

SIGNS *of the Times*

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?

Marked Safe

How often have you shown up for a medical appointment—only to wait and wait? One study of more than 9,000 patients in 44 outpatient clinics found that patients reported waiting, on average, more than 20 minutes before reaching the examination room.

On the other side, some doctors complain of late patients as well. Late patients and no-shows complicate their schedules.

We all dislike waiting; we all want appointments to take place on time. But it doesn't always happen.

Did you know that God has made an appointment with you? He's even been specific about the timing—and God keeps His appointments!

GOD MAKES AN APPOINTMENT

1. God has appointed a day on which _____
_____ (Acts 17:31)
2. When in earth's history does this appointed time occur?
(Daniel 8:17, 19)

Daniel's vision, recorded in chapter 8, closes with someone asking, "How long will the vision be?" (vs. 13) And someone replies, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed." (vs. 14)

JESUS IS OUR HIGH PRIEST IN THE SANCTUARY IN HEAVEN

The sanctuary on earth in Bible times was patterned after God's true sanctuary in heaven. (Acts 7:44; Hebrews 8:1, 2, 5) Everything taking place in the sanctuary on earth pointed forward to some aspect of Jesus' work as our Savior.

3. What happened in the earthly sanctuary when Jesus died on Calvary? (Matthew 27:50, 51)
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This showed that Jesus had completed His work as a sacrifice and that these ceremonies and animal sacrifices no longer had significance. They were an object lesson pointing forward to Jesus' death as the Lamb of God. Since that reality had taken place, the role of the sanctuary on earth ended.

4. After His death and resurrection, where did Jesus go? (Hebrews 9:24; 10:12)
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On earth, as a man, Jesus fulfilled His role as a Sacrifice for us. After His death and resurrection, He entered the sanctuary in heaven to serve as our High Priest. (Hebrews 8:1, 2)

CLEANSING THE SANCTUARY IN HEAVEN

In the sanctuary on earth, the priests sacrificed animals and carried some of their blood into the first room—the Holy Place—of the sanctuary. This happened daily throughout the year, and it symbolized Jesus' blood, which is always available to forgive our sins.

5. What happened once each year in the earthly sanctuary on the Day of Atonement? (Leviticus 16:2, 3, 33, 34)
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On this day, once each year, the High Priest took sacrificial blood into the second room of the sanctuary—the Most Holy Place—and made atonement for the sanctuary, cleansing it from all the sins that had accumulated there symbolically throughout the year.

On this Day of Atonement, the people were to examine their lives and confess their sins. It was a day of judgment for them. Anyone who did not make things right with God on that day was "cut off from his

people.” (Leviticus 23:29) The Day of Atonement pointed forward to the judgment day at the end of time when Jesus, our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, will “put away sin” “once at the end of the ages.” (Hebrews 9:26)

THE 2,300 DAYS OF DANIEL’S VISION—SETTING UP GOD’S APPOINTMENT

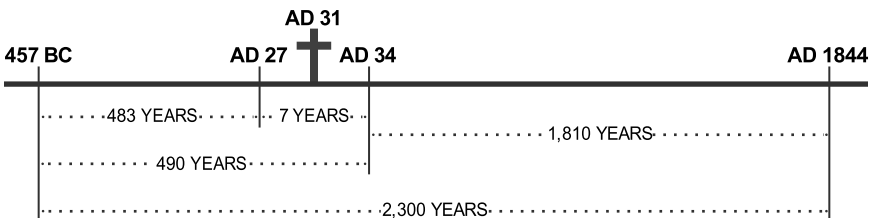
- In Daniel’s vision, what was to take place at the end of 2,300 days? (Daniel 8:14)

The cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement was “judgment day” for the children of Israel, and it represents God’s judgment day for the whole world at the end of time. (Daniel 8:17, 19)

- In Bible prophecy, how much literal time does a “day” symbolize? (Numbers 14:33, 34; Ezekiel 4:4-6)

The Israelites wandered in the wilderness 40 years—a year for each day they spent “spying out” the Promised Land before refusing to trust God’s leading. God told Ezekiel to lie on his side the number of days equal to the number of years Judah was to bear the consequences of her sins—a day for each year. This is called “the year-day principle” in which a “day” in Bible prophecy equals a “year” of real time.

Therefore, the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 are actually 2,300 years of real time. The prophecy predicts that it will be 2,300 years until the sanctuary is cleansed and the heavenly judgment convenes.



- What event marks the beginning of the 2,300 years? (Daniel 9:24, 25)

When Daniel received this vision, Jerusalem was in ruins. The Babylonians had destroyed it and taken God's people captive. Gabriel tells Daniel "a command" will be issued "to restore and rebuild Jerusalem," and that this command will mark the beginning of the 2,300 day (year) prophecy.

The Persian ruler, Artaxerxes, issued this command in 457 BC. (Ezra 7:11-26) Counting 2,300 years from 457 BC, brings us to the year AD 1844. (Remember: there is no year "0.")

THE JUDGMENT BEGINS IN HEAVEN

9. How does the Bible describe the solemn scene as judgment begins in the heavenly sanctuary? (**Daniel 7:9, 10**)

God's appointment begins right on time! The awesome judgment scene begins in heaven in 1844, at the end of the 2,300 years.

10. Should we fear the judgment? Who stands up for us in the judgment to make sure our names remain in heaven's Book of Life? Who is our Advocate (Lawyer) in the judgment? (**Revelation 3:5; 1 John 2:1**)

Jesus, the One who gave His life for you, is both your Judge and your Defense Attorney in the heavenly judgment. (John 5:22; 1 John 2:1) He loves you more than you can comprehend, and nothing can separate you from His love. (Romans 8:38, 39) With your hand in His, you have nothing to fear in the judgment.

MY DECISION

- Jesus, I ask You to stand by my side in the judgment going on in heaven today. Cover my sins with Your life (righteousness), and seal my name in the Book of Life.

MY PRAYER

Father, I know that You will judge all things righteously. I believe that we are in earth's final hours, and I pray that Jesus will come quickly. I praise You for Your amazing grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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