

# THE PROBLEM OF THE FIRST APARTMENT IN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SANCTUARY THEOLOGY

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## PREFACE

Historically the teaching that there is a close relationship between the sanctuary on earth and the temple of God in heaven has been a source of both courage and frustration to Seventh-day Adventists. That Christ serves as a High Priest before the Father is clearly biblical (Heb 8:1-2). But there is a question how close the relationship is between the ancient types and what they typify. Anciently there were two different phases of ministry, performed in two different areas of the sanctuary at different times during the year.

The problem in saying that Christ ministers in different parts of the heavenly sanctuary is that the ark of the covenant, identified with the throne of God, is confined to the second apartment. At issue is whether Christ ascended to the Father, which many have taken to be the same as asking whether He ascended to the second apartment. If this is the only way to frame the question, it appears that Seventh-day Adventists have no way to answer it. And yet one cannot escape the impression that, if we could once get past this point of contention, the question of where a given activity occurs within the sanctuary is of smaller moment than the fact that it occurs, the identity of the One who performs it, and the purpose it is designed to have relative to other features of the religious system.

Presently I hope to show, first, that the problem of locations can be responsibly addressed, and second, that after it has been what is left of the opposing argument is relatively insignificant. But the order should not be reversed. First let us solve the problem and then we will be in a better position to determine how important it was.

If the significance of the location problem is relatively small, there must be some basis for comparison. It is small in relation to what? I suggest it is small in relation to the problems faced by alternative models. These are vastly more serious than anything which confronts normative Seventh-day Adventism. Thus, I hope not only to deal with the issues but to place them in a right perspective.

## Introduction

Seventh-day Adventists are committed to the idea of a literal sanctuary in heaven, where Christ has entered the presence of God to minister the benefits of His sacrifice for us on the cross. They allow their understanding of His ministry in heaven to be informed by the ancient types pointing forward to it on earth.

The plan of salvation, as represented in the sanctuary, encompasses more than the fact that Christ would eventually die on the cross. What makes His death so supremely significant for every child of Adam is the fact that He was the one offering Himself in this way. But dying is not the only thing Christ did while on earth (John 21:25). In the thirty years or so leading up to the cross He also lived a life completely given over to doing His Father's will, i.e., benefiting others. If our Savior's life had not been blameless, His death on the cross could not have been accepted as a sacrifice for human sin. The two facts (of Christ's holy life and sacrificial death) cannot be separated.

On either side of the cross the life of Christ extends away into eternity (Mic 5:2; John 1:1; 8:57-58; Heb 13:8). To John He said, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" (Rev 1:17-18). In another place we read that "he is able to save completely [eis to panteles, to the farthest extremity of time] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb 7:25). This much may be readily accepted. Christ lives. What He lives to do is intercede. But if we wish to understand the nature of His intercession, we must study the ancient types and symbols of it in the sanctuary.

A prominent feature of the sanctuary services is that there were two of them. During the course of each year one set of ceremonies was performed every evening and every morning. The fire on the altar was never allowed to go out (see Lev 6:13). A sacrifice for the people was kept smoldering there continually. But at the end of the year a second set of ceremonies was performed on the annual Day of Atonement. Thus, there was a daily service and a yearly service. The one was not merely a repetition of the other. The function of both services was unique.<sup>1</sup>

On this analogy Seventh-day Adventists conclude that a similar distinction must be applied to the high priestly work of Christ in heaven, i.e., that the reason why there were two kinds of services in the ancient type was to illustrate different aspects of what Christ would do for us later in antitype. There was more than a cleansing function in the sanctuary. **There was a teaching function as well. God wanted the Jewish people to be free from their sins but also to have an intelligent grasp of what steps were involved. He wanted them to understand why a Messiah was promised, what He would do when He came, and what the significance of His work would be. These things are all clarified when we study the sanctuary in the context of Christ's later activity both on earth as our Sacrifice and in heaven as our High Priest. Such an approach to the sanctuary provides insight into both the types themselves and their antitypical counterparts that is not available in any other way.** Below we explore some of the implications of this concept.

