We can't control them directly, but we can often hide them quite effectively through conscious effort. We can't tell our subconscious to turn off the fear. However, we can focus on love and that will help to shut down the fear.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John 4:18)

Someone has determined that the Bible tells us 365 times not to fear. (Excuse me, I have to chuckle for a moment because today, as I am writing this, is February 29, 2020.) We can choose not to fear. See the [Biblical definition of fear](#).

The Computer Comparison

We could think of the conscious mind in computer terms as what is in active memory; perhaps more simply what is showing on the computer's monitor. The subconscious mind is all of the stored information on the hard disk and the operating system that works in the background to run everything including what to actually display on the screen.

The subconscious mind [learns by repetition and not by logic](#). That is why you can convince people to believe in something by repeating your argument again and again. Think of advertising and political campaigns which get their messages across often without much logic.

However, logic is a conscious process. It does not happen in the subconscious mind. If a new logical point is contrary to a long-held belief, you would need to repeat and reinforce it over time to reprogram the subconscious mind.

Positive Works Better

Remember, the subconscious does not understand negative. Rather than thinking “I have to give up ice cream that I love so much” – a negative association – it is better to think “I love good health etc” a positive association.

The subconscious mind will work to fulfill the input you provide to it. That is the power of positive affirmations. What you expect tends to be realized. If you are sure that you are going to fail an exam then you may indeed fail even if you have all what it takes to succeed. Your beliefs and expectations serve as the master plan for your subconscious mind. So whenever you think of something your subconscious mind will do its best to make it come true. A belief (“I’m stupid”) held in the subconscious will result in the subconscious mind attempting to fulfill that belief.

The Subconscious Usually Wins

If you are afraid of the dark and go into a dark room you will definitely feel afraid even if you consciously tell yourself there is nothing to fear. This happens because, as we saw earlier, the subconscious mind is more powerful than the conscious mind.

The subconscious mind has a great impact on the decisions we make and therefore, if the subconscious includes the unholy, it can easily cause one to succumb to temptation. Thus lies accepted as fact by the subconscious (not first filtered consciously) affect the brain’s wiring and easily lead to sinful thoughts and actions.

In what are called “knee-jerk reactions” (a response without thinking) what is in the heart often is manifested.

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:45)

“Fixing” the Subconscious Mind

We think 30,000 thoughts per day (and many more by some estimates) and most of those come from the subconscious. And it can be hard to shut off its voice. Unfortunately, we can’t just directly edit the contents of our subconscious minds. However, it can be “edited”

indirectly by overriding it with other content (even changing brain circuitry) – we will look at that more closely in later parts of this series.

God created the subconscious to be the place He could “reside” (His contact point) in each person. But Satan is doing all he can to get a foothold in there in any way he can. By renewal of the mind we can make it more hospitable for the Divine presence and less so for the satanic. The key is to understand how the process works and provide some direction.



We want to claim God’s promises to cleanse us:

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly [both the conscious mind and the subconscious]; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful *is* he that calleth you, who also will do it.” (1 Thess 5:23–24)

At the same time, we need to recognize that it is a cooperative process. The good news is that negative traits in the subconscious mind (even the very automatic ones) can be overcome. That is what we are working to understand and achieve through this series.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 14

Original Sin Definition

What was the very first, the original sin among humanity? Was it eating the fruit from the forbidden tree or was there a problem even before that? Consider again the three levels of sin (discussed in part 8) which did not exist in Adam and Eve when they were first created:

- sinful attitude
- sinful flesh
- sinful acts

Before Genesis 3, they had not yet committed any sinful acts, they did not have sinful flesh as their creation was termed “very good” (Gen 1:31) and they did not have a sinful attitude. They certainly had no reason to distrust God. Enter the serpent who, scripture says, was “subtil” (Gen 3:1) or shrewd, crafty. To just tempt Eve with fruit that “was good for food” and “pleasant to the eyes” (Gen 3:6) would not have been a strong temptation as she was surrounded by all sorts of similarly-desirable fruit. She was certainly not lacking for food.

The Sinful Attitude

Satan got Eve’s attention by putting some questions contradicting God into her mind:

“Yea, hath God said ...” (Gen 3:1)
“... ye shall not surely die.” (Gen 3:4)

Then he made a direct attack on God’s character:

“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Gen 3:5)

What could that have suggested about God?

- that He was keeping something to Himself; that He was selfish
- that He didn’t want to share something with Adam and Eve; He was not as generous as they first thought



Satan's suggestions implied that God was withholding something desirable ("your eyes shall be opened") from Adam and Eve and therefore was more concerned for His own interests than theirs and not to be trusted. Eve allowed the suggestion to register in her mind (her subconscious mind would readily accept it – part 13) affecting her understanding of God.

She perceived of God as being selfish and this immediately opened the way for a me-first, selfish attitude within her. We become like what we observe or, at least, our perception of what we observe. Her understanding of God was tainted by the lies of Satan and this led her to distrust God and His character. Misconception of and resulting distrust of God's character is the root of the problem. That point needs to be emphasized.

If everyone involved understood God's character they would trust and obey Him. Then all would happily do His will, would welcome God working to bless us as He wants to and all our problems would begin to fade away.

Correctly knowing God is the solution and the goal of cleansing the sanctuary.

The Sinful Flesh – The Brain Rewired

Eve's distrust of God resulted (as discussed above) in an immediate, actual, physical rewiring in her mind – a seed of selfishness was planted. Christian psychologist [Timothy Jennings](#) has a good description of what happened:

"Satan told lies about God. Adam and Eve believed those lies and the circle of love and trust was broken [**sinful attitude**]. Imagine you believe a lie that your spouse is having an affair, even though it isn't true. If you believe the lie, does something in you change? When lies are believed, love and trust get broken and fear and selfishness result [**sinful flesh**]. This principle of fear and selfishness is commonly known as "survival-of-the-fittest." This self-promoting principle, in turn, leads to destructive actions, what we call sins [**sinful acts**]. And destructive actions result in damage to mind, character, and body—a terminal condition." (Timothy Jennings, www.comeandreason.com; my points added in brackets)

There is a fairly new term – neuroplasticity – which refers to the ability of the brain to change; really to rewire (form new circuits), according to many of the influences that it is subject to. We can see how quickly something can be implanted in our minds when we experience the startle response. There is an almost instantaneous release of fight or flight

hormones. Even the hearing of bad news or believing a lie as described above for Adam and Eve can have immediate and profound effects.

Sinful Acts

Fear (discussed in part 13) and other emotions lead us to take self-preserving actions which, in many contexts, are not sinful. You want to move quickly if a car is coming at you in traffic. But when actions are taken at the expense of or harm to others – that is different. Fear of physical lack can lead to, for instance, stealing.

Sinful acts lead to a guilty conscious and a variety of negative feelings about ourselves which tend to cause fear and doubt and an even greater feeling of the need to preserve self.

This study takes the position that actual sinful acts are the least serious of the three levels of sin in the sense that they can never be eliminated from the life due to our sinful natures if the sinful nature is not first changed as explained above. It is just that the acts tend to be focused on because they are most obvious. Don't worry – we will consider how to deal with even those in later parts of this series.

Alienation and Reconciliation

The result of that day in the garden was that Adam and Eve then felt a degree of distrust of God and, of course, there was guilt, shame, regret and fear. Their natures had been changed from one of other-centered, God-like love to one of self-preservation. Their brains had actually been rewired. Even their genetics had been changed (as we will explore in later parts of this study) and they could only pass down to their offspring their altered nature (genetics) which was now no longer “very good.”

God's objective, since the fall, has always been to draw sinners back to Himself, to convince them of His continued, undiminished love for them. A reconciliation was needed but – it is important to note – the reconciliation only needed to be in one direction as is the case even today.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (Rom 5:10)

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” (Col 1:20)

Reconciliation between God and man is always spoken of as reconciliation of man to God, never of God to man. It is man that needs to change, not God Who does not change. (Mal 3:6).

Remember, Adam and Eve were hiding from God; they felt separated from and fearful of Him:

“... Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.” (Gen 3:8)

This was while He was “looking for” and seeking companionship with them:

“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?” (Gen 3:9)

Restored Trust the Greatest Need

God’s desire is for perfect reconciliation so that man can again be a sanctuary for the full indwelling of the Spirit of God. Some people have the understanding that God wants them to be overcomers and therefore focus, perhaps with great zeal, on cleaning up their behavior. However, as we saw above there are three areas that need to be dealt with and for cleansing to be effective they must be dealt with in the right order.

The sinful acts will be difficult or impossible to overcome while man has sinful flesh as that sinful flesh is always prompting him to act in sinful ways. And the sinful flesh (the wiring in the mind) cannot be remedied unless the fear circuits and other mental processes are dealt with and that can never happen without a change in the attitude towards God.

Here is a good illustration:

Sinful acts make the mess we, and others, see in our lives **[the mess on the floor]**. It is coming from the sinful flesh **[the sink]** which does not have the ability or capacity to keep from expressing its nature (spilling onto the floor) as a result of the misconceptions of the character of God that we have allowed in and continue to believe **[the running faucet]**.



“... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt 12:34)

We can attempt to mop up the floor (the sinful acts) but the job will never be finished. Or we can install a larger sink (increased ability to hold back the flood) to not express what is in our hearts. Obviously, the best option is to go upstream to the source of the problem and turn off the tap.

To try to clean up our lives while ignoring the source of the problem is about as frustrating as this:

The basis of our spiritual healing is a right understanding and acceptance of the true character of God. It is only the truth of what God is really like that will resolve the doubts that have been planted and passed down to us from the original lies Satan told (and has since added to) about God. The tap is still running.



The Order is Important

Failure to achieve results from just changing behavior can produce emotions that will tend to alienate us from God. If we do not have the right understanding of God's character and therefore a wrong attitude towards Him, then our failures will just lead to feelings of condemnation and make us less likely to want to get to know Him. It makes us want to run and hide from Him just as it did to Adam and Eve. The difference between that and the more appropriate attitude could be illustrated like this (think of the attitude and level of trust of a teenage girl who has just gotten into big trouble):

**“I messed up – Dad’s gonna kill me”
vs “I messed up – I have to tell Dad”**

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 15

Love as Motivation

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:15–19)

Now we are getting to the actual cleansing process and how to make it work starting with cleansing in terms of our attitude towards God as discussed in part 14. It is important to recognize right away that what we need is not just obedience but obedience based on love. Motivation is a key factor.

Again, from part 14, we need to be cleansed in three areas. Cleansing is needed for our:

- sinful attitude
- sinful flesh
- sinful acts

That cleansing has to be accomplished in the right order. This is worth repeating from part 8:

“For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.” (Lev 16:30)

The order in that verse is:

1. “make an atonement for you” (so that you may be in a state of oneness “at-one” with God) – **sinful attitude**
2. (in order) “to cleanse you” – **sinful flesh**
3. (so) “that ye may be clean from all your sins” (stop sinning) – **sinful acts**

Why the Greatest Commandment is the Greatest Commandment

One day, a Pharisee asked Jesus:

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Matt 22:36)

Of course, the Pharisees had a very legalistic outlook – it was always “what must I do to be saved?” Jesus’ answer was interesting:

“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.” (Matt 22:37–38)

There is a reason why that is the first and greatest commandment – it is the place we need to start in the cleansing process. Love for God is our connection to Him. Atonement, being at-one with Him (See [Atonement definition](#)) is our greatest need. If love for God comes first, it comes before not killing, before Sabbath keeping or anything else we should or shouldn’t do.

It is like the overflowing–sink illustration used earlier (part 14). If we will first understand God’s character correctly (turn off the tap of false ideas about Him) then the appreciation of what He is really like will go a long way to help us stop acts of sin. Knowing that He freely forgives all of our sins is a good place to start. If we don’t do that we will never be cleansed.

The first commandment gives us the heart appreciation that motivates us to do the cleansing. The second helps us to put it into effect in our lives.

“And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matt 22:39–40)

Loving Who We Can’t See

The important question of how to get this to work in our lives is how do we develop a real love for God? There is a bit of a problem here. How can we love God when we can’t even see Him?

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18)

Jesus suggested a solution to that when He said that seeing Himself was equivalent to seeing the Father:

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:9)

This sounds like a serious contradiction to John 1:18 unless it is understood that the word “seen” in both verses is the same original word. It can be understood either as “to see with the eyes” or “to see with the mind, to perceive, to know.” So, while it is true that no man has physically seen the Father, we may know what He is like in character by knowing His Son.

“All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.” (Luke 10:22)

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.” (John 17:6)

Knowing Him Equated with Eternal Life

Of course, manifesting His Father’s name was not merely something like repeating the name or telling people what the name was – they already knew that. Knowing God’s name was more than knowing what His name is, it is knowing His character:

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.” (1 John 5:20)

Can you see the connection between “given us an understanding” and the two verses before that:

- the Son will reveal him (Luke 10:22)
- I have manifested thy name (John 17:6)

He gave us an understanding by revealing His Father, by manifesting His Father’s name. Here are some other versions of 1 John 5:20:

“We know that Jesus Christ the Son of God has come and has shown us the true God. And because of Jesus, we now belong to the true God who gives eternal life.” (1 John 5:20, Contemporary English Version)

“Now we know that the Son of God is come and has given us understanding, so that we may know Him who *is* true; and we are in Him who *is* true, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.” (1 John 5:20, Berean Literal Bible)

Really knowing Him is understanding His character well enough to trust Him:

“And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.” (Psa 9:10)

It’s not: “Nice to meet you and learn your name; now I trust you.” You don’t trust someone just because you know their name. It has to come from knowledge based on experience of their character.

