

How to Tell Someone the Good News

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Study Six: Preparing for Christ's Second Coming

I. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE OF THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE?

1. Note the full context of Revelation 14:
 - a. It opens with a people "without fault before the throne of God" (verses 1-5).
 - b. It presents the "everlasting gospel" (verse 6).
 - c. It separates a people from "Babylon" (verse 8).
 - d. It prepares a people to meet the final, most clever deception of Satan—the "mark of the beast" (verses 9-11).
 - e. Its fruitage is a people who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (verse 12); "agape is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).
 - f. The next event is the second coming of Christ (verse 14).
 - g. A people prepared for Christ's coming is the "harvest" ripe (verse 16).
2. What effect does the message have on those who prepare for Christ's coming? 1 John 3:1-3.

Note: Make it clear that this is not a "works trip," or self-righteousness. This is sometimes ridiculed as fanaticism, trying to be "little christs," or "navel-gazing." Preparing for the return of Jesus is solemn Bible truth; the motivation is not self-centered, a search for personal security based on fear, but a sincere desire to honor the Savior in the final time of this world's crisis.

3. What is included in this purification? 2 Cor. 6:16-18; 7:1.

II. WHAT TRUTH WILL MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO PREPARE FOR CHRIST'S COMING?

1. How important is the unique Adventist sanctuary message? Heb. 9:11-14, 24-28.

Note: Christ Himself has always been without "sin," so the phrase "without sin" cannot mean a change on His part. Here is how it is rendered in several translations: "Shall ... show himself the second time, without reference to sin" (Berkeley); "not to deal with sin" (Moffatt); "not to bear sin" (New American Standard). Those "that look for Him" will be "without sin," having purified themselves "even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2, 3).

"The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith" (Evangelism, p. 221). It "should be clearly understood by the people of God. ... Otherwise it will be impossible for them to exercise the faith which is essential at this time, or to occupy the position which God designs them to fill. ... The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work on behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth, ... revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin" (The Great Controversy, pp. 488, 489).

"Christ's work on behalf of men," as we have seen, is to minister the experience of justification by faith.

2. In presenting the sanctuary truth, don't get the cart before the horse. Begin with the New Testament, not the Old:
 - a. Use the texts in Section I, #2 and #3, and make clear that a preparation for Christ's coming is needed for all of us.
 - b. Let Hebrews reveal Christ as a High Priest who will prepare us for His coming if we let him do so, and we do not hinder Him: 3:1,7, 8; 4:11, 12, 15; 7:25, 26; 10:35-39. Define the word "High Priest"—the Physician, Psychiatrist, and Healer of our souls.
3. How does the High Priest prepare His people for His coming?

Through the Holy Spirit He:

- a. Convicts of sin that we did not know of. John 16:7-9.
- b. Gives the on-going gift of repentance. Rom. 2:4; Acts 5:31.
- c. Gives grace to overcome the sin which was previously unknown to us. Rom. 6:20, 21; Gal. 5:16, 17; Psalm 19:12, 13.

Note: This on-going work is "receiving the atonement" (Rom. 5:10, 11). When "the harvest is ripe," Jesus will come (Mark 4:26-29; Rev. 14:14-16).

The sacrifice which Christ offered at the cross was perfect and complete; but the sinner must choose to "receive the atonement."

Here is where the Seventh-day Adventist truth of the sanctuary comes into focus. When the Lord has a people who, by a mature faith and surrender to His love, have overcome fully, they will be reconciled to God, and every buried root of alienation will be healed. This is the same as standing before the throne "without fault" (Rev. 14:5) or the harvest being "ripe" (verses 14, 15). It is described by Ellen White's phrase, "final atonement" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 485; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 352, 355, 357-358, 426).

III. WE NOW LIVE IN THE GREAT DAY OF ATONEMENT.

1. These truths will grip the heart.

Now we can present the symbols of the sanctuary ministry: Heb. 8:1-6; 9:1-12; Ex. 25:8, 40. (Draw your own sketch of the two-apartment sanctuary, with the articles of furniture.)

2. When did the heavenly High Priest begin the final phase of His ministry? Dan. 8:14, 17, 27; 9:23-27.

Note: This 2300-year prophecy is "the foundation of our faith." It is not difficult to understand or to explain to others. You can easily find a chart in many of our books. Study it, mark your Bible, and draw the chart yourself. A little practice will make it clear. Thus, you can demonstrate that the heavenly Day of Atonement began in 1844.

3. How do we make practical the fact that we are living in this solemn time? Note the type in Lev. 23:27-32; now note the antitype in Luke 21:34-36.

Note: Those who love the Lord have a special duty and privilege, living in this antitypical Day of Atonement. The ancient Israelites left their ordinary labors on the day of atonement, fasted, gathered around the sanctuary, and "afflicted" their souls (Lev. 16:19-31). "Afflicting the soul" means to "abase self (Isa. 31:4); "chasten thyself (Dan. 10:12); "humble one's soul" (Psalm 35:13). In ancient Israel, the day of atonement was the one day on which the people fasted, except for times of special crisis (cf. Acts 27:9; Isa. 58:3-5; Ezek. 8:21).

This experience today includes health reform and simplicity of diet (Dan. 10:2, 3; no alcohol, drugs, harmful food, so that the mind might be clear to appreciate the on-going work of our great High Priest). These duties on the Day of Atonement are not "works" to merit salvation, but they give evidence of heart-cooperation with the great High Priest. This is the real reason Adventists believe and practice health reform.

This is also the reason why those who follow Christ find deliverance from the "keeping-up-with-the-Jones" rat-race of worldly success. Ancient Israel left their business on this day; we cannot neglect to make a living, but we can learn to put Christ and His service first. We can learn to feel a concern for the work of that great High Priest, as a bride is concerned for her husband-to-be. We can learn to love souls as Jesus loves us!

Dress reform, wearing simple clothing, accompanied "afflicting the soul" (see Psalm 69:10; 1 Kings 21:27; Joel 1:13; Jonah 3:5; Judges 20:6; 1 Sam. 7:6; Neh. 6:4). In times of spiritual emergency, God's people did not drink alcohol or wear jewelry (Isa. 3:16-24; Ex. 33:4-6; cf. 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; 1 Peter 3:3, 4). This is the real reason why we do not drink, smoke, do drugs, or wear jewelry, because living in the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary is a solemn time.

Your student will have little difficulty giving up jewelry and changing the lifestyle, if these sanctuary truths are made clear.