

Seventh-day Adventism's Dogma of an Investigative Judgment through Ellen White's Eyes

by Fred Mazzaferri

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a revision of my "Seventh-day Adventism's Dogma of an Investigative Judgment through Ellen White's Eyes – a Brief Evaluation", November, 2000

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Quotations

Sacred Scripture

Unless otherwise specified, throughout this entire assessment I employ the **New International Version** (NIV) – 1990 British edition – for all such quotations, with all emphases supplied personally.

Ellen White Corpus

With very rare exceptions, dictated by decades of writing prior to cyberspace, I likewise adopt the standard abbreviations for the Ellen White writings listed @ www.whiteestate.org/cdrom/bib-stan.

DARCOM Apologia

Reference to the Daniel and Revelation Committee's seven-volume apologia for exclusive Seventh-day Adventist dogma is facilitated by the labels **DARCOM 1-7**.

They all share the details: ed. F.B. Holbrook; Biblical Research Institute:

DARCOM 1: Shea, W. H., *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation* (Silver Spring, 1992²).

DARCOM 2: *Symposium on Daniel: Introductory & Exegetical Studies* (Washington, 1986).

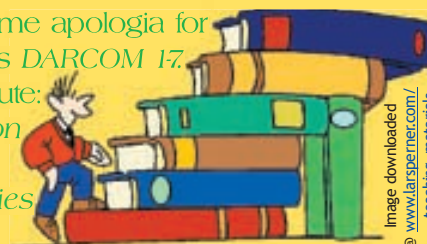
DARCOM 3: *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (Washington, 1986).

DARCOM 4: *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, (Silver Spring, 1989).

DARCOM 5: *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: a Historical Survey (1845-1863)* (Silver Spring, 1989).

DARCOM 6: *Symposium on Revelation: Introductory & Exegetical Studies, Book 1* (Silver Spring, 1992).

DARCOM 7: *Symposium on Revelation: Exegetical & General Studies, Book 2* (Silver Spring, 1992).



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Seventh-day Adventism's Dogma of an Investigative Judgment through Ellen White's Eyes

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has long enjoyed the respect of many informed Christians as an organisation making a commendable contribution to Christ's global cause. Then why does it stand so far apart, even claiming to be God's sole authentic church in the whole world, with a unique message to deliver to its every last human inhabitant before Jesus can return in glory to gather his elect?

The seventh-day Sabbath is not an issue as some other confessions like the Seventh Day Baptists respect it, too. Nor is the oblivious state of the dead, which is endorsed by such respected, conservative Bible scholars as John Stott in Great Britain and Clark Pinnock in the United States of America.

What actually sets it largely apart is its unique teaching that Jesus started a fresh phase of his High Priestly ministry in 1844, moving from the Holy Place of heaven's sanctuary to its Most Holy Place. The record books were opened there, we are assured, so that the suitability of every individual who has ever professed faith in God and/or Christ to enter their eternal Kingdom may be assessed, beginning with Adam and moving in due course to the living. It closes by obliterating the sins of all who have repented, claimed Jesus' atoning blood and perfected characters in harmony with God's Law. Then probation closes and, soon afterwards, Christ returns, terminating that fearful, final Time of Trouble!¹

The history of this dogma's development need not detain us, either as regards its genesis among Seventh-day Adventist pioneers, or its refinement because of the epochal Glacier View Colloquium.² What is of particular interest here is that, at least prior to the Desmond Ford watershed, the Seventh-day Adventist Church claimed that it was presented best of all in Ellen White's writings.³ As it likewise stands apart from all other denominations in claiming her as its authoritative prophet,⁴ it is doubly convenient to assess this dogma through her eyes. For no appeal can be made here to a mere casual reading of Scripture. *She must be offering what she considers strictly major, **literal** interpretations of the Word when she addresses any theological point crucial to any unique dogma.* If she was truly inspired by the very same Holy Spirit who inspired Holy Writ, the decisive fact will certainly be evident here.