Here is a very important passage:

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John 17:1–4)

Let’s look carefully at this passage:

- **“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;** – what hour? – Compare with: “... this is your hour and the power of darkness.” (Luke 22:53)– spoken to those arresting Him.
- **glorify thy Son,** – show His character? – What else could it be? This is not the transfiguration.
- **that thy Son also may glorify thee:** – reflect the Father’s character.
- **As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.**
- **And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.** – how does He give eternal life? – by giving the knowledge of His Father

- I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” Notice that He had "finished the work" He was given to do even before going to the cross. His word was to glorify or show the character of His Father. The sacrifice part, the crucifixion was man’s doing.

The Beholding Principle

If we can only get to know the Father through the Son, the next question is how do we get to know the Son?

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29)



“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:2)

So we are to behold, to look unto Him. However, we cannot physically see Him, observe His actions or learn of Him directly. Isaiah, prophesying of Him, actually suggested that His physical appearance would not necessarily attract:

“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.” (Isa 53:2)

It must be His character reflected in His words and actions. Those we can “observe” through the gospel accounts of His life and other details in the rest of scripture. So we can learn of Him through His Word that describes Him and how He treated people, especially how He reacted in difficult situations where true character is revealed.

Here are verses suggesting that beholding Him will actually work a change in us.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor 3:18)

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psa 119:11)

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word,” (Eph 5:26)

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17)

Any change in our characters or any law keeping that follows from our study of the Word will only follow because God has taken the first steps. Studying the life of Jesus, understanding that the things He did reflect the character of His Father will help us to understand the Father as well. (That is the object of this website – to help bring a right concept of the character of God.)

So beholding Him and allowing the love and appreciation that will bring to us if we allow it will be key to us cleansing our hearts.

The Effect of Beholding the Opposite

What happens if, rather than beholding a God of love as portrayed in the life of Jesus, we have the opposite concept of God? Christian psychologist **Dr. Timothy Jennings** has explained this so well that I will simply quote him (my additions in brackets):



“Amazingly, recent brain research reveals that worshipping an angry and wrathful God [as many imagine Him to be] has the same effect on brain circuitry as theatrical television watching. The only God concept that didn’t have this negative effect was a God of love! Worshipping a God of love results in calming of the fear circuits and healing of brain and even the body!

Research at the University of Pennsylvania by Dr. Newberg and colleagues demonstrated that subjects 60–65 years of age who meditated on a God of love, just 12 minutes a day for 30 days, experienced measurable growth in the ACC [anterior cingulate cortex] of their brains as measured with MRI scans. This was directly correlated with reductions in heart rate, blood pressure and stress hormone levels and a 30% increase in memory testing. This demonstrates the calming of the amygdala and limbic system circuitry as a consequence of meditating on a God of love. Science confirms what the Bible has told us” (Timothy Jennings “[How TV and an Angry, Wrathful God Damage Your Brain](#)“)

What happens when people know of God but don't really know what He is like:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” (Rom 1:21)

“Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.” (Rom 1:21, NLT)

Here is an illustration of becoming vain in the imagination:

The evidence from history, if one remembers the religious intolerance of the Dark Ages with its persecutions and tortures in the name of religion, shows what can happen. A wrong belief that God is intolerant, unforgiving, even wrathful can actually alter the brain, impair judgment and reason and cause people to treat others as they mistakenly believe God would.



There is a war going on over God's character in the world and in every mind. For those who are learning to appreciate the truth about God, the direction is given:

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” (2 Cor 10:5)

It is time we do all we can to counter false representations of God and present the truth about His character of love. Please share this information with others.

Cleansing the Sanctuary - Part 16

Renewing the Mind

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom 12:2)

Scripture indicates that renewing the mind will renew or transform the life. To renew or change the mind requires changing what goes into it. Our behavior is driven by our most strongly-held beliefs. You have probably seen something like this:

- Your beliefs become your thoughts,
- Your thoughts become your words,
- Your words become your actions,
- Your actions become your habits,
- Your habits become your values,
- Your values become your destiny.

This suggests the order in which we need to start the process of renewing our minds.

Rewiring Your Brain to Renew Your Mind

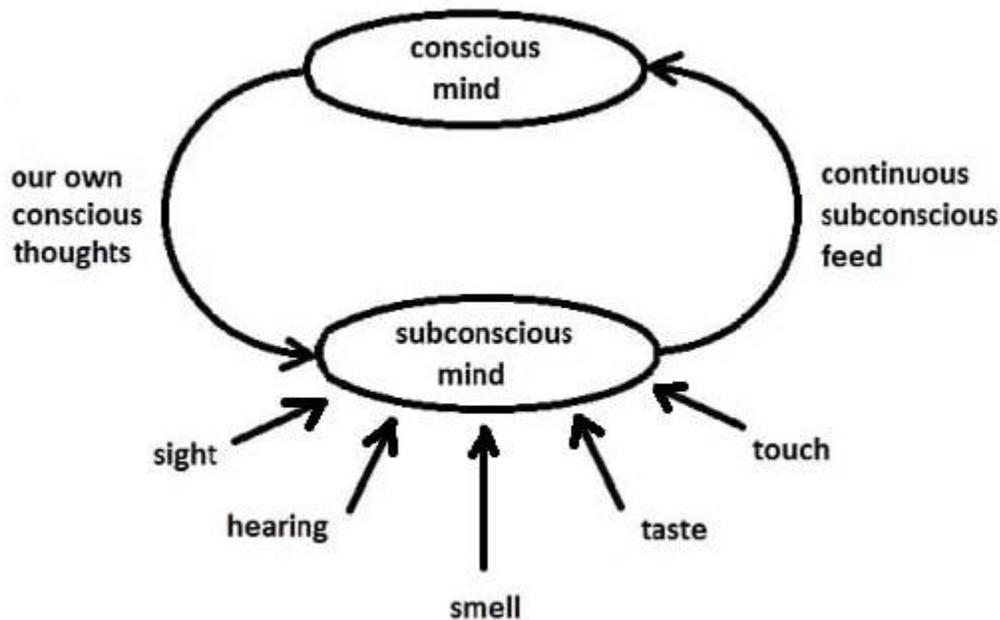
Renewing or rewiring (which actually physically happens – you could see it through a microscope) your mind is kind of like the running faucet referred to earlier (Part 10) that fills the sink and then overflows onto the floor. We need to start at the source to effect what happens downstream.

What do we most and first need to change? That must be our beliefs, especially those about God – equivalent to the running faucet in the illustration. How do we change beliefs? It should be by the evidence presented to us which we then choose to either accept or reject. But we need to be careful to not always accept a single statement at face value. We need to take all of what scripture says on a topic and sort out the apparent discrepancies that show up.

For instance, you might attempt to establish a new habit (go for a brisk walk daily) in place of another (watching TV). If you struggle to do that, a more sure way would be to change your beliefs by looking seriously at the evidence of the benefits of exercise on health and perhaps the dangers of watching too much TV.

Internal and External Inputs

Our beliefs are influenced even by what we think about. Aside from input via our senses, a thought can come from our own subconscious. If you choose to consciously dwell on a thought, it will be reinforced in your subconscious and affect your beliefs. That is why positive affirmations work.



If you need to, it might be helpful to go back and review the distinction between the conscious and the subconscious mind in part 13.

The subconscious mind can remind us of things we have seen, heard, smelled, tasted and touched in the past. Thus, the conscious mind has both external (the 5 senses) and internal (the subconscious) data feeds. Of course, the content from the subconscious feed is entirely dependent on what previously went into the subconscious via the senses. Thus, the profound truth of the children's song including these lyrics:

O be careful little eyes what you see
O be careful little ears what you hear
O be careful little tongue what you say
O be careful little hands what you do
O be careful little feet where you go
O be careful little heart whom you trust
O be careful little mind what you think

Will Power

Ultimately, everything depends on the right action of the will and a very key truth to remember is that God has given each of us a free will and He will NEVER interfere with it. God loves us dearly and wants us to love Him in return (more for our benefit than for His). Love cannot be forced. “Love me or else” just does not work; it never works.

The power of the will resides in the conscious mind. We always have the option of exercising our will to choose. And we can even make that a habit. Always make the right choice even in minor matters and it will become easier to choose what is right in more critical situations. You can strengthen your will power. Like any other exercise, train your brain to always choose the right option and it will become easier.

The Mind and the Flesh

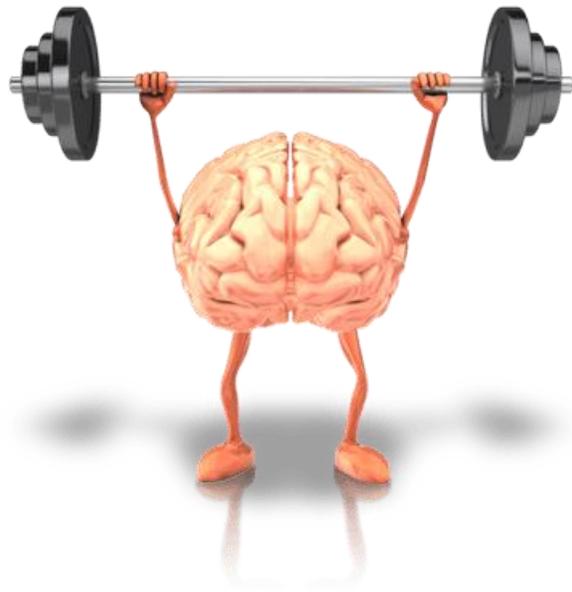
In this part, we are looking especially at renewing the mind which is equivalent to cleansing the sinful flesh identified earlier as one of the three levels of sin:

- sinful attitude
- sinful flesh
- sinful acts

As discussed in part 14, rewiring of brain circuits (in a negative way) happened at the fall of mankind. Soon after everything in creation was pronounced to be “very good” (Gen 1:31) it was suddenly not so good.

Adam and Eve were changed from operating on love and trust to having minds subject to fear and selfishness, what is commonly called “survival-of-the fittest” and that, of course, affected many choices they made after that. It continues to be the operating system mankind uses to this day.

It is fear for self that leads to so many thoughts and actions in attempts to preserve and protect self. This leads to the “me-first,” selfish attitude that we all have which is so characteristic of the theory of evolution. Perhaps that is why it is so readily accepted – it matches our experience.



The Starting Point

There are many verses showing the condition of the human heart and how far it is from the original "very good." This is where, after Adam and Eve, all of us start from.

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psa 51:5)

The process of conception is not evil; the problem is the flesh we inherit that is defective. Adam and Eve could only pass on to us what they had.

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
(Jer 17:9)

"How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"
(Job 15:16)

"Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psa 53:3)

Even by the time of the flood many centuries ago, mankind had already reached a deplorable state:

"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually." (Gen 6:5)

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." (Rom 7:18)

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation [conduct] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" (Eph 4:22)

Even when the heart (conscious mind) has the right attitude towards God, the flesh (subconscious mind) can need some adjustments, usually many of them. Think of the repentant thief on the cross. He (near the end of his life) changed His attitude towards God and that was enough for Him to receive the promise of salvation and eternal life. But, had he somehow survived his crucifixion, he still would have been subject to the temptation to steal. He would have struggled with habitual tendencies which had developed in him over the years. It would have taken continued trust in God to help him not fall back into his old ways. That the repentant thief would be so readily granted his dying wish shows that what God most wants from us is our love and trust.

Desperately and Abundantly Wicked

Our brains, our ways of thinking (our sanctuaries) need to be cleansed of many things such as:

Negative Ways of Thinking	
Anger	Laziness
Bitterness	Love of the world
Critical attitude	Low self-worth
Envy/jealousy	Pride
Fear	Regret
Gluttony	Resentment
Guilt	Selfishness
Hatred	Shame
Lack of self-control	Uncontrolled imagination

Are the items listed above sins? Well they are not primarily outward actions but they are very real. Often they are expressed outwardly, in many cases, via the mouth. People don't like to hear their doctor say "it's all in your head" but often much more of it is there than we would like to admit or that we even realize.

Wouldn't you like to clean up and be able to cross off items you might have from that list? Cleansing the sanctuary is more than dealing with words and actions. Stop for a moment and think of what life would be like if you could not only stop outward acts of sin but if you also had none of the traits listed above (or any other negative ways of thinking) in your experience. What would that be like? How would you feel? Perhaps even write down what that would be like. That is the cleansing, the renewing of the mind that God wants for us. And He wants it for our good not His. He is most concerned for our welfare. What a change - from desperately wicked to life abundantly!

The thing is that those ways of thinking are affected by our basic beliefs and, much more than we realize, by our beliefs about God. In this section, we are looking at the general principle of renewing the mind. In a coming section, we will look at the specifics of some items on that list and some practical suggestions of how to counteract and eliminate them from our experience.

How to Want to Change

Many items listed above reflect our “me–first” thinking and our natural desire is actually not to give them up even though there is often a negative outcome. For example:

- With gluttony, the thinking is “I like the taste,” leading to overeating and resulting in **poor health**.
- With pride we might enjoy the feeling that we are better than others but scripture even tells us that “Pride cometh before **a fall**.” (Pro 16:18, paraphrased)
- Low self–worth leads to thoughts of “I can’t do it” and the easy road of procrastination which can lead to **poor productivity**.
- Love of the world produces the desire for more of life’s goodies which can mean a person is **never satisfied**.

We don’t want to get rid of those thinking patterns, but often know we should.

Why do we want or why would God want to cleanse us of these problems of the flesh? Are any of those ways of thinking good to have? No, certainly not. What is God’s desire for us?

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” (John 10:10)

To have some of the things in the list above still in our minds would not result in the abundant life. And, of course, those thoughts, as we saw earlier, lead to sinful actions. We tend to focus on the actions without thinking of where they come from. Dealing with the source will certainly help to clean up the results, the obvious sins. This is like getting to the root of the problem as in:

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” (Matt 3:10)

We need to get to the root of the problem and God has promised to help us do just that:

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” (Psa 84:11)

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:” (2 Cor 9:8)

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14)

His aim is complete restoration, even to the uttermost:

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Heb 7:25)

Being saved to the uttermost (or made completely whole) would be more than dealing with words and actions, it must also include the thoughts and intents of the heart:

“For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12)

Having a thought is not sin. It is only when we dwell on questionable thoughts and choose to desire the wrong outcome, that they become, for example, lust. So thoughts can become sinful even with no outward act.