## Potential Problems

**If there are two phases of ministry in the antitype (the heavenly reality behind the type), it follows that the first part of Christ's ministry in heaven must correspond not to the ancient yearly service but to the ancient daily service.** The yearly comes at a later time and corresponds to the final judgment at the end of the world. One would not expect the decisions of the judgment to be implemented before they are announced. Instead the seating of the court and opening of the books in Dan 7:10 introduces a period of investigation in

heaven and of soul searching here. This fact is consistent with what we know about the ancient Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29-30). **Thus, the Day of Atonement or yearly service in the Israelite sanctuary prefigures only the last part of the gospel age. The daily service must account for the rest.**

The concept of an antitypical daily service has implications that require explanation. It is not the case that the yearly service supersedes and therefore minimizes all that has gone before. **If Christ performs one phase of ministry and then another, there is nothing in that fact which would make the second more important than the first. On the contrary, His involvement is what gives significance to both.** In the type neither service was complete in itself. The unit of completeness was the ceremonial year--not the last day only and not all the other days except the last one. The sanctuary system was a unified whole.

**Another problem, more weighty than the first, is that the daily service and the yearly not only had different functions but were associated with different parts of the sanctuary.** There were two distinct areas (or apartments) within the sanctuary tent that were separated from each other by a veil. Any priest could enter the first apartment while performing the daily service, but he could go no further. Only the high priest could enter the second apartment and he could go there only on the Day of Atonement and in a carefully prescribed manner (Heb 9:6-7).

**Projecting this distinction onto the antitype now, if we say that Christ ministers an antitypical daily service in the first apartment and that the throne of the universe is located in the second apartment, it appears that Christ is excluded from any direct contact with His Father from the ascension to 1844.<sup>2</sup> This implication is radically unbiblical (Acts 7:55-56; Heb 1:3, 13). So many other parts of the model make sense that we must now ask whether the above implication really follows as a natural and inescapable consequence of what Seventh-day Adventists believe about the sanctuary or whether some misunderstanding remains that might be manufacturing the difficulty for us. In this paper I argue for the second alternative.**

## The Evidence from Scripture

Below I discuss three lines of biblical evidence, each of which taken separately appears to introduce new problems of its own, when they are brought together, however, they go a long way toward addressing what might be considered **Adventism's single most vexing problem in regard to the sanctuary--how to account for Christ's first apartment ministry prior to 1844.**

### The heavenly court in Dan 7:9-10

In Dan 7, apart from a well known succession of prophetic beasts representing the rise of four different nations to earthly power, there is a court scene that takes place in heaven. We have become perhaps too familiar with this passage. Let us read the prophet's words again carefully. They describe a transition.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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 7:9-10, 13)

**Notice first that "'till the thrones were cast down'" (vs. 9). One does not set a throne where there is already a throne. To account for Daniel's language we must assume that the throne occupied by the Ancient of Days during the judgment is different from the one He has occupied before or else that it is the same throne moved to a different location. What we do not have is the same throne in the same place.**

**Second, Daniel says that "and the Ancient of days did sit" or "the Ancient of Days took his seat" (vs. 9). One does not take his seat if he is already seated. We can construe this as an anthropomorphic use of words if we wish, but our first object must be to explain them and not to question why the writer did not state himself in some other way. What Daniel describes is a change of posture. This makes sense only in the context of a change of location.**

**Third, Daniel says "the judgment was set" or "The court was seated" (vs. 10). The seating of a court marks the beginning of its session. From this it follows that up to that time the court was not seated, i.e., it was not in session. The seating of the heavenly court in vs. 10 marks a change of status that must be taken into account.**

**As a corollary to point three, it would be unreasonable to assume that the great judgment hall where these scenes take place should be filled with "'Thousands upon thousands" and "ten thousand times ten thousand" while the court is in recess. When the Judge arrives and takes His seat, however, one can imagine the audience also arriving and taking their seats.**

**Fourth, "the books were opened" (vs. 10). I conclude from this that they were previously shut. That is one point. If we assume in addition that there is some reason for opening them, it would have to be that they contain relevant information. There is no reference in vs. 10 to sinners being destroyed. Instead the court pours over the evidence contained in the books. Decisions are announced--to the entire satisfaction of those gathered--concerning who will be punished (vs. 26) and who will be rewarded (vs. 27) when the judgment is over and its decisions can at last be implemented.**

