

The Apostle and High Priest of Our Profession Christ Jesus, I

A Most Serious Question

1. There is an ongoing controversy between Evangelicals and Adventists as to whether Christ's work of making atonement for sin, in other words the work of salvation, was completed at Calvary or not.
2. Protestants teach that the work of atonement was completed at Calvary---that when Jesus cried "It is finished," His work of making atonement for sin was forever completed;
 - a. **Heb 9:12**—understood by Evangelicals to mean that Christ has already obtained eternal salvation for us at the cross; this is why they cannot see the meaning and value of the work of intercession of Jesus as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary;
 - b. **Rom 5:11**---understood by evangelicals to mean that since we have now received the atonement (through the cross, a past event), no further work of making atonement is necessary;
3. **NOTE:** If the Protestants are correct in their teaching that Jesus already made a full and complete atonement at the cross, then
 - a. all that was needed to accomplish our salvation was for Jesus to die for our sins. In other words, the only thing our Lord Jesus had to do to save us was to shed His blood on the cross.
 - b. More seriously, the Adventist doctrine of the cleansing of the sanctuary, the work of Jesus in the first and second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, the final atonement, the 2300 prophetic days of Dan 8:14, 1844, the investigative judgment, the three angels messages along with this the spirit of prophecy, all fall to the ground. . . Adventism has no legs to stand on.

Adventist Position in 1872

4. Realizing this, some early Adventist writers vigorously opposed the idea that atonement was made at cross at Calvary; the Protestant belief that atonement was completed at the cross was considered subversive by early Adventist writers; early Adventist writers went to the other extreme by teaching that no atonement whatsoever, was made on the cross; that Jesus' work of atonement was not started until He was inaugurated as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, following the typical model of the Mosaic sanctuary; in fact, they incorporated this understanding in their **1872 Declaration of Fundamental Beliefs:**

A Declaration of Fundamental Principles of the Seventh-day Adventists, Article, II:

"That there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the One by Whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that He took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of the fallen race; that he dwelt among men, full of grace and truth; lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, with his own blood, he makes atonement for our sins; which atonement; so far from being made on the cross, which was but the offering of

the sacrifice, is the very **last** portion of his work as priest, according to the example of the Leviticus priesthood, which foreshadowed and prefigured the ministry of our Lord in heaven." See Leviticus 16; Hebrews 8:4, 5, 9:6, 7.

5. Books and articles were also written to further elaborate on the early Adventist position of the atonement, foremost of which include the following:

- a. **Uriah Smith**

"The death of Christ and the atonement are not the same thing. . . Christ did **not** make the atonement when he shed his blood upon the cross. Let this fact be forever fixed in the mind."

"In this case as in the type, the offering and the usual priestly work precede the atonement. But when Christ suffered for us, in what capacity was he acting? Not as our priest but only as the offering." (The Sanctuary, 224 pages, quoted from p. 181 onwards)

- b. **J. H. Waggoner**

"So far from his mediatorial work being completed on the cross, it had not yet commenced."

"There is a clear distinction between the death of Christ and the atonement." "The killing of the offering did not make the atonement." (**The Atonement**, 368 pages, quoted from pp. 190, 182, 187).

- c. **J.N. Andrews**

Said the "when on earth, Christ was not a priest" on page 84 of his book "The Sanctuary and the 2300 Days"

- d. **C. H. Watson**

"Some believe that the work of the atonement was completed at the cross. If it was, it was completed without a priest. Again if it is contended that Christ at the cross was priest, then our priest must have died. Atonement is not made by the mere shedding of blood. (**The Abiding Work of Christ**, p. 94-96)

Who Is Right?

6. So, who is right? The evangelicals who maintain that the work of atoning for our sins was completed at the cross, or the early Adventists who said that no atonement was made until Jesus was inaugurated High Priest after His ascension? That when Jesus died no atonement was made because He was basically just acting as Sacrifice and was not inaugurated Priest until after His ascension? BOTH ARE WRONG!

The Evangelical Conferences in 1950

7. As a result of the series of meetings with Evangelicals¹ in 1950, the seventh-day Adventist church published a book called "**Questions on Doctrine**" which more or less takes the position that Jesus' work of atonement was finished and completed on the cross (as Evangelicals believe), and all that Jesus is doing in the heavenly sanctuary is shedding the benefits of that atonement He had already made at the cross 2000 years ago.
8. The question is, what does this new position do to the many statements in the Spirit of Prophecy that say Jesus is still making atonement in the heavenly sanctuary?