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Matt 5:28)

You have to train your mind–muscle to rebuke those thoughts when they surface. Not simply out of fear that they will overtake you but because, just as when we don’t exercise our muscles, they will atrophy over time.

The object of all this is to have a cleansed heart, yes, but especially to have the clean or right concept of God. Hopefully, what we have shared already in this series and other information on this website is helping you with your concept of God’s character.

Specific ways to deal with the various forms of negative thinking will be examined soon in this series. Before that we want to see how we can become more aware of our specific problems.

Cleansing the Sanctuary - Part 17

A Clear Conscience

In any cleaning we do it is necessary to be able to see the dirt. In cleansing our personal sanctuary (our minds), the conscience plays a large role in identifying to us what requires cleansing.

The conscience is actually part of our flesh. It occupies a physical part of our brain and was included in God's design of our physical make up. Although the word "conscience" never appears in the KJV version of the Old Testament, here is one reference to it:

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;" (Jer 17:1)

The conscience was designed by God for our protection much like the capacity to feel pain enables us to take protective action to minimize physical injury. It is hard to ignore pain in our body. Likewise, a guilty conscience can get our attention:

"And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." (Acts 9:5)

This was the message to Paul when he was involved in persecuting Christians, forcing them against their will and restricting personal freedom.

The Action of the Conscience

Bible uses of "conscience" indicate different roles:

1. to warn of potential spiritual danger
2. to react as soon as possible against temptation
3. to prompt us to seek help in overcoming during trial
4. to seek healing from spiritual injury
5. to encourage us when it is clear

1. To Warn of Potential Spiritual Danger

This is based on our knowledge of right and wrong pointing out the necessity of educating ourselves in the ways of God. We need to recognize that all God's laws are there for our

good and our protection, not for God's benefit. That is the difference between natural, design law and imposed, arbitrary law. See more on the difference [here](#).

Our conscience helps us to know not to look at that, not to say that, not to go there etc. The conscience will even operate in people (unless they have consciously suppressed it to the point they can no longer hear its "voice.") who do not know God's law if they have accepted its principles in their heart:

"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)" (Rom 2:14-15)

"Their thoughts" would be thoughts activated by their consciences. How can the Gentiles (some of them) have the law written in their hearts when God is proposing to write His law in the heart of "His people" implying it is not yet written there? Are there Gentiles, who don't have the law, ahead of God's people in terms of having an appreciation of its principles? Could the law in the heart be much more a matter of living by its principles than it is of knowing its details? Christians need to ask themselves that question.

The religious leaders who brought the woman caught in adultery to Jesus abandoned their plot to have her sentenced to stoning and to trap Jesus when, with Jesus awakening their consciences, they were reminded of their own sinfulness:

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. ... And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." (John 8:7,9)

2. To React as Soon as Possible

This is equivalent to pulling our hand away from a hot stove.

In the human mind there are "horns." The spinal cord descends from and is part of the brain. The spinal cord has extensions at the back and front connecting to nerves. They are called, in medical terminology, the posterior and anterior horns. There are horns in your nervous system and in your brain.

The “horns of your altars” (Jer 17:1) is a reference to the altar of incense with its horns:

“And the priest shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation ...” (Lev 4:7)



That altar is in the first apartment of the sanctuary which may correspond to our conscious mind. Sins were “recorded” in the sanctuary on the horns of the altar. Similarly, sins are recorded in our conscious mind from where we need to take the action to repent of and forsake them. Even the dangers of temptations, as they come to our awareness, need to be dealt with by sending up a prayer (symbolized by the incense) for help rather than falling to the temptation.

Perhaps that altar corresponds to the function of our conscience? I think there is much more to understand about the connection between the sanctuary, its apartments, furnishings and our mind or sanctuary.

It is interesting that the word for table in these two verses is from the same original word:

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table (H3871) of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;” (Jer 17:1)

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables (H3871) of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” (Exo 24:12)

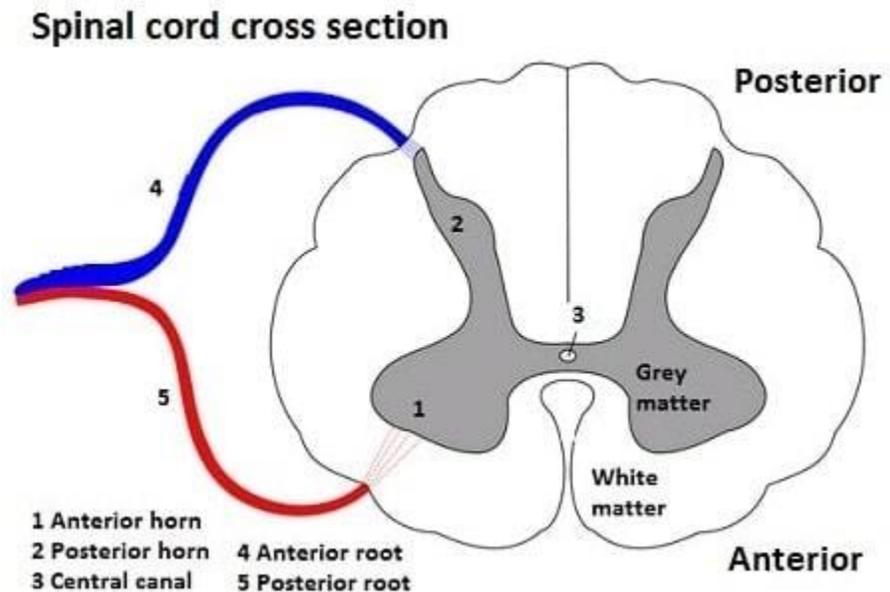
What is written (“graven”) on the table of the heart (conscience) is recorded there because of our perception of our actions in relation to what was graven or written on the tables of the law.

“And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God, graven upon the tables.” (Exo 32:16)

Horns Represent Power

In Bible prophesy, horns represent power. This is what your spinal cord and your brain is to the rest of your body. The posterior and anterior horns are where you perceive the sensation of touch. The sensing nerves send a message of sensation into the posterior horn and a return message of reaction goes from the other horn to react. The reception of and reaction to the message goes through those horns.

So in situations such as touching a hot stove, the nervous system is designed to react very quickly to protect us from injury without us even having to make a conscious decision. We don't think "my finger is getting very hot, I smell burning flesh, perhaps I should take my finger off the stove." We want our



conscience to have similar power to make right decisions without us thinking about it; we should not even consider the advantages of yielding to temptation. Train your will to choose right because it is right. The will is the governing power in the nature of man. It is the deciding power which we must always use to keep us on God's side.

3. To Prompt Us to Seek Help

The conscience calls upon us to make a choice. When you are faced with a moral decision, you can choose right or wrong. Many will simply default to what is easy. We need to activate willpower to bring to mind the choices and their consequences and reason out which is the better option.

If we do this, it can become easier. Perhaps that is why it is called willpower which is defined as:

"control of one's impulses and actions; self-control." (Dictionary.com)

Help is Promised

There are many promises of help when facing decisions or temptations. When our conscience prompts us of danger it can also prompt us (especially if we make a habit of connection the two) to call upon God's promises for help.

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." (Isa 30:21)

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Pro 3:6)

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
(1 Cor 10:13)

4. To Seek Healing from Spiritual Injury

This verse could be speaking of spiritual injury; injury to the mind:

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." (Titus 1:15)

The conscience looks for and perhaps we could say suggest to us that we should do something about it. Have you ever had your conscience say to you:

- "You should apologize for that."
- "You should make that right."
- "You would feel better about yourself if you ..."

We have surely all experienced that sort of thought and perhaps have often not listened to it which only makes the hurt deeper. It is helpful to understand that our conscience is there for our good:

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;" (Rom 2:15)

If we understand that, and cooperate with Jesus, He can purge or cleanse our conscience:

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14)

“Purge” is from the Greek katharizo (G2511) which is most often translated as “cleanse” and from which we get “catharsis.”

There are many emotions that come from a defiled conscience that need cleansing:

- Shame – I am to blame, I was foolish
- Fear – of being discovered, of loss as a result of a wrong done
- Fear – of natural consequences which are already happening – fear itself is a consequence
- Fear – of imposed penalties
- Feelings of estrangement
- Feelings of condemnation – I deserve some form of punishment
- There is a sense that there is a record somewhere else, other than in my conscience.
- Someone else knows what I have done – gulp!
- A sense of conflict between my actions and my beliefs and values.



This all helps to convict our conscience to take action to resolve the mental and emotional hurt.

5. To Encourage Us When it is Clear

To have a conscience clear of all guilt would be a wonderful feeling and would greatly help us draw closer to God:

“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart [conscience] condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.” (1 John 3:19–21)

The word “confidence” is translated from the same original word rendered “boldly” in this verse:

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16)

Do you feel boldness before God now? If not, understand that it is possible by having a clear conscience. That includes having the knowledge that God does not condemn us for past wrongs.

Paul's aim was to have a conscience that was clear or "void of offence."

"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and *toward* men." (Acts 24:16)

The Conscience and Brain Function

Brain research looking at the roles of different parts of the brain has shown that when our consciences are clear, we can reason and think more efficiently. But when we are involved in activities that defile the conscience we cannot think or reason as well. Clear thinking requires a clear conscience. And a clear conscience comes from making right decisions. How important it is to cleanse our sanctuaries so that what God has designed into us to make our lives better can work properly!

God, through our conscience, seeks to warn us off the path of sin. But when we refuse to listen, because He honors our free will, He backs off. God never forces obedience. Heed the warnings of your conscience and your brain will even work better.

Why Not a Verbal Warning?

God does not force obedience and He does not sanction others forcing obedience to His laws either. If His warnings to us were audible, it might induce others to put pressure on us not to do something. And so, He speaks to us individually – through the conscience. It is through the nerves of the brain that God communicates to man to affect his life. And no one else can read our minds to know whether we are under conviction or not.

That non-verbal warning also protects us from the embarrassment of exposure to others. A good example of that is the story of Simon the Pharisee. Simon, in his mind, was condemning the woman who was anointing Jesus' feet as a great sinner when he had considerable sin of his own. Jesus' gentle rebuke given through a parable (Luke 7:40–47) was designed to give a Simon a private message without exposing his sin before his dinner guests.

A Guilty Conscience Hurts

A conscience can be activated by certain actions:

“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.” (Pro25:21–22)

The probable or hoped-for reaction from the enemy would be something like: “He is being so kind to me; I should have treated him better.” It causes mental suffering, likened to the effects of hot coals.

The final suffering and destruction of the lost at the end of the millennium will likewise consist mainly of the effects of a guilty conscience. This is described for the case of Satan himself:

“Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.” (Eze 28:18)

For a detailed description of this process see my e-book [The Lake of Fire](#).

Focus Where the Problem Is

Too often we focus on the acts of sin not realizing that it is the sinful tendencies in our heart that lead to the sinful acts. And going further towards the ultimate source of our problem, as discussed in earlier parts of this series, it is our concept of God’s character that leads us to think and then act as we do. We tend to become like the concept of God we hold in our minds.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor 3:18)

Cleansing the Sanctuary - Part 18

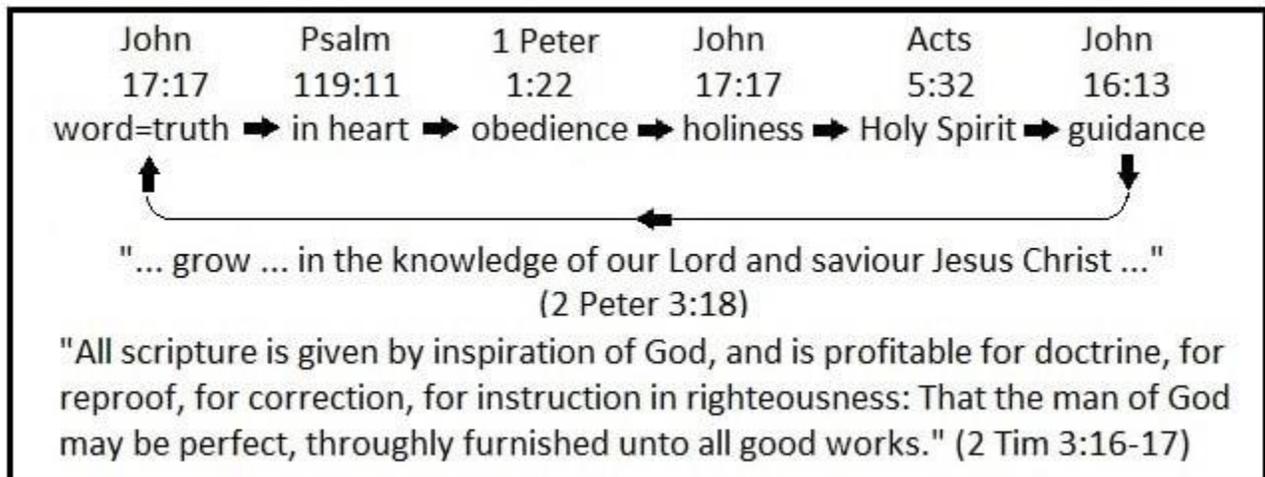
Cleansing by the Word

That he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word,” (Ephesians 5:26)

It is interesting that the words “sanctuary” (hagion, G39) and “sanctify” (hagiazō, G37) are both from the same Greek word “hagios,” (G40) usually translated as “holy.” A sanctuary is a holy place and a place that is clean.