What comes to most Seventh-day Adventist minds when they mention the investigative – more recently pre-Advent – judgment is their Church's very confident claim that Dan. 8:14 reveals the *precise* time when heaven's sanctuary would begin to be cleansed of its amassed burden of human guilt. In fact, in a recent pamphlet to world-wide members, it boldly asserts that, of all the Bible's predictions,

those centering on Daniel 8 and 9 are the most critical for Seventh-day Adventists... These prophecies focused the message of William Miller and the pioneers of our movement, and they are still vital for understanding our times.⁵

It was through the study of Daniel 8:14 *as a point of departure* that Adventism came into existence *as a historical movement*, developed its *doctrinal identity*, and *identified its mission*. *We are confronted here with a **foundational and vital aspect of Adventist thought.***⁶

However, this is certainly not the proper place to launch our assessment of Ellen White's treatment of this doctrine. First on the list is the foundation, if any, of this paramount denominational "building". Indeed, she and her fellow pioneers may never have buried their devotees in it had they begun at the beginning instead of in the middle, with Dan. 8:14, naïvely and exigently forcing the blood cultus behind, in the Book of Leviticus, and its NT interpretation ahead, in the Book of Hebrews, into its warped mold.

The "Foundation": Blood Within the Tabernacle

What Ellen White Claims

The crucial question that should be considered before that of *cleansing* God's sanctuary is, *When and how is it defiled by an individual's sins? That is, **Why** must it be cleansed from their pollution at all?* Looking back first to his earthly sanctuary, one of Ellen White's fuller answers to this key question is:

*The most important part of the **daily** ministrations was the service performed in behalf of **individuals**.* The repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle, and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. By his own hand the animal was then slain, and the blood was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. *By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary.* In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place;* [asterisk sic] but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron..., "God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation." Leviticus 10:17. *Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.*

... The sins of Israel being thus transferred to the sanctuary, *the holy places were defiled*, and a special work became necessary for the **removal** of the sins. God commanded that an atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments, as for the altar, to "cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." Leviticus 16:19.

Once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary. The work there performed completed the yearly round of ministrations.

On the Day of Atonement two kids... were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, "one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." The goat upon which the first lot fell was to be slain as a sin offering for the people. And the priest was to bring his blood within the veil, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat...⁷

Ellen White here quotes Lev. 16:16, then 21f., which treats the fate of the scapegoat. She then draws out the "important truths concerning the atonement" which are taught by these solemn ceremonies:

In the sin offerings presented during the year, a substitute had been accepted in the sinner's stead; but the blood of the victim had not made full atonement for the sin. *It had only provided a means by which the sin was transferred to the sanctuary.* By the offering of blood, the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed the guilt of his transgression, and expressed his faith in Him who was to take away the sin of the world; *but he was not entirely released from the condemnation of the law.* On the Day of Atonement the high priest, having taken an offering for the congregation, went into the most holy place with the blood and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat, above the tables of the law. Thus the claims of the law, which demanded the life of the sinner, were satisfied.⁸

Ellen White now turns to the scapegoat, which does not concern us here. A long section follows, employing typology to justify her belief that, like the earthly, heaven's sanctuary has two apartments. She draws from this a doctrine of Christ's two-phase ministry within heaven's temple. These notions will be evaluated in due course. Whether or not the biblical evidence supports them, she continues:

As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministrations sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner's behalf.

The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, *was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement*; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.

In the great day of final award, the dead are to be "judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, *the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven.* Thus the sanctuary will be freed, or *cleansed*, from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement—the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.⁹

What the Word of God States

Blood for Individual Sins

How does Ellen White's sectarian teaching survive the Berean Test, Acts 17:11? Actually, this editorial note in the Appendix of her *Patriarchs and Prophets* seeks to clarify its asterisked detail we observed in my initial quotation. In the process, however, it all but concedes that she is strikingly mistaken here:

When a sin offering was presented for a priest or for the whole congregation, the blood was carried into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil and placed upon the horns of the golden altar. The fat was consumed upon the altar of burnt offering in the court, but the body of the victim was burned without the camp. See Leviticus 4:1-21.