### **The heavenly court in Revelation**

**These events are described in more than one place. We find identically the same court scene in Rev 4-5 and again in Rev 19.** Other chapters do not change the subject but show in detail what sorts of evidence is brought before the court. There are seven letters showing the condition of the church in different ages (Rev 2:1-3:22).<sup>3</sup> There are seven seals and seven trumpets which provide a further backdrop against which its successes and failures can be evaluated (Rev 6:1-17; 8:1; 8:2-9:21; 11:15-19). There are broad summaries of a more general nature (Rev 12-14, 17). The context for each person's life choices is made known. Nothing is done in a hasty or superficial manner. Every circumstance is carefully weighed. And since "a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9) are ultimately seen to have been loyal to Christ, the background for their widely different lives amounts to an overview of world history, with special emphasis here on the time from John's day to the second coming.<sup>4</sup> As each decision is handed down the four living creatures around the throne say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come" (Rev 4:8), and the twenty-four elders join them in acknowledging the fairness of the court.<sup>5</sup>

Toward the end of the book of Revelation, after the reasons for each decision have been fully presented, we are brought back to the court scene in heaven and again see the vast multitude in the gallery, the twenty-four elders closer in, and the four living creatures who stand closest to the great central throne. Each group in turn is asked for its opinion. The first response is from the gallery, where John hears "the roar of a great multitude in heaven" shouting: 'Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments (Rev 19:1-2). Next "The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: Amen, Hallelujah!" (vs. 4).

Finally all eyes turn to the throne itself and from it a voice is heard which calls God "our God" (vs. 5). Such language is reminiscent of what Jesus says to Mary after rising from the tomb: **"I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."** (John 20:17). There is only one Being in all the universe who can speak from the throne and call God "our God." Up to this point no one has been able to come forward and say that God was unfair to him in any way. Those who are lost get only what they deserve. But Christ suffered the full penalty for sin while deserving none of it. There is a question whether He will now bring this fact to the courts attention. Everyone waits for Him to speak. But what He says is: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" (Rev 19:5). Everyone does and the result is a deafening paeon of praise to God. John combines three different similies in his attempt to convey some idea of what he heard: " <sup>6</sup> And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. <sup>7</sup> 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." (vss. 6-7).

The time for deliberations is over and Christ takes His place at the head of all the angel armies of heaven. He now comes to earth "a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" (Heb 9:28). His purpose is to rescue His saints (Dan 11 :44-45; 12:1) and to implement the decisions of the court on those who oppose God.<sup>6</sup> The question before that body had been who belongs in which category (cf. Matt 25:31-46). At a still later time wicked men (about whom there is now no longer any question that they are wicked men) and wicked angels are judged by the saints (1 Cor 6:1-2). But what to do with them is a separate issue. The primary verdict handed down in the judgment is that the court itself has been fair, i.e., that the system of government administered from that center and the system of laws on which it is based are worthy of universal confidence. It is in this way that the sanctuary is "cleansed" (KJV) or, more accurately, "vindicated."<sup>7</sup>

**Here, then, is the second apartment ministry of Christ as portrayed in the New Testament. It is entirely parallel to and consistent with the account given by Daniel in the Old Testament. The two complement each other perfectly.**

### **The throne of God in Ezekiel**

Notice that according to Daniel, God's throne "was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze" (Dan 7:9). What is the significance of the fact that in Daniel Gods throne is said to have wheels? I have never seen these things and so can only rely on the descriptions of those who have. It may be that we will never find final answers to all our questions, but we do find similar language in the book of Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel a number of passages describe an object which, in view of the parallels with Daniel, can be identified as the throne of God. **Thus, in Ezek 1:4-28 the prophet sees four living creatures surrounding a square object which is blazing with glory and has wheels within wheels on all sides (vss. 5, 15-18; see also**

**Ezek 10:9-14). Ezekiel concludes his first vision by saying, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (vs. 28).**

In chap. 8 the gross idolatry of those in the temple is pointed out and as a direct result of such intolerable wickedness " <sup>3</sup> And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house." (Ezek 9:3). Among the wheels Ezekiel had seen, beneath the cherubim, were burning coals, which are now scattered over the city (10:2 ). "Then the glory of the Lord departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house(temple), and stood over the cherubims. . . . and *every one* stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD'S house; and the glory of the God of Israel *was* over them above." (10:18, 19). Finally, " And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city." (11:23). At this point the prophet is brought back eastward in his vision to Babylon.