Cleansing is a Process

Scripture indicates that cleansing the sanctuaries, the hearts of people involves the Word of God. When we learn truth from the Word, we can choose to obey it and receive the benefits. It involves a process that might be illustrated like this:



First we learn truth (even if just a little) from the Word:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17)

It starts to have an effect right away. Then we remember and treasure that truth in our hearts and put value on it:

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” (Psa 119:11)

That truth, when we make it the guide of life (a light to our paths – Psa 119:105), has the power to purify the person:

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth ...” (1 Pet 1:22)

When we obey the Word and are purified (even to a limited degree in one area of life) we become a more holy (sanctified) sanctuary to receive the Holy Spirit:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” (John 17:17)

Then, with obedience and resulting sanctification, the Spirit is given in greater measure:

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” (Acts 5:32)

The Holy Spirit then has greater influence to guide the believer:

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth ...” (John 16:13)

More truth from the Word is given with further opportunity to grow in knowledge and so the cycle repeats again and again towards the objective:

“That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:17)

The preceding verse identifies scripture as key to this process:

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Tim 3:16)

Jesus, Himself reinforced this:

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt 4:4)

The Role of the Word

Here is a key verse that gives an insight into how this works:

“For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb 4:12)

What does it mean to discern?

Def: to perceive by the sight or some other sense or by the intellect; see, recognize, or apprehend (www.dictionary.com)

Who needs to discern? Not God, but us. He already knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. It is we that need to understand our own thoughts and intents especially in relation to what the Word says. It helps us to discern what needs cleansing. It helps us to see the dirt.

Cleansing and Fear

Here is an interesting verse that links the cleansing process that we looked at above with the fear of God:

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear [phobos] of God.” (2 Cor 7:1)

That is not talking about perfecting holiness while being afraid of God; that would make no sense. The fear of God in that verse is reverence for him and an awareness of the presence of His Spirit. The verse below says if one is in fear they cannot be made perfect; cannot be cleansed. That fear must be the other meaning of fear – to be afraid.

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear [phobos]: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18)

So

- we are cleansed in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1)
- He that fears is not made perfect (1 John 4:18)

The interesting thing is that fear, in both cases, is from the same Greek word phobos (G5401) with these definitions (from the On-line Bible):

- 1) fear, dread, terror
 - 1a) that which strikes terror
- 2) reverence for one's husband

Fear can mean either “reverence for” or “to be afraid of” and that must be determined by the context. This is a good example of how one word can have multiple and very different meanings depending on the how it is used.

It is apparent that having fear in the sense of reverence for God is necessary for the other type of fear – being afraid – to be cast out.

Many of the sins we fall into are motivated by fear in some way:

- stealing for fear of going without.
- lying for fear of embarrassment.
- judging others for fear of feeling inadequate ourselves.
- adultery for fear of being unloved, lonely
- procrastination for fear of failure

Why We are Afraid of God

At the deepest level, most people fear God. The penal, [legal model](#) is so ingrained in our society that when we do wrong we think, even subconsciously: “God is going to get me for that.” Indeed, it is often reasoned that He has to punish sin in order to be a “just” God. But is that [the Biblical meaning of justice](#)? Our assessment of our value to Him is based on our performance or lack thereof: yes, God loves me – if I’m good (which I am not always) and, of course, “He knows if I’ve been bad or good.”

Do we really think subconsciously that “God is going to get me for that”? How would you know if you do or not? – It is subconscious! [Your subconscious processes all the input coming into it](#). If your subconscious has had the input that God must punish in some way for every sin (and we have all had that – lots of it), then it will put that together and, even if you don’t consciously make the connection, your subconscious mind will and it will cause you stress.

That is basing our value to God on our performance but is that how God determines our value? I don’t believe so. Jesus’ value to His Father is based on His relationship as the Son of God. I would highly recommend reading the booklet [Identity Wars](#) for further insight on this.

See the [Character of God and the Gospel Glossary](#) for clarification of the Bible's [definition of fear](#).

Perfect Love Casts out Fear

It should be made clear that when we speak of perfect love it is not so much us having a perfect love as it is us knowing of and appreciating the perfect love of God for us. That should be apparent as the verse (1 John 4:18) says: "...perfect love casteth our fear..." In a state where fear is present in the mind, that mind is not capable of perfect love and therefore perfect love must come in to the mind (be understood and accepted) from an outside source to cast out the fear. It is a conscious appreciation of the perfect love from an outside source that even invites it (the perfect love) in.

That can be illustrated by the following diagram (ovals represent the mind):



Jesus said:

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” (John 17:3-4)

Jesus’ work to reveal the character of His Father, especially His sacrifice for us, will draw us to Him.

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” (John 12:32)

He continues that work in our lives applying His Word (with its account of His life and the offering of His death) to us to cleanse us:

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:” (Phil 1:6)

“For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb 10:14)

Remember sin exists in our lives on three levels:

1. the sinful **attitude**
2. the sinful **flesh** – no one is going to be cleansed by the Word if:
 - they have not been cleansed in attitude.
 - they do not accept that the Word is of God.
3. the sinful **acts** – if the flesh, the mind, beliefs etc are cleansed the acts will be taken care of.

So His Word first cleanses by revealing His loving character to us thus changing our sinful attitude. Then, as we react in appreciation, the love starts to grow in us.

The Word can then begin a change in our sinful flesh (mind, sanctuary) as we comprehend His great love for us. And lastly, the sinful acts will naturally decrease in frequency as a result of changed habits and thought patterns in our brains. We actually need to say relatively little about dealing with specific sins in our lives. The next part however, will provide some help in that area.

Cleansing the Sanctuary - Part 19

Mopping up the Mess

Remember the three levels of sin:

- Sinful attitude
- Sinful flesh
- Sinful acts

This series on Cleansing the Sanctuary has stressed the point that we need to first deal with **the sinful attitude** (Part 8). Once we get to the point of truly trusting God by understanding His character then we can begin to

change our habits and attitudes, to cleanse **the sinful flesh** and make changes in our thinking – what is in our hearts. Only then will we have real success in dealing with **the sinful acts** that merely reflect the inner state. However, as we approach that point, we do want to deal with the sinful acts. Not by grim determination to do right but by having a changed heart so that the right words and actions will come naturally.



This verse may make it sound like cleaning up the speech can't be done:

“But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.” (James 3:8)

And it can't – not directly. This points to the need to get to the root of the problem. We are told that a person's words reflect what is in the heart:

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matt 12:34)

And that could, of course, include body language, tone of voice etc. This reflects that old maxim “garbage in, garbage out.” If the output from the heart into the speech center is wrong the words will match. The key, as always, is to change the heart. So don't concentrate so much on refining your words; focus on the heart and the words will be indirectly but effectively tamed.

There are many verses saying things like to make yourselves clean:

"If iniquity *be* in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles." (Job 11:14)

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;" (Isa 1:16)

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor 7:1)

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." (James 4:8)

And there are verses speaking of specific things that we need to be cleansed of:

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," (1 Peter 2:1)

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." (Eph 4:25)

How do you clean up a sin? Today I just stole _____ from _____. How can I cleanse that sin? Can you clean up a sin?

Logically, we can't clean up individual acts of sin. A sin is an event; an event that has happened in the past. We can make amends in some cases but we can't change the fact that the sinful act happened. We can't time travel and go through the same temptation again that lead to a past sin resisting it more firmly. So it is really about making changes to reduce or eliminate the tendency to sin and thus the future acts of sin.

Let's be clear about this process. First of all, cleansing must start with where the problem really is – our concept of God's character. Turn off the tap of misinformation about Him (part 15) so that you can appreciate what He is really like. That will lead to a total change in your attitude towards and relationship to God (repentance) and the motivation to take the next steps.

Secondly, the mind must be physically renewed which will greatly reduce the force of temptation. That renewing involves an actual physical rewiring to deal with the list of defects in our ways of thinking listed in part 16 and relisted here:

Negative Ways of Thinking

Anger	Laziness
Bitterness	Love of the world
Critical attitude	Low self-worth
Envy/jealousy	Pride
Fear	Regret
Gluttony	Resentment
Guilt	Selfishness
Hatred	Shame
Lack of self-control	Uncontrolled imagination

Imagine a scenario where you are starving hungry (almost in danger of death), you find some food and are about to eat it when a stranger snatches it from your hand. A person with an unrenewed heart, operating in the normal me-first mode, does not stand a chance of resisting the temptation to, if possible, snatch it back. We can't effectively prevent sin without dealing with how our brain is wired and that can only be changed by first straightening out our understanding of and attitude towards God.

Some people's brains may be wired with a high priority to be seen by others to do right. That motivation may give them a greater ability to avoid expressing their sinful desires as sinful acts (they exercise more restraint). In the illustration (top of this page), they have a larger "sink." But that can only do so much if the tap is still running. And, in that situation, the heart is still not cleansed. Desires of the heart (the thoughts and intents of the heart, Heb 4:12) not carried out still constitute sin (Matt 5:28) and have a negative effect on that person.

So, understanding that we can't just stop sinning without an appropriate change of heart, and assuming we have an appreciation of God's true character and His love for us, what are some steps we can take to actually reduce the acts of sin in our lives?

And let's admit that we don't have a true appreciation of God's character. We may have mentally assented to the fact that God does not personally take vengeance on His enemies, that He is ever-merciful and forgives all our sins etc but we are talking about the infinite God Who is infinitely good. We will forever be understanding and appreciating Him more fully. But even now, as our attitude and appreciation of Him and His character changes, we will be better able to cleanse our minds.

So if we have the sinful attitude taken care of, what steps can we take to cleanse and renew the mind?

General Positive Actions

First we will look at some general positive actions and then at some specific steps we can take to deal with negatives in our lives.

Avoid Temptation

Acts of sin are often preceded by exposure to temptation so one obvious action to battle sin is to avoid tempting circumstances

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. 1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 6:17-18; 7:1)

Touching the unclean thing seems to be a problem. What are we dealing with? Is it just physically touching? It starts with a temptation (which cannot always be avoided) and then (by choice) can become sinful coveting and finally a physical act.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:13-15)

For example:

“When I [Achan] saw [not a sin] among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them [there is the sin in the mind, even before the action of taking], and took them [the physical outward act]; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.” (Josh 7:21)

It makes sense to guard the senses from things that tempt you to sin but beyond that we need to have different motives in our hearts:

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Col 3:2)

Avoid Negative Influences

Beyond obvious temptations there can be negative influences around us that we might not even be aware of. Such things as music and images especially are registered in our subconscious mind and can have effects even much later.

There is a spirit which comes with sinful objects which gives Satan more access to tempt us. The presence of literature and objects associated with paganism, the occult, horror, pornography and other genres are inviting an influence. There is a reason why the second commandment tells us not make graven images.

We can and should be aware of these things and take steps, as far as possible, to eliminate such things from our surroundings. When I hear on our CBC radio “a warning: the following story contains what may be disturbing details” my tendency is to turn it off. Aside from being possible sources of temptation, such things as the nightly TV news can contribute towards depression (there is not much good news these days.)

“Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance, above everything else that you guard, for out of it flows all the issues of life.” (Pro 4:23 Amplified Bible)

Prayer and Promises

As most know, the Bible is loaded with promises to help us deal with sin in our lives. One of the most familiar is:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.” (1 Cor 10:13)

The help is there in the promises but they must be claimed in prayer to be of benefit as suggested by verses such as:

“For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” (Matt7:8)

The reception comes from God in response to our asking. There are clues that we can't just ask once but that there is to be a daily renewal:

“Give us this day our daily bread.” (Matt 6:11)

Scripture makes a direct connection between the promises and the ultimate result that can be obtained through them:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” (2 Peter 1:4)

“Having escaped the corruption” certainly sounds like some cleansing has happened.

Gratitude

Many, even secular sources, promote the positive effects of expressing gratitude. The simple habit of writing down three things each day that you are grateful for and expressing gratitude to others has many positive effects

Some Benefits of Gratitude:

- lowers levels of stress and depression
- reduces physical symptoms
- improves sleep
- strengthens the immune system
- reduces aches and pains
- optimizes blood pressure
- improves mood and self-satisfaction

So count your blessings, be aware of the source of the good things in your life and express your gratitude to God.



“When we express gratitude and receive the same, our brain releases dopamine and serotonin, the two crucial neurotransmitters responsible for our emotions, and they make us feel ‘good’. They enhance our mood immediately, making us feel happy from the inside.” (<https://positivepsychology.com/neuroscience-of-gratitude/>)

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:” (Psa 92:1)

Hope

Scripture promises are a good source of hope when we need it:

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (1 Cor 2:9)

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;” (2 Cor 4:17)

There are better times coming. I remember the saying “heaven will be cheap enough.” After all, it will be for eternity.

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Psa 16:11)

These verses shows the importance of hope:

“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom 5:2)

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Rom 8:24)

A source of hope is the Word of God:

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Rom 15:4)

It is always good to practice being hopeful, look on the bright side, see the glass as half-full etc.

Casting Down Imaginations

Imagination seems like it could be a problem.