As the priest entered the most holy once a year to cleanse the earthly sanctuary, so Jesus entered the most holy of the heavenly, at the end of the 2300 days of Daniel 8, in 1844, to make a final

¹ Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse

atonement for all who could be benefited by His mediation, and thus to cleanse the sanctuary. **EW 253.**

Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ. **GC 623.**

Jesus is our great High Priest in heaven. And what is He doing?--He is making intercession and atonement for His people who believe in Him.—**TM 37.**

The Work of Atonement --a Continuous Process

9. Contrary to what the Evangelicals believe, the work of the atonement is not a one-time event made at the cross, but has been an ongoing process started since the inception of sin (**Rev 13:8**)
 - a. The moment there was sin, there was a Savior
10. **Heb 9:26, 28; Heb 10:12, 14**—These verse explains why Jesus was a better Sacrifice than the animal sacrifices because He needed to be offered only once; it saying nothing about Jesus only making one act of atonement; the sacrifice is complete only in the sense that it does not have to be repeated again;
15. There was atonement made on the cross, contrary to what our early pioneers believed; there was atonement even before the cross, and there is atonement being made even now and a final atonement will be made to cleanse the sanctuary;
16. Continuous atonement in the heavenly sanctuary is needed because of the constant commission of sin; in short, there will always be the need of atonement as long as there is sin;

As you near the cross of Calvary there is seen love that is without a parallel. As you by faith grasp the meaning of the sacrifice, you see yourself a sinner, condemned by a broken law. This is repentance. As you come with humble heart, you find pardon, for Christ Jesus is represented as continually standing at the altar, momentarily offering up the sacrifice for the sins of the world. He is a minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man. The typical shadows of the Jewish tabernacle no longer possess any virtue. A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood, as it had been a lamb slain. Jesus presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner. **1SM 343-344.**

The continuous nature of the daily service brings out the continuous nature of the work of atonement taking place in the heavenly sanctuary;

Dual nature of Christ's Priesthood

10. But what about the teaching of our pioneers that there was no atonement made on the cross because Jesus was merely acting as Sacrifice and not Priest? That His work of atonement did not begin until after He ascended to heaven and was inaugurated High Priest?
 - b. Jesus not merely Sacrifice, when He died, contrary to what Uriah Smith wrote, but also Priest:

As in the typical service the high priest laid aside his pontifical robes and officiated in the white linen dress of an ordinary priest; so Christ laid aside His royal robes and garbed Himself with humanity and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. **AA 33**

The Son of God . . . has fulfilled His pledge, and has passed into the heavens, to take upon Himself the government of the heavenly host. He fulfilled one phase of His priesthood by dying on the cross for the fallen race. He is now fulfilling another phase by pleading before the Father the case of the repenting, believing sinner, presenting to God the offerings of His people. **7BC 929.**

The Work of Atonement—a Most Painful Process

17. Jesus Christ's death on the cross served mainly to demonstrate to men's dull senses the pain that exists in the heart of God on account of sin and the agony the Godhead goes through in atoning for sin; atonement for sin did not just occur once when Jesus died on Calvary's cross; Jesus has been making atonement ever since man fell into sin:

Those who think of the result of hastening or hindering the gospel think of it in relation to themselves and to the world. Few think of its relation to God. Few give thought to the suffering that sin has caused our Creator. All heaven suffered in Christ's agony; but that suffering did not begin or end with His manifestation in humanity. The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from the right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him. **Ed 263.**

18. The pain of Calvary immortalized in Christ's High Priestly ministration

Christ as high priest within the veil so immortalized Calvary that though He liveth unto God, He dies continually to sin, and thus if any man sin, he has an advocate with the Father. **1SM 343.**

19. Hence, those who teach that Jesus made atonement for sin once at the cross when He died, have a limited view of the work of atonement and real no understanding of the pain and sorrow that is involved for a long time now;
20. This is why the announcement in **Dan 8:14** that the sanctuary shall be cleansed should make every believer who understand what the atonement involves as far as God and Christ are concerned, excited and rouse them to action because it's not so much about the benefits to be enjoyed as a result of the final atonement; it's more about cooperating with the High Priest to bring His pain and suffering come to an end;