**Then toward the end of his book Ezekiel shows how the glory which had departed earlier returns.** " And the glory of the LORD came into the house(temple) by the way of the gate whose prospect *is* toward the east. <sup>5</sup> So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house." (43:4-5). What the prophet sees on this occasion is specifically compared with what he had seen in chap. 1 (see Ezek 43:3). Thus, the Lord deserts His temple and goes off toward the east--the direction the captives had taken--and eventually, when they return, He returns with them to bless His people in their own land again. Here we see one of the most tender portraits of God as a loving Father that can be found anywhere in all the Bible. If His people are in Babylon, then God wants to be there too. **And He does not return to Judea, in Ezekiel's visions, until they do.**

Human words are adapted to human situations in Scripture, but without allowing them to become the sole object of inquiry, Ezekiel's words still convey a thought that we must deal with. **When Ezekiel speaks of wheels the thought he is expressing must have at least something to do with mobility. But why is the throne of God said to be mobile? The sanctuary may give us an answer to this question. If there is a first apartment and a second apartment in the antitype, as there was in the type, these are represented as being different places. Otherwise, what was the function of the veil that separated them? That is the problem we started with. If the Ancient of Days enters the court at the beginning of the judgment (Dan 7:9), as the vast number in attendance do (vs. 10) and as the Son of man does (vs. 13) , we have a context in which it would be appropriate to talk about movement. Where He goes to is the second apartment; where He comes from is the first apartment.**

#### The throne and the altar of incense

**Here we may also have the context for one of the thorniest problems in the book of Hebrews. In chap. 9 the author is describing the furniture of the sanctuary and appears to place the altar of incense in the second apartment. Anciently, however, it was clearly not in the second apartment (Exod 40 : 26-27). Is the writer introducing an innovation of some sort or have we failed to understand his intent?**

To get at the authors thought in this case we are going to have to pay careful attention to how he expresses it. He does not use the same words in describing the location of the altar of incense that He does for the lampstand or the table of consecrated bread. In the latter case he says en he "in which [are]," while in the former case he says echousa "having" (i.e., "pertaining to"). One should not read too much into this distinction but according to B. F. Westcott, "the substitution of echousa for en he (v. 2) itself points clearly to something different from mere position." <sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For there was a tabernacle made; the first[en he], wherein *was* the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary<sup>b</sup>. <sup>3</sup> And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; <sup>4</sup> Which had [ echousa] the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein *was* the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; (Heb 9:2-4)

**The issue therefore is not confined to the question of where the altar of incense was located but also includes its function in relation to other features of the sanctuary.** The function of the consecrated bread and of the lampstand had to do mainly with the first apartment. The lampstand, for example, was kept burning to make the first apartment bright. But the incense was not offered to make the first apartment fragrant. It was presented to God, whose visible presence was manifested in the second apartment. One might say therefore that the incense was offered to make the second apartment fragrant. The golden altar of incense was only placed where it was so that priests could have access to it. Without such access no incense could be offered at any time except on the Day of Atonement only and the purpose for its existence would be defeated. **Thus, the altar of incense pertained to the first apartment physically, but it pertained to the second apartment functionally.**

### Discussion

**The close relationship between the altar of incense and the second apartment in the book of Hebrews is not an isolated fact. Notice the similarities among the following passages:**

<sup>26</sup> And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil: <sup>27</sup> And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses. (Exod 40:26-27)

<sup>6</sup> Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal [rispa] in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: <sup>7</sup> And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. (Isa 6:6)

<sup>1</sup> Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. <sup>2</sup> And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, *even* under the cherub, and fill thine hand<sup>a</sup> with coals [qah le-es] of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter *them* over the city. And he went in in my sight. (Ezek 10:1-2)

<sup>9</sup> 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. (Dan 7:9)

**There can be no altar of burnt offering in heaven. The altar that the seraph took a coal from in Isaiah's day was the altar of incense. Coals are also taken from the mysterious wheeled object described by Ezekiel as a throne. In Daniel the throne of God is said to be both flaming with fire and immediately afterward it is also said to have wheels. The connection between what Isaiah saw, and what Ezekiel saw, and what Daniel saw is too broad to miss. Taking all these facts together we have a possible basis for**

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<sup>b</sup> the sanctuary: or, holy

<sup>a</sup> thine hand: Heb. the hollow of thine hand

**explaining the vexed problem of how Christ could be separated from His Father for almost 2000 years after the cross. The explanation is that He was not separated from His Father. Nor was Christ in the second apartment all that time. Instead the Father was in the first apartment all that time.**

At the end of the above period, in 1844, the "Ancient of Days" enters the vast antitypical judgment hall in heaven (Dan 7:9) and the "one like a Son of man" joins Him there (vs. 13). The above interpretation accounts in a straightforward way for the language used to describe the court scene in Dan 7 and in the process it brings together a number of passages that would otherwise remain unexplained.