“Science has revealed that even though we may avoid unhealthy behaviors (taking a substance, gambling, shopping) if we engage in the behavior in our imagination the same neural circuits fire as when the actual behavior is carried out.” (Timothy Jennings, April 30, 2020, [A Scriptural Healing Plan for Overcoming Addiction](#))

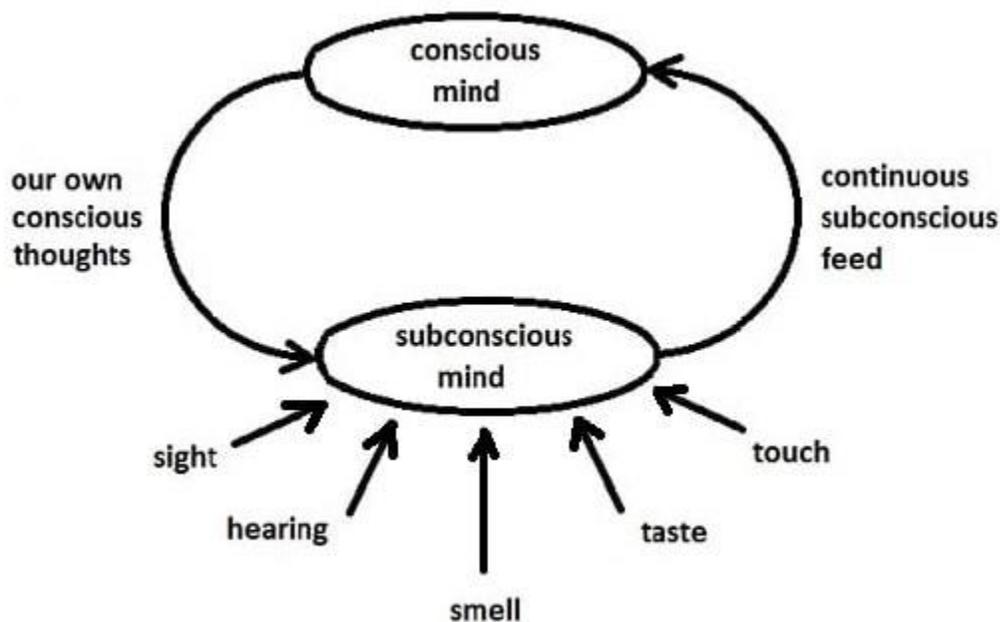
“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;” (2 Cor 10:4–5)

“Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together *for war*.” (Psa 140:2)

Casting down imaginations does not mean not using a God-given faculty. Our imaginations are an important function but just need to be correctly used.

Avoid Negative Thinking

Aside from our five senses, our subconscious mind is affected by what we think. It accepts all input without discrimination.



A good way to decrease negative thinking is to overwhelm it with positive thinking:

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.” (Phil 4:8)

Meditate on the Love of God

“Research at the University of Pennsylvania by Dr. Newberg and colleagues demonstrated that subjects 60–65 years of age who **meditated on a God of love**, just 12 minutes a day for 30 days, experienced measurable growth in the ACC [anterior cingulate cortex] of their brains as measured with MRI scans. This was directly correlated with reductions in heart rate, blood pressure and stress hormone levels and a 30% increase in memory testing. This demonstrates the calming of the amygdala and limbic system circuitry as a consequence of meditating on a God of love. Science confirms what the Bible has told us, ‘perfect love casts out all fear’ 1 John 4:18.” (Timothy Jennings “[How TV and an Angry, Wrathful God Damage Your Brain](#)“)

When we experience activation of our fear circuits or negative emotions in our limbic circuits, such as lust, envy, jealousy, anger or aggression, our prefrontal cortex is impaired. We become less capable of comprehending God and His methods. Thus, fear impairs spiritual growth! The antidote to fear is given in scripture:

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18)

How this works has been discussed in earlier parts of this study and is very much connected to our perception of the character of God. I have had people say to me things like that “the character of God topic is not that important.” Even that the Sabbath is more important.

What is the Sabbath for if not a time to spend with God and get to know and appreciate Him better?

“And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:” (Mark 2:27)

The Sabbath was made by a God of love for our benefit for us to get to know Him and not for His benefit. If you are going to meditate on a God of love you need to get to know Him and understand that He is love. What can that lead to?

“And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John 17:3)

Dealing with Specific Negatives

Having discussed general actions we can take to cleanse our sanctuary, what are some actions we can take to deal with specific problems?

Amusement

This is not to say that various fun activities are bad – we all need some fun but think of the background of the meaning of the word amusement:

Muse – verb (used without object), mused, mus · ing.
to think or meditate in silence, as on some subject. (dictionary.com)

Amusement (a-muse) therefore can be thought of as something that puts one in a non-thinking state. Here is a very good description of the effects of one source of amusement:

“Theatrical entertainment (TV and movies) activate the limbic system while diminishing prefrontal cortex activity. Theatrical entertainment stimulates an emotional reaction. It stimulates you to laugh, cry, be afraid, irritable, angry, frustrated, aroused or some other emotional response while simultaneously suspending your critical reasoning. And the stronger the emotional reaction the “better” the programming. The brain and body cannot tell the difference between firing the fear circuits in a real life stressful situation or when the fear circuits fire from a stress-inducing TV program. The biological consequences to brain and body are the same.

This means the more time spent watching TV etc the more activation of the limbic system and less development of the prefrontal cortex. Over time the limbic circuitry grows stronger while the prefrontal cortex is less developed and therefore less capable of calming the limbic system. Not only that, theatrical entertainment introduces false ideas which inappropriately activate, rather than calm the fear circuits of the brain.” (Timothy Jennings, [How TV and an Angry, Wrathful God Damage Your Brain](#))

Less development of the prefrontal cortex can have the effect, as some term it, of turning people into sheeple.

Knowing the effects of amusement and the media in general can help us, if we so choose, to limit our exposure and thus help to preserve our mental function.



Guilt

Many people are plagued with guilt over past wrongs. We need to understand that God is ever-merciful. As discussed in my booklet [Biblical Forgiveness](#), God always forgives every sin. Don't be like Cain who did not believe he could be forgiven:

“Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven” (Gen 4:13 KJV marginal reading in some editions).

And don't be like David who, for a whole year, would not deal with his guilt over his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah even while suffering greatly:

“When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.” (Psa 32:3)

Having guilt can also lead to fear; fear of being discovered or punished. God already knows all that you have done and does not actively punish. However, there may be negative consequences that come naturally from our sins:

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal 6:7)

Shame

We have all done shameful, embarrassing things that we would rather forget and certainly are not anxious for others to know about. Fear of embarrassment can keep us from admitting wrongs to others but that should not keep us from God Who already knows exactly what we have done – including our motives. Correctly understanding that God is not looking to punish but rather to heal us from the effects of sin can make a big difference. In fact, God will do all He can even to save us from potentially feeling embarrassed.

He did not come to Adam and Eve in the garden accusing them of sin, rather, He approached with a gentle question:

“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?” (Gen 3:9)

He sent Nathan the prophet with a parable to help David finally see and admit his own sins.

When Simon the Pharisee was thinking accusing thoughts of the woman washing Jesus’ feet, Jesus did not openly rebuke him before his guests but told a story to show Simon his error.

I have had the reaction from people that God must erase and forget every sin we have ever committed – said, possibly from fear of having those sins exposed. But, for instance, the sins of David are recorded in the Bible. Is the Bible going to be kept from us in heaven? Will Solomon not know who his earthly parents were? Will David and Bathsheba not know who he is?

“As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” (Psa 103:12)

Removing our sins from us is not talking about the record of our sins, it is not a rewrite of history. Rather, it is about removing the sinful tendencies we have as discussed in earlier parts of this study on the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Remember, God is not the accuser, Satan is. (Rev 12:9–10)

Regret

Feelings of regret for a wrong done can weigh heavily on a person. You can’t undo the past. Remember, God forgives all your sins so forgive yourself and get on with life. We all make mistakes. We have many wrong habit patterns and ways of thinking that trip us up.

“For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” (Psa 103:14)

God is fully aware of our weaknesses. The key is for us to also be aware of them and to cooperate with God in the cleansing process.

A good rule when making choices is to never decide to do something you will or even might regret later. Determine to always choose the best option in the future. Even make decisions beforehand that will help to keep you from committing a wrong that you will later regret.

"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" (Job 31:1)

Selfishness

Selfishness can result from not trusting in God's promises to provide for our needs. We need to learn to really understand God's love for us and His desire to take care of us:

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Pet 5:7)

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." (Matt 6:8)

An antidote for selfishness is to do things for others. When we realize the blessing that comes from that we will be more inclined to be thinking of others.

Low Self-worth, Esteem, Image

Our self-concept is very much affected by our early learning. A child enters the world with basically a blank slate or, to use the computer metaphor, an empty hard drive. Many of their self-concepts are acquired from interactions with others. The effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (**ACES**) have been well-researched. They can have profound effects throughout a person's life.

These can be counteracted by a sense of acceptance from God. Surely, His opinion of us is the most important. Of course, that requires a belief in Him and His goodness; His true character.

This verse can apply to each one of us:

"... Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (Jer 31:3)

Also, consider these:

"We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," (2 Thess 2:16)

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us," (Eph 2:4)

We are valuable in His sight, not because of a value inherent in us but because He is so loving and values all of His creatures. Anyone who has been affected by negative events in their lives can greatly benefit from meditating for a time every day of the wonderful character of God.

Anger/Bitterness

You have perhaps heard the saying:

“Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.”
(Unknown original source)

It is true. Theoretically, you could be holding anger in your heart and the person you are angry with does not even know it. Then where is the damage happening? It would be in the heart of the angry person. And such emotions have been linked to physical problems especially connected with the heart and risk of strokes and a lowered immune system. Scripture tells us to be generous with our forgiving:

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” (Matt 18:21–22)

Pride

This is the sin that led to Satan’s downfall

“Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. ... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.” (Eze 28:15–17)

If pride could lead to the downfall of one of the highest angels in heaven, it is something to be very cautious about.

“For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” (2 Cor 10:12)



The solution to having a sense of inadequacy is to recognize our value in God's estimation. We should recognize that we are highly valued in God's sight. After all, He made a great sacrifice to rescue us from the path of destruction.

“Who is Sitting on the Throne?”

One way you may have heard of the struggle to overcome sin is in terms of a question like: “Who is on the throne of your heart?” You may have heard something like this:

“The subconscious is considered to be in direct connection with immeasurable power known as the collective mind.”

This is the way New-age type people might talk. But there is power out there, much more than what we hold ourselves.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against **powers**, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:12)

The question then is: immeasurable power from what source? It is interesting how some authors and musicians etc got their words and lyrics.

Stephen King, author of horror novels, says that an idea will come to him for a book and he is driven to sit down and start writing it:

“I sometimes will write for one week barely stopping to eat or go to the bathroom or take small siestas until the book is finished. It's as if it is being dictated to me.”

J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series says:

“It was just like I was taking dictation.”

Note that I am not making a statement about the state of salvation of individuals as much as I am showing the power and influence that can bear on a person if they open themselves to it.

Power vs Influence

The struggle between the two opposing forces is not about power or God would have won long ago. It is more about influence and, because God carefully guards our free wills, the direction each person goes is determined by their own actions.

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.” (Phil 2:12-13)

He works in us through our conscience attempting to woo us to His side but all the time leaving us free to choose.

Bob Dylan, another influencer in popular culture has a song **You Gotta Serve Somebody** with the chorus:

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed
You're gonna have to serve somebody
Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord
But you're gonna have to serve somebody

You either serve God or the devil.

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Luke 16:13)



Some say “I don’t want to serve either, I am my own person and I will choose what I am going to do.”

The verse is talking about who lives in or most influences your subconscious, and you have no access to directly edit that part of your brain. There are only two forces that have access.

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” (1 John 4:6)

You do have a choice but you have to consciously make it as the default mode (that comes with our operating system) is selfishness which is certainly not God’s way. Our subconscious is also affected by what we consciously dwell on and, of course, by our five senses over which we do have considerable control.

Need to Make Conscious Decisions

Can you just tell the devil to get out and keep living like the devil and ignoring God and expect that the devil will actually leave? You can give him permission to influence you by your daily choices. The better choice is:

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and **he shall direct thy paths.**” (Pro 3:5–6)

The Effect on Our Witness

We should recognize that our sins, even seemingly minor ones, can often have an effect on others and impair our witness to them. And if we have hurt others we should, where appropriate, make amends. Think of the story of – Zacchaeus, the tax collector:

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold.” (Luke 19:8)

He determined to make amends and, as his declaration was made very publicly, it gave witness to the change that had happened within him. Zacchaeus had experienced a degree of cleansing of his sanctuary.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 20

Thy Way is in the Sanctuary

“Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?” (Psa 77:13)

Is there a physical sanctuary in heaven that looks like the earthly sanctuary Moses built with furnishings corresponding to each item in Moses’ sanctuary? I would not say there isn’t but we should understand the question in light of the truth of the cleansing of the sanctuary – what sanctuary is God most concerned with cleansing? That was answered in earlier parts of this study.

A Sanctuary in Heaven?

So is there a heavenly sanctuary somehow contaminated with records that Jesus is working to cleanse? Is He busy erasing records in heaven? What is He doing?

We could ask of the words “Thy way O God is in the sanctuary” Thy way of what? A way is often like a path to travel on. It can also be a manner of doing something. There is a famous song “I Did It My Way” by Frank Sinatra. Could it mean something like God’s way of dealing with the sin problem?



The sanctuary of the earthly system itself was designed as a teaching tool as laid out in [part 3](#) of this series. And it very much had to do with the disposition of sin rightly understood as resolving sinful tendencies in the hearts and minds of people.

“Your way, O God of dealing with the problem of sin in the hearts and minds of your people is illustrated in the sanctuary ...” (Psa 77:13, my paraphrase)

Jesus is not erasing records of sin in heavenly "books." He is not hiding evidence.

Is there an **altar of sacrifice** in heaven? No. There would be no death in heaven. Essentially, the altar of sacrifice of the heavenly “system” was the cross of Calvary. That is where the sacrifice happened in the heavenly system or heaven’s way of dealing with the sin problem. That sacrifice was to enable us to receive (accept) forgiveness.

John saw candlesticks that he was told represented churches (Rev 1:20). They are commonly thought of as being in the sanctuary (but it doesn't say that). Did Moses' sanctuary have **candlesticks** that represented candlesticks in heaven that represented churches? I don't think there are symbols of symbols. Symbols always point to reality.

The same could be said for the **table of showbread**. Showbread literally means "bread of the faces" or "bread of the presences." Is there a table in a sanctuary in heaven with two stacks of showbread representing the Father and His Son? Would it be needed when They are actually there?

Is there an **altar of incense** in a heavenly sanctuary from which prayers rise to heaven? No. If there is an equivalent altar there, it is already in heaven.

The **ark of the covenant** with its porous wood can represent our human lack of understanding of Him which is then covered with gold as we gain a more perfect understanding of Him and His character.

"Thy way" is His appointed way for us to come to a more accurate understanding of His character so that we could completely trust Him again enough to come to a state of atonement with Him.

What Sanctuary is Being Cleansed?

This study has shown that the sanctuary to be cleansed is really the human heart. It is to be cleansed of sin. When a person falls into sin it is definitely a time of need. We are told to come to the throne of grace which we can do by prayer.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16)

And what might our great High Priest do in response? Among other things, He might give us assurance of forgiveness, prompt us to make things right or remind us of His great love for us. Where does that take effect? In our minds. So where is He ministering? While He is physically in heaven, the beneficial effects of His ministration happen on earth in the sanctuaries of our minds – the sanctuary/sanctuaries heaven is most concerned about.

It is something like a person could be an ambassador of Canada to a foreign country but that does not mean he is ministering in Canada. Rather, the ministering, while being done in **behalf of** Canada, is actually conducted outside of Canada.

Christ Pleading?

Christ “pleading His blood **before** the Father,” as it is often said, is describing **where** He is (His physical location) while doing His work of intercession NOT **to Whom** the pleading is directed. We should not think that Christ is trying to persuade His Father to do something. God is not divided.

Then, if Jesus is in a heavenly sanctuary pleading **before** God, to whom is He pleading? To you and me! Jesus knocks on the door to our hearts, pleading for us to let Him heal and restore us to righteousness.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” (Rev 3:20)

Why is Christ outside knocking? – because He starts off on the outside. Many people have “good” characters but the devil still has considerable influence in their lives and they need to respond to the Savior and accept His help. God does not use force. Love can never be won by force.

We Must Invite the Heavenly “Janitor” In

Is it enough to open the door to Christ? No, we don’t just “let” Him in. That can imply to yield under pressure. Rather, we invite Him in. It is active on our part, not passive.

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it **empty**, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” (Matt 12:43–45)

That man did not invite the Savior into his “house” or it would not have been described as “empty.” We have to invite Him in. He is such a gentleman He will not just walk into a house even if the door is open but will wait to be invited in.

Christ comes into the heart, not because it is free from sin, but in order to free it from sin. He must be welcomed in so that He can do the work.

Lessons from the Sanctuary

Let's look more at some of the aspects of the sanctuary. Perhaps it will help to understand the process of cleansing our sanctuaries. Like prophecies can have multiple applications (for example, Matthew 24 teaching of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD and the end of the world) the sanctuary and its cleansing can teach a few different things.

As discussed above and in earlier parts of this study, it relates to our understanding of the character of God and to steps we can take in dealing with sin.

It can also be understood as described on my other website as [a template for prayer](#). If the way to God is in the sanctuary and prayer is a way to connect with Him, it makes sense that there might be a connection between the two. It has proved useful to me in my prayer life.

In addition, the sanctuary illustrates the human mind and its two parts, the conscious mind and the subconscious mind.

At the deepest level, most people fear God. The penal, legal model is so ingrained in our society that when we do wrong we think, even subconsciously: "God is going to get me for that." Indeed, it is often reasoned that He has to punish sin in order to be a "just" God. But is that even the [meaning of Biblical justice](#)? Our assessment of our value to Him is based on our performance or lack thereof: yes, God loves me – if I'm good (which I am not always) and, of course, "He knows if I've been bad or good." That is making Him less loving than He actually is.

Do we really think subconsciously that "God is going to get me for that"? How would you know if you do or not? – It is subconscious! Your subconscious processes all the input coming in to it (**Part 13** of this series). If your subconscious has had the input that God must punish in some way for every sin (and we have all had that – lots of it), then it will register that and, even if you don't consciously make the connection, your subconscious mind will and it will cause you stress.

We need to get new ideas, new programming, a new understanding of God in there. Then our subconscious will have the right information and can feed right thoughts into our conscious mind.

"I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons." (Psa 16:7)

As noted in part 13, "reins" can refer to the mind, specifically, the subconscious mind.

Satan is the Accuser

Another thing we have to deal with in our heart/mind (sanctuary) is the accusations of Satan:

“And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD stood by.” (Zech 3:1–5)

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” (Rev 12:10)

Judgment is often pictured as a court room scene where Satan accuses us while Jesus stands by our side to defend us in the presence of His Father the Judge. But notice who Satan is accusing – “accused them.” The following is adapted from a presentation by [Tim Jennings](#):

"Does God listen to what Satan says? Does God get confused by Satan's arguments and need Jesus there to present the truth in order to get it right? Does God say to Jesus, "Wow thank you Son, I almost believed what Satan was saying, if you hadn't been here to present the truth I wouldn't have been able to know it?"

Who does get confused by Satan's arguments, allegations and lies? Who listens to the devil and gets discouraged, guilt-ridden, overcome with shame such that they think they are beyond salvation, beyond healing, too sinful, too awful for God to love and for God to save? Human beings! We are the ones to whom Satan makes allegations."

So, it seems that Satan tries to have his way in our sanctuaries too. It really is, as some have termed it: “a battle for the mind.”

Out With the Bad – All of It

The cleansing of our sanctuaries must be a conscious process:

“The Lord will not take our sins [sinful tendencies] without our permission. God’s people must decide whether they would rather have their sins or Christ. ... The Lord will probe and bring up sins to us that we never thought of before, that only shows that he is going down to the depths, and he will reach the bottom at last. . . He cannot put the seal, the impress of his perfect character, upon us until he sees it there. And so he has got to dig down to the deep places we never dreamed of, because we cannot understand our hearts. ... We need to know what the Lord is doing. If He takes away our sins without our knowledge, it would do us no good. We would be machines. ... He must try our ‘reins’ that our unconscious rebellion may be purged.” (A. T. Jones, Sermon 1893)

That “trying” is really for our benefit, not God’s. It is to bring hidden defects to our consciousness so that we can allow Him to cleanse us of them.

“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.” (Psa 26:2)

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psa 139:23–24)

“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.” (Lam 3:40)

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor 13:5)

While verses can seem to be talking of Him learning of us, it is really Him working to bring us to a true knowledge of ourselves. That is an important part of cleansing the sanctuary so that it may be thoroughly cleansed.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 21

Benefits of Cleansing

We are nearing the end of our study on the cleansing of the sanctuary and I thought it would be good to look at the benefits of this process both to us and others. Seeing the benefits will hopefully encourage us to take this process seriously. Then there will be one more very interesting part. For now, let's look at the benefits of cleansing the sanctuary:

- for us
- for those around us
- for the universe
- for God

Benefits of Cleansing for Us

First, what is it about the cleansing of the sanctuary process that will benefit us? What happens in the sanctuary of our heart/mind? – The tendency to sin is lessened and finally completely controlled. The flip side is that the law of God and a desire to keep it is written there – and will be kept.

“The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.” (Psa 37:31)

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Psa 40:8)

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.” (Psa 119:34)

What are specific benefits to us resulting from that? What have you felt or imagined that could be felt as the process progresses? Here are some possibilities:

- Closer fellowship with God
- No guilt
- Better self-worth
- Greater Confidence
- Peace of mind – better sleep, gratitude
- Hope
- A sense of purpose
- No fear

We recognize that cleansing is an ongoing process and so the benefits should increase over time. Let's briefly look at each of these.

Closer Fellowship with God

“And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” (Acts 5:32)

So when we are obedient, we have a sense of the presence of the Father and His Son, not physically but by Their omnipresent Spirit.

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)

That fellowship and resulting familiarity leads to trust and His constant direction:

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Pro 3:5–6)

No Guilt – Understanding God's freely-offered, ever-available, no-strings-attached forgiveness, His non-condemnation and desire only to heal and restore can remove feelings of guilt and fill us with gratitude. When if we do slip up we can take comfort in this:

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:” (1 John 2:1)

All the other four uses of the original word for “advocate” are translated as “comforter.” Jesus, the Comforter, wants to comfort us when we sin, not to excuse our sins but to heal, restore and strengthen us.

Better Self-worth – Even though we are sinners and may often fail, we can know that the God of the universe accepts and loves us in spite of our faults. We are of great value to Him or He would not have gone to such great lengths to save us.

“But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:7)

That self-worth should not lead to pride but just give us assurance that we have Someone Who has our back.

Greater Confidence – There is great confidence that comes from doing the right thing and from knowing you are right with God. Not so much self-confidence but confidence in Him. That comes mostly from experience so the sooner we can start making significant progress in the cleansing process, the sooner the relationship can grow and the sooner we can build that sense of confidence.

Peace of Mind – Many people struggle with what is often called the monkey mind; a mind that is unsettled, restless, confused, indecisive and uncontrollable. That can come from uncertainty, guilt and regrets from the past and fears for the future. Knowing you are right with the God of the universe can greatly contribute to genuine peace of mind. And that can lead to a sense of gratitude and physical benefits such as better sleep and better health in general.

Hope – When one knows and accepts the truth about what God is truly like it gives great hope that the future will be better.

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Rom 8:24)

“To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col 1:27)

A Sense of Purpose – An appreciation for the truth of God’s character stirs within a person a desire to share it with others and, knowing the difference it can make, a sense of urgency to engage in this great work.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt 5:16)

The light we are shedding is to illuminate Him; to point others to His wonderful character that others may be attracted.

No Fear – Our health is related to our environment right? Here is something interesting. Every cell in our body has an environment it lives in. There is the immediate environment around it, the intercellular space, and the larger environment that we walk around in. Each cell is ultimately affected by both. Cells in your body cannot perceive the outer environment directly (like a person in an interior cabin on a cruise ship can’t see the

weather) but they get information via an indirect source which is your nervous and hormonal systems.

For example, if the conscious mind perceives danger, the amygdala (the brain's alarm center) fires and the subconscious mind takes over to signal physical changes via adrenaline and other stress chemicals that are released which affect cells elsewhere in our bodies. The point is that our brain interprets the environment for the rest of our body. The danger could be physical or emotional as either will cause similar reactions that we call stress resulting in some degree of fear.

When our mind/sanctuary perceives that all is not right because we have underlying issues of guilt, shame, etc there is a level of stress that affects every cell in our body. That can affect inflammation levels, digestion, sleep, muscle tension and other factors that can lessen our function and shorten our lives. Ultimately, that can affect our ability to understand spiritual truths and threaten our salvation.

Fear of God can be understood as either reverence for God or fear as in to be afraid of. See the detailed [glossary definition of fear](#).

Benefits of Cleansing for Those Around Us

The Blessing of Others

“And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all *that* he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time *that* he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field.” (Gen 39:2–5)

“And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing.” (Gen 12:2)

“[Christ] Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” (Titus 2:14).

“Ye are the salt of the earth ...” (Matt 5:13)

The Protection of Others

Anyone and everyone is in danger from the attacks of Satan:

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:” (1 Peter 5:8)

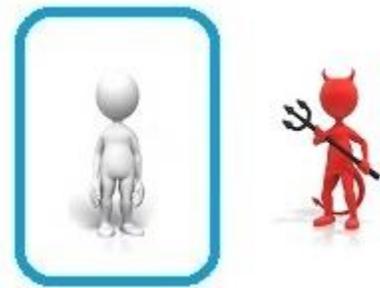
Protection is available from those attacks as suggested by these verses:

“Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” (Job 1:10)

“And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:” (Isa 5:5)

It can be illustrated like this:

When people refuse God’s protection directly or through their disobedience of God’s law that protection is removed in honor of the free will choices of man. God does not use force even to pressure us to accept His protection. He is an absolute gentleman and will not impose Himself where His presence is not desired:



"Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?" (Job 22:17)

Notice we do it to ourselves; God does not willingly remove that protection:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)



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When the hedge is removed people are vulnerable to Satan’s attacks. A whole city, because of the sins of the people there can forfeit their protection and come under attack:



“And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;” (Gen 18:20)

The hedge of protection is then lost but, for the sake of a few righteous people, it can be maintained or restored:

“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.” (Eze 22:30)

Notice the situation in the case of Sodom where there were not enough righteous people present to prevent the looming destruction.

“And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten’s sake.” (Gen 18:32)

The city of Sodom would not have been destroyed if there were even a few righteous people found there. Trust in the Lord can bring His protection:

“Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone..” (Psa 91:9-12)



The Conversion of Others

Cleansing our sanctuary/heart can even contribute to the conversion of others:

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” (Psa 51:10–13)

Of course, having a right spirit and the joy of salvation in our hearts will prompt us to share that good news with others.

Benefits of Cleansing for the Universe

We know from scripture that one third of the angels sided with Satan (Rev 12:4, 7–9) in his rebellion against God. No doubt there were many questions even in the minds of the loyal angels as they discussed the issues. Even though sides were taken, questions likely lingered. In this verse, note that the word “men” is supplied; it is not in the original:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.” (John 12:32)

The effect of the cross was to draw all intelligent beings to a greater understanding of the self-sacrificing love of God. The whole history (His-story) of the conflict on Earth between good and evil was to show to the universe the characters of those involved.

“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.” (1 Cor 4:9)

“Spectacle” is from the Greek word “theatron.” We looked at the many parallels between the symbolic earthly sanctuary and theater in part 3.

Part of that spectacle, of course, is God’s servants showing the effect of having His character in their hearts or minds. And, as His representatives, their characters reflect the character of the God they serve. Fully accepting God’s way in their hearts (sanctuaries) is represented by this verse:

“Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” (Rev 7:3)

Benefits of Cleansing for God

“God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.”
(Rom 3:4)

What does it mean for God to have a sanctuary as in a safe place? Is God ever in danger? – can He be in danger of being hurt?

What is it about Him that can be hurt?