The link between the two apartments--the feature that makes it possible to account for the Father's presence in the first apartment before 1844--is in some way therefore the altar of incense. But this is not to say that the altar of incense is the throne of God or that it is a second throne. There is one more aspect to my proposed solution.

### **The throne and the ark**

**To understand the relationship between the throne and the golden altar we must first understand well what the relationship is between the throne and the ark of the covenant.** Consider the following highly significant comment by Ellen G. White:

In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it was purest gold. On each end of the ark was a lovely cherub, with its wings spread out over it. Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward. Between the angels was a golden censer. Above the ark, where the angels stood, was an exceeding bright glory, that appeared like a throne where God dwelt.<sup>9</sup>

**Here the ark and the throne, while closely associated with each other, are not the same. The throne is above the ark. This fact becomes important in the present context because it opens the way for the throne to be associated in a similar way with an article of furniture in the first apartment--the golden altar of incense. As in the first case, here also, the two are not identical but are closely associated with each other.**

If the throne can be associated with an article of furniture in the first apartment during the antitypical daily service, as it is with the ark of the covenant during the antitypical yearly service, then at least one of the problems with which the present discussion began has been resolved. **The judgment can begin many long years after the cross and occur in its own special place without in any way implying that a veil separates the Father and the Son before that time, i.e., prior to 1844.**

### **The Evidence from Ellen G. White**

Notice that for Ellen White the problem of the veils does not arise, despite the profound literalness with which she views the services of the heavenly sanctuary. **Here is the way she describes the crucial transition from first apartment to second apartment which takes place at the beginning of the judgment.**

I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, and the most of those who were bowed down arose with Him . . . . Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus

was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father.<sup>10</sup>

**Notice that here, just as we have seen earlier in Daniel's description, both the Father and the Son enter the great judgment hall (or second apartment) in heaven at the beginning of the judgment. It is not only Christ who enters.** And since the Father enters first--to take His seat as the Ancient of Days--it is appropriate to say that the Son of man approaches Him and is led into His presence (Dan 7:13). All of this makes perfectly reasonable sense if we conceive of the judgment as being a real event. **No judge spends all his time in the court. But he goes there when it is in session. It is true that the sanctuary is the dwelling place of God, but a dwelling can have more than one room (John 14:2). The sanctuary is still the dwelling place of God even if part of His time is spent in the first apartment.**

**A change of location is required by the language of Daniel. Provision is made to account for it by the language of Ezekiel. We have a similar description in Isaiah. And what all three men write is shown to be consistent with Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary theology by Ellen White. In her view the existence of a literal veil is not a problem because if there is such an object (and she asserts that there is),<sup>11</sup> both Father and Son are on the same side of it.**

### Problems with Alternative Positions

I have argued above that a conservative Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary theology can directly address the problems it raises. But focusing on such problems, as necessary as that may be in a discussion such as this one, introduces a subtle bias. The one set of ideas is presented, even in the act of defending it, as a source of problems, while the other is seen as a source of potential solutions--even if they do not work. I would now like to remove this bias. Alternatives to the view I advocate have problems of their own and they are far more serious than the ones we have already dealt with.

**If we expand the ministry of the second apartment so that it includes all the time after the cross, what we have left is the ministry of the first apartment on the one hand and all the time before the cross on the other.<sup>12</sup> Once a person has reached this point there are two main ways to proceed. He could say that there is an antitypical daily service and that it is performed before the cross. Or alternatively he could say that there is not an antitypical daily service and identify whatever is antitypical in the sanctuary with its second apartment. Either choice leads to a depressing morass of difficulties.**

### Antitypical daily service before the cross.

**If there is an anti-typical first apartment ministry which takes place before the cross, who performs it? Albion F. Ballanger has angels and even Melchisedek serving as priests in Christ's place prior to the cross.<sup>13</sup> I personally consider this implication of his model to be absurd. And yet no one should be criticized for following a premise through to its natural conclusion. It is the premise itself that must be dislodged and not only its implications. If Christ does not perform an antitypical daily service, Ballanger has shown us one direction we can logically look for a solution. Someone else performs it.**