- His reputation – which then hurts others as they act in ungodly ways
- His emotions – He feels more for us and our hurt than for His own

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.” (Isa 63:9)

God is:

- Omnipresent – His presence is everywhere
- Omnipotent – He has infinite power
- Omniscient – He knows all things
- Omnipassionate – He can feel all emotions at once

He feels emotions and feels them strongly.

“And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.”
(Matt 26:39)

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa 53:10–11)

In what sense did it please “the LORD “to bruise him”? What pleased the Father was not that His Son was hurting but the result of the suffering – that many would be saved. Likewise, the Son, even in His terrible suffering, felt joy that you would be saved. He must love you very, very much.

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:2)

Wanting to benefit God, could mean that we finally quit misrepresenting Him, allowing Him to have His way in us by reflecting His way of treating people instead of taking things into our own hands and doing things our typical way.

We need to be thinking more of Him and His good than our own.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 22

The Kingdom of Heaven

“Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:21)

The Kingdom of God (often understood to be synonymous with the kingdom of heaven) is commonly thought of as heaven itself – the physical place where God and His angels abide. However, the text above actually suggests the location of this kingdom – “within you;” that is, within God’s people; something other than a physical, visible kingdom.

If God’s desire is to dwell within the cleansed hearts of His people as we have determined in this **Cleansing of the Sanctuary** series and if the kingdom of God is also within people, that suggests that the presence of the kingdom of God is closely connected with the cleansing of His people.

What could “the kingdom of God is within you” mean, in light of all that we have been studying on the cleansing of the sanctuary? Could it be that it is within people who have a correct understanding of the character and purposes of God?

But is that kingdom of God referring to God’s actual presence through His Spirit or to something that enables His presence?

The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven

First let’s establish that the two terms are referring to the same thing. In the New Testament, “kingdom of heaven” is used 33 times and only by Matthew. The “kingdom of God” is used 69 times in the New Testament but only 5 times by Matthew. Here are verses in Matthew and Mark reporting exactly the same conversation but each using a different term:

“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt 4:17)

“And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mark 1:15)

Here is the same comparison between Matthew and Luke:

“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:3)

“And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20)

The terms “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” are thus seen to be equivalent and will be used interchangeably in this study. It is also interesting that if you look at every verse that uses the phrase “kingdom of God” (69 verses) and every verse that uses “kingdom of heaven” (32 verses) you won’t find much that indicates that it is referring to a literal place we think of as heaven. In fact there are a number of clues that it is a kingdom that could be established on Earth before the Second Coming. We will now look at those.

The Kingdom of God is Related to Knowledge

“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Matt 13:11)

“But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.” (Matt 23:13)

The scribes and Pharisees could not shut up literal heaven but they could keep people in spiritual ignorance so they would not find their way to the kingdom.

“And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables.” (Mark 4:11)

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matt 6:33)

Matthew is not speaking of people trying to find a physical kingdom. Rather, it is knowledge that we need to seek – about the kingdom of God. He is speaking of finding the kingdom of God and, once found, their other temporal needs would be supplied. Could “finding” it be something like reaching a level of understanding of God’s ways and a connection with Him?

The Kingdom of God is a Mindset

If the kingdom of heaven “is within you” that could be referring to the mind; to a way of thinking – a way of thinking that is in agreement with [the principles of heaven](#). This

website supports the understanding of a non-violent, non-condemning, ever-merciful God. While that concept might, on the surface, seem to contradict plain words of scripture, a more careful look reveals a different picture – please explore more of this website.

Also, this **Cleansing of the Sanctuary** series emphasizes that overcoming sin starts with having a relationship of absolute trust in God which comes from properly understanding His wonderful character. Consider these verses:

“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 19:14)

“Of such” – of the trusting attitude of a young child – “is the kingdom.”

“Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” (Mark 10:15)

“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom 14:17)

That verse relates the kingdom of God to a state of the mind rather than to physical things.

“And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. ...” (Mark 12:34)

Jesus’ words above were in answer to a scribe who had said:

“... Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:32–33)

This scribe was close to the kingdom of God because of his understanding that the principle of love was more important than offerings and sacrifices.

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Dan 2:44)

How could a kingdom be set up anywhere on earth when those kings are still in existence and stand forever? Wouldn’t it be interrupted by the Second Coming? If the kingdom that

God sets up “in the days of these kings” is not a physical kingdom but a way of thinking, a set of attitudes in the minds of its subjects, it could be seen to continue right through the Second Coming and on into eternity. If the God of heaven sets up a kingdom it could certainly be referred to as either the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven.

The Kingdom of God Not Like an Earthly Kingdom

This verse shows that people in Jesus’ day were expecting a visible kingdom:

“And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” (Luke 19:11)

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6)

Jesus response to such ways of thinking is shown in this verse:

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:” (Luke 17:20)

“But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.” (Luke 10:10–11)

Jesus was there saying not that a physical kingdom had somehow come near but that an opportunity to learn the truth of God’s kingdom had been made available – and they had spurned it.

Those verses suggest that the kingdom is not so much a place as it is a state of mind or knowledge. In Jesus’ sample prayer is a suggestion that the kingdom might even be on Earth:

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.” (Matt 6:10)

“Let your kingdom of love come and your perfect will be done on earth just like it is in heaven.” (Matt 6:10; The Remedy New Testament paraphrase)

Other verses suggest that people on Earth are or will be a part of this kingdom:

“These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” (Dan 7:17–18)

The saints “take the kingdom” or, as it is more commonly translated, “receive the kingdom.” They are not taking the kingdom of God from kings of the earth who never had it. This verse links receiving the kingdom with a level of knowledge:

“Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment [discernment] was given [granted] to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” (Dan 7:22)

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” (Dan 7:27)

That verse also supports that the saints receive rather than take the kingdom.

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John 18:36)

“Not of this world” is not simply a reference to being on Planet Earth because, of course, that is where His servants (the disciples) were. Rather it is a reference to the world’s way of doing things. In the world’s system not only would His servants have fought but they would have been organized and trained for fighting and expected and ordered to by their king. “Under the whole heaven” in Daniel 7:27 suggests that this kingdom is on Earth.

Who Will be Part of this Kingdom of God?

When we get to heaven who do you think, among the saved, might be great in heaven? Moses? Elijah? Surely one of the prophets. Does this verse suggest it might be John the Baptist?

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist ...” (Matt 11:11)

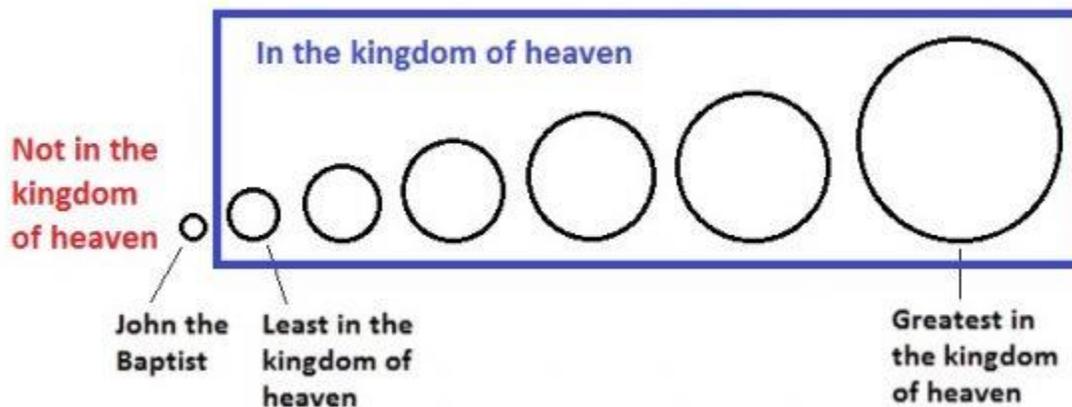
Why was John considered so great? In fact, he was considered more than a prophet and the reason is given:

“But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.” (Matt 11:9–10)

“More than a prophet” because it was he who had the role and privilege of introducing the Messiah to the world. But the last part of verse 11 contains a surprise:

“Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” (Matt 11:11)

It could be illustrated like this:



Does that mean that when we get to heaven and line people up by greatness (which, of course, we wouldn't do) the least person who made it to heaven, the one who just squeaked in would be greater than John the Baptist?

How is greatness measured? Don't we expect that John the Baptist will be there? Will he be the shortest person there? Is it even referring to heaven?

Notice, it says:

“.. he that **is** least in the kingdom of heaven **is** greater than he”

Matthew 11:11 is written in the present tense. Could it be talking about John the Baptist compared to other people right then; in his day; when the words were spoken?

Could being in the kingdom of heaven refer to not necessarily being physically in heaven although that will be the case after the Second Coming but having a certain state of mind or understanding, even before the Second Coming?

Did John the Baptist have a problem with his understanding? Might he have been influenced by passages about the Messiah such as:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;” (Isa 61:1–2)

As he preached about the coming Messiah he said things like:

“Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” (Luke 3:7)

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” (Luke 3:9)

“Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.” (Luke 3:17)

Does it seem like, in John’s mind, the Messiah was coming to straighten things out? Wasn’t that close to the common expectation? They were, for example, looking for a Messiah to end the Roman oppression.

But when Jesus came and proclaimed His mission He said, quoting Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4:18–19)

He quite significantly stopped just before the part that says “and the day of vengeance of our God” Why do you think He did that? Potentially, He would very likely have been misunderstood.

Did He proclaim “the day of vengeance of our God”? It would seem (in some understandings of God's vengeance) that He did in Matthew 24 when He spoke of the fall of Jerusalem. But why not include it in what He said in Luke 4? Because it was not part of His mission to the world. Also, because He understood the non-violent nature of God. The prophesied vengeance came later in 70AD but that was the work of Roman soldiers and not the work of God. That destruction happened not by a direct act of God but because His protection was forced away (as in Job 22:17) and He could no longer protect them. We can see that in this verse:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings [to protect them], and ye would not [allow it]!” Matt 23:37)

We can see further evidence that John the Baptist had a problem with his understanding.

“Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.” (Matt 11:2-6)

What happened in John's mind?

- He heard what Christ was doing
- He perceived a mismatch between Jesus' actions and his understanding of the work of the Messiah
- He had doubts in his mind that Jesus was the Messiah
- He sent two of his disciples to investigate

Is it possible that John was still looking for the vengeance part? Is that how it could have been true that John was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven? Those people, with a true understanding of the character of God, would know that He does not use violence to get His way but only the incentive of love. Those who have only heard the standard concept of God's character and have not carefully investigated for themselves would believe that God often plays His trump card of force to get His way.

The Kingdom of God Subject to Violence

While Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven, it seems that it was misunderstood by most people. Misunderstood and even attacked in some way:

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence (G971), and the violent take it by force.” (Matt 11:12)

If the kingdom of heaven was only a reference to the physical heaven, people could not be doing violence to it. This is not a physical attack and as the kingdom is shown above to be a way of thinking (a mindset or philosophy) it could be referring to attempts to impose ideas upon the understanding of it that don't fit.

“The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth (G971) into it.” (Luke 16:16)

In that verse, the word “presseth” is translated from the same Greek word translated “violence” in Matthew 11:12. The thinking of most people towards the concept of the kingdom of God is also seen in this event:

“When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.” (John 6:15)

This misunderstanding of the nature of the kingdom of heaven is seen in this verse:

“For I bear them (the people of Israel) record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom 10:2)

It could be said that the kingdom suffers violence even today; much violence from the understanding that God would use violence in the establishment or ruling of His Kingdom. People try to impose their own understanding of how God should rule His kingdom without understanding [the principles of heaven](#).

So if the kingdom of heaven is not referring to the physical location of heaven and some were part of the kingdom of heaven in John's day, could the kingdom of heaven exist even now? Or perhaps the kingdom of heaven (a correct knowledge of God) has been largely lost over the centuries (think especially of the Dark Ages) and is only now or soon to be reestablished – “in the days of these kings” (Dan 2:44).

Even John the Baptist's preaching of the kingdom of God was not with a full understanding. He shared some of the misconceptions of the popular belief. The kingdom of God was then

preached by Jesus and, after Pentecost, by His disciples. And, I believe, the 144,000 will more fully understand the kingdom of heaven and will thus be able to preach it with conviction and power.

So what will the experience of the kingdom of heaven be like and who will be a part of it? We will look at that in the next and final part of this series and see how it is related to the Cleansing of the Sanctuary.

Cleansing the Sanctuary – Part 23

A Fit Temple

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven." (Matt 6:10)

In this last section of the Cleansing of the Sanctuary series we will take a look from another angle and consider whether that cleansing might go as far as to include a degree of physical cleansing.

Reaching the point of having a cleansed sanctuary is described in Revelation as (at last) the bride "hath made herself ready":

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Rev 19:7-8)

The end result is described:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." (Rev 14:1)

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." (Rev 14:5)

"Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Rev 14:12)

"And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." (Rev 14:15)

The goal of the cleansing process is described:

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph 5:27)

Are spots, wrinkles and blemishes serious defects? Compare to:

"From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." (Isa 1:6)

Spots, wrinkles and blemishes don't sound so bad but the point is that God wants to clean us up entirely – mind, body and spirit.

We think of the spots, wrinkles and blemishes in the spiritual sense as sins but could it include more than that? – What about mental function or physical function? Or should I say dysfunction? Is that also to be cleansed?

Our Body, Our Responsibility

We are a sanctuary or temple for God's indwelling. We have a responsibility to care for our bodies in order to:

- better reflect God's character
- be better able to share about God
- not be a burden others
- be better able to care for family
- be good stewards
- be healthier and happier

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are. (1 Cor 3:16-17)

Here is a version of verse 17 that better expresses what is being defiled and what it is being defiled with:

"If anyone fills the heart and mind with the destructive principles of this world, then when God returns, his presence will be a consuming fire to such people and will destroy them; for you are created to be God's temple—to have your hearts and minds filled with his character, methods and principles—and God's temple is to be kept pure." (1 Cor 3:17, The Remedy New Testament paraphrase)

Our minds are responsible for our bodies (but not the reverse) because it is in our minds that we make decisions concerning the care of our bodies. The two are closely connected. Your mind, your body. Then what about this?