### Discussion.

**I submit that there is only one basis for any sort of antitypical ministry whatever and that it was provided on the cross.** In the system of types both victim and priest represented what Christ would later to do

for us because sacrificial blood had to be both shed and ministered. There must be ministry if the blood was to have value and there must be blood if the ministry was to have value (Heb 8:3). When Christ says, "I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!" (Rev 1:17-18), and when John the Revelator writes, "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne" (Rev 5:6), **we must remember that the blood shed on the cross still courses through Jesus veins as He pleads the merits of that blood before the Father. Unlike the priests in the type, our great High Priest in heaven is also the Lamb and as such can present the blood of His Sacrifice before the Father by presenting Himself.** He does not assume either of these roles gratuitously. Both must be present before either can operate in a meaningful way. I conclude that Ballanger's solution can with every confidence be laid permanently to rest.

### **No antitypical daily service.**

**Ballanger, however, has taken only one of two possible approaches. If Christ does not perform an antitypical daily service, and if no one else does, then none is performed. There is no antitypical daily service at all. The "first tabernacle" of Heb 9:8 represents the Jewish age while the innermost area of the sanctuary represents the Christian age. This is an attractive hypothesis.**

**The problem is that a sanctuary theology which confines all of Christ's high priestly activity to the second apartment provides no basis for seeing any special meaning in the ceremonies that took place on any of the other days of the year. But if none of the other ceremonies point forward to Christ, what was John the Baptist saying when he saw Jesus and told those standing nearby, "'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)? The sacrifices peculiar to the Day of Atonement were not lambs but goats.**

John's words cannot be accounted for on the basis of what happened on the Day of Atonement and we are forced to interpret them in a more general sense. We have just set aside the rest of the sanctuary's services as being inapplicable. What general sense did he have in mind?

Views which in one way or another lead to the above impasse have been held by respected commentators. One of these is B. F. Westcott, cited earlier, who writes:

The comprehensive sense which has been given to *ta hagia* [the holy places], as including both the Holy and the Most Holy place, explains the use of *he prote skene* [the first tabernacle]. This phrase has been used just before (v. 6; comp. v. 2) of the Holy place as the vestibule, so to speak, of the Divine presence-chamber; and it is very difficult to suppose that it should be suddenly used in another sense for 'the first (the Mosaic) tabernacle' as opposed to the heavenly archetypal tabernacle (v. 11).

The Levitical system then, represented by 'the first Tabernacle,' is described here as a parable 'to serve for' or, perhaps 'to last as long as' the present season [*eis ton kairon ton enestekota*, vs. 9]. It conveyed its lessons while the preparatory age continued up to the time of change.<sup>14</sup>

**Let us examine this position more closely. It is Westcott's claim that the "first tabernacle" of Heb 9:8 is a reference to the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary in contrast to the second and not the earthly sanctuary with both its apartments in contrast to the heavenly. The first apartment is therefore a parable for the Jewish age and the second apartment is a parable for the Christian age. Christ entered the second apartment immediately after His ascension and all of His high priestly work for mankind takes place there.**

But if Westcott is correct, the ministry of the first apartment either represents itself (translating "to serve for") or represents nothing at all (translating "to last as long as"). In either case the ceremonies performed in the

first apartment do not inform us concerning Christ's antitypical sacrifice on the cross and as a result John's description of Christ as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" remains puzzling instead of being filled with deep meaning.

Nor is this the only passage of its kind. When Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza the passage he was reading as he rode along was this one from Isaiah:

Acts 8:32-33 "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: <sup>33</sup> In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, " I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." (vss. 32-35).

**Philip, of course, gave the right answer. But under a model which confines all ministry in heaven after the cross to the second apartment we must ask what connection there is between the good news about Jesus and passages such as Isa 53:7 that talk about sacrificial lambs. By limiting our sanctuary theology in so severe a manner as Westcott proposes we are left asking the eunuchs question rather than supplying Philips answer.** Let this much suffice to show that any solution along these lines is fundamentally misdirected.