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor 6:19–20)

You are the manager of your body, you make the decisions for it, what to put in your mouth etc. but God, ultimately, owns it. That is much like how man was given dominion of the Earth and yet God said it was His.

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen 1:28)

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:" (Exo 19:5)

He is responsible for our existence and He wants to fully redeem us. His goal is to have our minds (housed in our bodies) be abodes for the presence of His Spirit.

So the important question is:

If God is going to make our minds His sanctuary, a place for Him to dwell, will He also take some responsibility for needed renovations and maintenance of the body that houses the mind?

We have concentrated on the cleansing of the mind in this series but have also said that the functioning of the mind is dependent on it being supported by a well-running body. Does this whole Cleansing the Sanctuary process involve the flesh beyond the brain itself? We are familiar with this verse:

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must put* on immortality." (1 Cor 15:53)

That, of course, is referring to the renewal of our bodies at the Second Coming. But what about before that? That is what we want to continue exploring in this last part of the series.

What About the Timing of this Cleansing?

Just before Jesus ascended to heaven He was asked about the kingdom of heaven:

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."
(Acts 1:6-7)

It seems that the full establishment of the kingdom was yet future. Daniel chapter seven especially points to a future time for the kingdom:

"But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. ... Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." (Dan 7:18,22)

We saw in the previous part of this series that the kingdom was related to having knowledge of the ways of God which is also reflected in this passage:

"But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."
(Jer 31:33-34)

The phrase "my law in their inward parts ... hearts" sounds like a completed cleansing of the sanctuary and "they [the house of Israel] shall all know me" sounds like atonement in the final stages of cleansing. There is also this verse:

"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." (Jer 50:20)

Those passages suggest those in the kingdom have been purified and have a clear knowledge of and close relationship with God. Previously, we also linked to the 144,000, a group on Earth at the Second Coming. The final, completed cleansing when the 144,000 fully reflect Christ's character will occur just before the Second Coming (Rev 7:3-4).

Evidence of a Physical Cleansing

The second chapter of the book of Joel contains a very interesting description of a unique group of people and signs associated with them. Here it is in point form:

- v2 great people ... strong
 - there hath not been ever the like (they are unique)
- v3 fire before them and flame behind them
 - land as Eden before them (land producing abundantly)
 - behind them a desolate wilderness
 - nothing shall escape them
- v4 appearance as horses (a symbol of strength; eg Psa 147:10)
 - run like horsemen
- v5 leap on the mountains (chariots)
 - devoureth the stubble
 - strong people
 - set in battle array
- v6 people much pained (in reaction to "great people" of v2)
- v7 run like mighty men
 - climb the wall like men of war
 - march every one on his ways
 - shall not break their ranks
- v8 neither shall one thrust another (all united)
 - each will walk in his path
 - not wounded by the sword (see Isa 54:17)
- v9 run to and fro in the city
 - run upon the wall
 - climb up upon the houses
 - enter in at the windows like a thief
- v10 earth quakes before them
 - heavens shall tremble
 - sun and the moon shall be dark
 - stars shall withdraw shining
- v11 his army, his camp is very great

And this is all "at the day of the Lord" in connection with the Second Coming. It does seem to be describing a very unique group of people who are Divinely-empowered (with cleansed sanctuaries/ minds?) to carry out their mission.

A Theory

I am going to present a theory with the purpose of encouraging further consideration by others. It is based on a combination of three things we have looked at in this series:

- the cleansing of the sanctuary
- the description of the kingdom of God
- the characteristics of the end-time 144,000

The theory is that there will be a period of time (likely very short) on Earth preceding the Second Coming when the 144,000 who have their minds (sanctuaries) fully cleansed and have a correct understanding of the character of God (and reflect it in their own lives) will act as God's special agents in giving the last warning message to the world. They will be obedient to all of God's laws, will be filled with the Holy Spirit, supernaturally endowed with physical capability and directed (for example, see Acts 8:29) to do God's work. This seems to be indicated by what I have looked at and I invite others to further investigate whether it might be so.

A Caution

My capable reviewer pointed out to me that this group in Joel chapter 2 is commonly regarded as being the same as the nation (Joel 1:6) that was to invade and lay waste to Israel. And that may well be. I do recognize however that there are prophecies in the Bible that have dual applications/fulfillments and am questioning if this might be one of those.

Some of the points in that section of Joel 2 that most seem to point to an end-time scenario are:

- v1 "the day of the "LORD"
- v10 the sun and the moon being darkened
- v11 His, The LORD's army

So, I freely admit, that this theory is somewhat speculative (but not without evidence).

That there are degrees of being filled with the Holy Spirit is evidenced by:

"For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3:34)

The presence/influence of God can be partial or total ("without measure") and will be in accordance with the degree of obedience or conformity to the will and ways of God:

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (Acts 5:32)

We will now look at some of the ways the Bible suggests God's servants in the last days will be empowered. Whether Joel 2 describes His servants or not, there is evidence elsewhere in scripture for a special, Spirit-guided role for the 144,000.

Promises of Protection

I think God will especially honor His promises to those with the seal of God who are doing His will and reflecting His character.

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day; *Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee." (Psa 91:5-7)

"Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge, *even* the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Psa 91:9-12)

I find that verse interesting in that the promise is connected to making God our habitation – we in him. Connect that with this verse:

"At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." (John 14:20)

It sounds like the indwelling is mutual: "ye in me, and I in you." It seems to me from this study of the cleansing of the sanctuary that when people are completely cleansed, they will be completely indwelt by the Spirit of God. Could it be that some promises such as these in Psalm 91 will especially apply to God's cleansed people, His special representatives in the last days?

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." (Isa 54:17)

"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19)

"They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:18)

Given Words to Speak

"And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do." (Exo 4:15)

"And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and *unto* magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." (Luke 12:11-12)

"For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.' (Luke 21:15)

Needs Provided

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt 6:33)

That verse implies "all these things" will be provided if you find the kingdom of God. Doesn't "first" imply: seek and then the other things are added?

"Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years." (Deut 8:4)

That suggests that the clothing of the Israelites did not wear out during their wilderness travels. And, of course they were provided with manna to eat.

"He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on

high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." (Isa 33:15-16)

As the Garden of Eden

"A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them." (Joel 2:3)

Both fire and a garden can be connected to the concept of harvest and the overall setting is the end of time. "Nothing shall escape them" may be picturing a very thorough work. Being a gardener myself I like to imagine that the earth will produce for God's people like it did in the Garden of Eden. That might be stretching things a little, however, we know that the Earth was cursed because of Adam's disobedience:

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;" (Gen 3:17)

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (or because of you) suggests a relationship between disobedience (or obedience) and the cursing or blessing of the earth. Could the ground not also be blessed by obedience or at least for the obedient? Here are a few verses that might relate to that:

"The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."
(Isa 24:5)

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." (Eze 22:30)

"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom 8:21)

"Creature' is often translated as "creation."

The Beasts

"And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." (Hosea 2:18)

"And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook." (1 Kings 17:4-6)

"For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee." (Job 5:23)

"My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." (Dan 6:22)

Glory Revealed

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom 8:18-19)

Most versions use "creation" rather than "creature" in that verse. Creation itself is waiting for this group of people to show up on the world stage.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." (Isa 60:1-3)

"And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him." (Exo 34:30)

Is it possible that the faces of the 144,000 will shine?

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan 12:3)

Health Renewed

There are a number of verses that directly speak of renewed physical health some of which are related to obedience or dependence upon God:

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward." (Isa 58:8)

The increased health is as a result of the benefits that naturally come back to one who is doing good to others. That happens because of the way we are physically designed in terms of our brain chemistry and hormonal system.

"In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them." (Zech 12:8)

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;" (Psa 103:3)

"And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee." (Exo 15:26)

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint." (Isa 40:31)

"Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 2)

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones." (Pro 3:5-8)

Cleansing the Sanctuary

Summary

"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." (Dan 8:14)

The word "cleansed" in Daniel 8:14 ("then shall the sanctuary be cleansed") really has a meaning like "cleansing to be cleansed." It is a process of cleansing human minds/hearts for the indwelling of the Spirit of God culminating in a holy people, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, the bride of Christ, the 144,000 – many titles.

Let's remind ourselves again what is being cleansed as determined in previous parts of this study.

In this appropriate illustration, **the still-following tap** represents our continued distrust of God due to misinformation that has been widely spread about His character. **The overflowing sink** represents our mind that is filled with these wrong ideas of God which prevents us from trusting Him in the process of cleansing our sanctuary/mind. It overflows because it does not have the capacity to repress and restrain our sinful nature resulting in the expression of the thoughts and intents of the heart as outward acts of sin represented by **the mess on the floor**. The important point is that the mess will never be cleaned up if the source of the problem is not addressed.



It is the common perception of God, the **sinful attitude** of distrust, thinking God is not on our side or worse that He is out to get us that keeps people from being at one with Him (atonement). It is learning the truth of His loving character and being reconciled to Him that leads us to trust Him to help in every area of our lives resulting in us being able to overcome our **sinful flesh** and put an end to **sinful acts**.

Luke reported something interesting about the kingdom of God. In defending His action of casting out a devil, Jesus said:

"But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." (Luke 11:20)

He was not speaking of the kingdom of God as something in the future. He went on to explain:

"When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth *it* swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh *to him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first." (Luke 11:24-26)

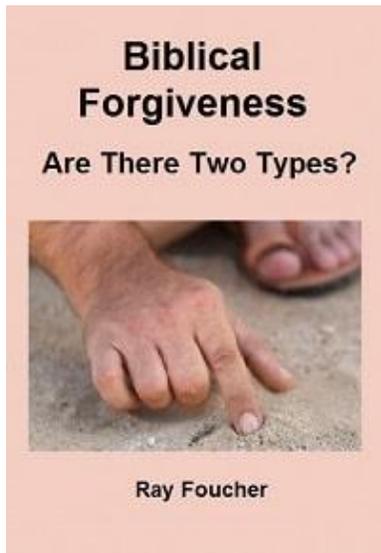
The "swept and garnished" suggests a cleansing but just getting the dirt out is not enough. The Savior must come in, In fact, He must be invited in as He will not force His presence on anyone.

The whole point of the cleansing of our sanctuary is so that the Divine Presence can dwell within us.

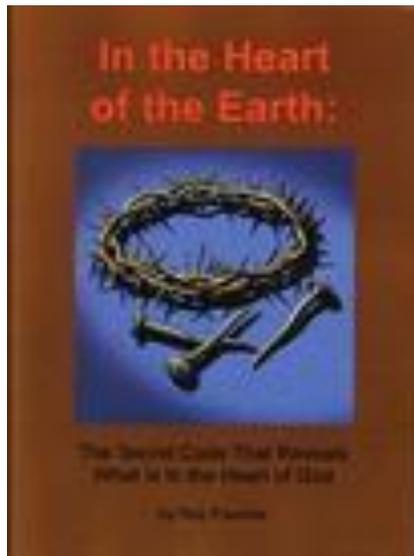
"Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21)

"... for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor 6:16)

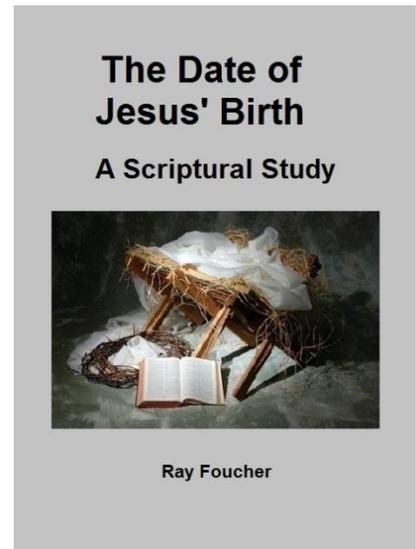
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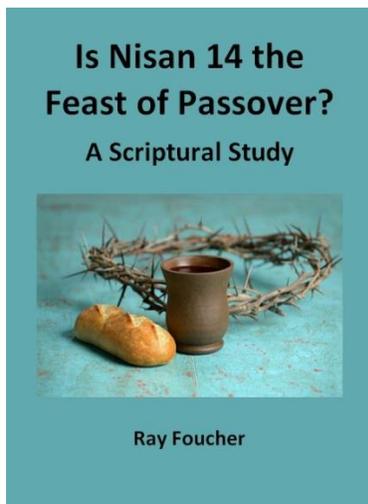
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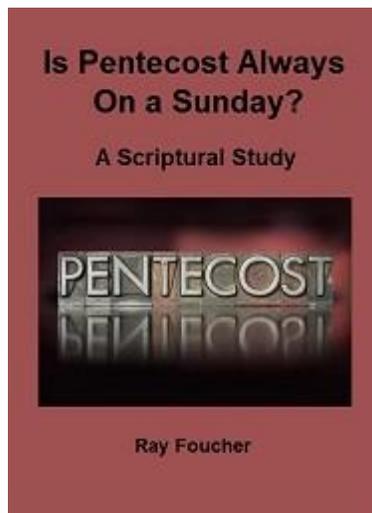
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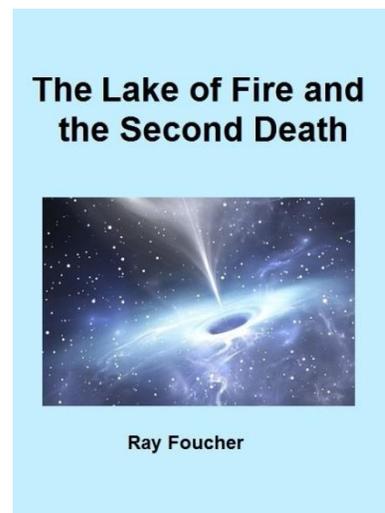
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