#### Discussion.

**There are issues to consider that go beyond what has already been said. Attempting to confine Christ's high priestly work in heaven to the second apartment must in fact have the opposite effect of making it impossible for Him to do what the second apartment was designed to accomplish.**

**It is not only the case that there were two areas marked off within the ancient sanctuary and two periods of time associated with their use; the two ministries performed there also served different functions. The one was not merely a repetition of the other. In the daily service of the first apartment sin was separated from the sinner by transferring it into the sanctuary. In the yearly service of the second apartment sin was separated from the sanctuary by transferring it into the wilderness. The one process brought sin into the sanctuary, while the other process took sin out of the sanctuary. Bringing sin in and taking it out are not the same. The one function was perpetuated every day, continually, while the other took place only on the day of atonement and brought the ceremonial year to a close. To transfer the continual (tamid) ministry of Christ to the second apartment rather than the first betrays a misunderstanding of what happened in both places.**

**It should also be pointed out that a sanctuary theology which indefinitely extends the work done in the second apartment makes no provision for the second coming. It is limited to the first apartment concept of continually bringing sin in, regardless where this ministry is said to take place. There is no corresponding second apartment concept of taking sin out and bringing the year to a final end. If we say that Christ is always in the second apartment but prevent Him from doing antitypically what was done there in the type, then for all intents and purposes we take away His second apartment ministry rather than emphasize it.**

This is a serious omission and I would go further to suggest that it is more than an omission. During the long period when Christ was ministering only the daily service (before 1844) it was attacked by the little horn (Dan 8:11). There was a precedent for this and we can be glad that there was because it is highly instructive at

the present time. Peter--one of the most prominent of the disciples--once attempted to remove the cross from Christ's earthly ministry (see Matt 16:21-28).<sup>15</sup> Peter did not know what he was saying and he was stringently rebuked. After the ascension the truth about Christ's priestly ministry in heaven "was thrown to the ground" (Dan 8:12). The little horns attack on the daily service thus corresponds to Peter's earlier attack on the cross. What remains is the antitypical yearly service and we are now seeing the attack on that. If we could tell those involved the true nature of what they were doing in Dan 8:11, they might well be just as surprised as Peter was in Matt 16:23. But however this might be, if someone now comes forward and tries to weaken the function of the yearly service (not the place of the yearly service but its function) in Christ's present phase of ministry, he should at least be aware that he is dealing with very serious issues.

**In the type the yearly round of ceremonies was performed endlessly but it represents something that would only happen once. Christ offered Himself once not only in the sense that His sacrifice does not need to be repeated in order to save sinners living in any age of history (Heb 7:23-28). He offers Himself once also in the sense that the history of our planet will never be repeated (Nah 1:9-10). There will not be a second fall after the earth is cleansed by fire and recreated in its original beauty (Rev 21:1-4). It is really true that on the cross Christ accomplished an eternal redemption, but not because in accepting it people lose the power of choice. Instead it is because what He did has the effect of forever innoculating not only us but the entire universe from any recurrence of the sin problem. It takes away any desire that His creatures might ever have again to rebel against God's wise and gracious laws. But such a result cannot be envisioned if history as we know it goes on indefinitely.**

**Adopting a timeless notion of the entire gospel age as a perpetual end time (an endless end time), merely renders our words meaningless. Both apartments are necessary before either can do what it was designed for and their respective functions must be allowed to contrast with each other. There must come an end and our sanctuary theology must be able to account for that fact.**

**Returning to the passage from Heb 9, I submit that the appropriate context for understanding the "first tabernacle" of vs. 8 is the "first testament" or "first covenant" of vs. 15. Thus, if the first covenant is the pre-Christian system of Jewish sacrifices in its entirety, the "first tabernacle" is the place where those sacrifices were offered--in its entirety. The "first tabernacle" is not an isolated part of the first tabernacle. It is the whole thing. It is not one apartment in contrast to another but the earthly sanctuary in contrast to the heavenly.**

This [the ministry of the first tabernacle] is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper (vs. 9).

**The distinction that the author of Hebrews has in mind throughout is between one system of worship in which "gifts and sacrifices" (8 : 3) are brought before God by a human priest and another better one in which such measures are no longer necessary.** This is why he says,

<sup>1</sup> 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; <sup>2</sup> A minister of the sanctuary<sup>a</sup>, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

All of the type was superseded at Christ's death and all of the type points forward to what He would eventually do for us, not only here on earth as our Sacrifice (2 Cor 5:20, margin), but also in heaven as our great High Priest.

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<sup>a</sup> of the sanctuary: or, of holy things

## Conclusion

Just as the whole sanctuary had a cleansing function anciently, the whole sanctuary has a teaching function now (Gal 3:24). It must, in its entirety, either be allowed to lead sinners to Christ or be prevented from doing so. When studied in the light of the cross the sanctuary clarifies the nature of Christ's sacrifice and helps us to understand the full length and breadth of what He was doing there on our behalf. To remove any part of the type is to remove the corresponding instruction that it might have given us. In order to gain all of the instruction that we can from the sanctuary we must allow all of the types to speak to us concerning Christ.

The problems inherent within a conservative Seventh-day Adventist theology of the sanctuary are not insuperable. Of course, if we pretend they are not real, the solutions we propose in response to them will not be either. The problems must be recognized as such and be met head on. That is not where the difficulty lies. The difficulty lies in any attempt to avoid the original set of problems by striking off in a different direction altogether.

## ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Until the point has been grasped that the two ministries are different, their relationship will appear to be repetitive rather than complementary. There were two ministries but one end or purpose that both had in view.

<sup>2</sup> In the words of William Miller, "Take 490 from 2300, and add the life of Christ, 33, and you will find the true sanctuary cleansed, of which the temple at Jerusalem was only a shadow" (Miller's Reply to Stuart's "Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy" in Three Letters, Addressed to Joshua V. Himes [Boston, 1842; reprinted 1985], p. 31). This, of course, brings us to 1843, not 1844. The date was later corrected to 1844, taking into account more facts from secular chronology and also both the seventy weeks of Dan 9 and the 2300 days of Dan 8. "The 2300 days had been found to begin when the commandment of Artaxerxes for the restoration and building of Jerusalem went into effect, in the autumn of 457 B.C. Taking this as the starting point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9:25-27. Sixty-nine weeks, the first 483 of the 2300 years, were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, A.D. 27, exactly fulfilled the specification. In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of A.D. 31. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. 'Then,' said the angel, 'shall the sanctuary be cleansed'" (Ellen White, The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1950], p. 410).

<sup>3</sup> Hardy, "Structural Characteristics of the Letters to the Seven Churches in Rev 2-3," Historicism No. 4/Oct 85, pp. 39-64.

<sup>4</sup> It is God's purpose in the book of Revelation to give us insight, not only into what happens in the judgment, but also how world events would affect the church. Thus, the emphasis is selective. There is no reason to suppose that only those who live after the cross come in review before the judgment. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the court evaluates each event while it is still in progress. The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy. It looks forward to those events which the court would eventually consider when it sits (as in Dan 7:10) and brings all men's lives under review.

<sup>5</sup> Hardy, "Do Rev 4-5 and 19:1-10 Refer to the Judgment?" Historicism No. 6/Apr 86, pp. 49-58.

<sup>6</sup> From one point of view the result of Christ's presence is the second coming (Luke 21:28; 1 Thess 4:16-18), from another it is Armageddon (Rev 19:11-21; cf. 16:12-16). What have appeared to be two events are in fact the same. One cannot fight until he arrives at the scene of the battle.

<sup>7</sup> See Hardy, "wenisdaq in Dan 8:14, Part 1: How Should the Word Be Translated?" Historicism No. 3/Jul 85, pp. 17-36.

<sup>8</sup> The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, reprinted 1980), p. 247.

<sup>9</sup> Life Sketches of Ellen G. White (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1943), p. 100.

<sup>10</sup> Early Writings of Ellen G. White (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> "The curtain which separated the two apartments [in heaven] was of different colors and material, with a beautiful border, in which were figures wrought of gold to represent angels. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the second apartment (Early Writings, p. 252).

<sup>12</sup> Dividing time before the cross into one part before Moses and another part afterward can only be done arbitrarily. If we are dealing with the time before Christ, we must account for all the time before Christ—including that part of it which is also before Moses.

<sup>13</sup> See Roy Adams, The Sanctuary Doctrine: Three Approaches in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 1 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1981), pp. 112-15.

<sup>14</sup> Hebrews, p. 253.

<sup>15</sup> See Hardy, Matt 16:13-20," Historicism No 17/Apr 89, pp. 27-29.