When, however, the offering was for a ruler or for one of the people, the blood was not taken into the holy place, but the flesh was to be eaten by the priest,... Leviticus 6:26... See also Leviticus 4:22-35.¹⁰

This clarification can scarcely be faulted. Lev. 4 details the offerings for the sins of a priest, 3-12, communal sins, 13-21, sins of a leader, 22-26, and sins of individuals, 27-35. In two of these cases alone, sins of a priest or of the whole community, was the blood manipulated as Ellen White details: borne inside the sanctuary, sprinkled in front of the inner curtain and put upon the horns of the altar of incense, 6f., 17f. In contrast, the remainder was poured out at the base of the external altar of burnt offering, 7b, 18b.

Yet *in the case of individuals whom alone she specifically discusses*, "the priest is to take some of the blood... and put it on the horns of the altar of **burnt** offering, and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar", 30. That is, *this blood never entered the sanctuary, so an individual's sins never defiled it!* Even the blood of a priest's personal sacrifice rarely entered the Holy Place. For just five priests, Ex. 28:1, then only three, Nu. 3:2-44, served 603,550 men alone, 1:1-46; 2:1-32 – *more than 200,000 per priest!* Even topping 1,000 of their sacrifices a day, he would enter the Holy Place with the blood of his own merely *twice a year!* At very least, therefore, Ellen White should have epitomised this whole situation thus: "In almost **every** case (not some cases) the blood was not taken into the holy place".

Quite apart from the huge problems this data creates for those still desperate to have individual sins pollute the Holy Place day by day,¹¹ the simple, strident query remains: “If Yahweh really wished such sin to register there day by day, *why not precisely the same extremely simple procedure as for a priest, or the entire nation?*” The stark contrast between the blood manipulations of the two types of sacrifices eloquently attests that *this dogma attempts to obliterate a manifest distinction ordained by God himself!*

The Priest and his Consumption of Portion of the Sacrifice

Nor does Ellen White offer *any* persuasive case for her claim that a priest’s eating the flesh of a sacrifice was *any* part of the atonement process. For one thing, such food, ranging from flesh, Lev. 6:24-30; 7:1-6, to bread or grain, Lev. 6:14-18; 24:5-9; Nu. 18:8-19, was the regular nutriment not only for the priests themselves – including those ineligible for sanctuary service through physical defects, Lev. 21:16-23! – but also for their families, 6:29; 7:6; 10:12-15, and even some of their slaves, 22:11. Nowhere here is there even the slightest hint that the consumption itself had **any** cultic significance whatever.¹²

For another, the priests’ effecting atonement via sacrifice is mentioned repeatedly. But even where the service is detailed, as in Lev. 1; 4:22-26, 27-35; 5:7-10; 9:7-24, eating is never included. Why not, if it contributes to the atonement which is the very point of every reference? For yet another, Yahweh himself specifically clarifies that “*it is the blood that makes atonement*”, Lev. 17:11b. Its consumption was therefore **completely prohibited**, 10-14. How, then, could any priest possibly make atonement for sin by consuming the flesh of *any* sacrifice? In fact, it had been drained quite dry of its *atonement* blood at the altar.

Regardless, at first sight Lev. 10:17 still appears to support Ellen White’s case, above all because of the import of the verb נָשָׂא (*nāsā*) and its object, the noun אֲוֹן (*āwōn*), which it uses here. Time and again they have the sense *bear the guilt/iniquity/consequence*, as in Gen. 4:13; Lev. 5:1, 17; 7:18; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17, 19; Nu. 5:31; 14:34; 30:15; Eze. 14:10; 44:10, 12. This obtains even in a vicarious sense, as when Ezekiel, Eze. 4:4-6, or the scapegoat, Lev. 16:22, “bears” the people’s iniquities, or when Yahweh forgives a genuinely contrite transgressor, as in Ex. 34:7; Nu. 14:18; Ps. 32:5; 85:2; Isa. 33:24; Hos. 14:2; Mic. 7:18.

However, the choice of this verb and noun in Lev. 10:17 is no proof that a priest bore the sin by eating his portion of any sacrifice. For one thing, simply by *being* a High Priest, Aaron was to “bear” his people’s sins, Ex. 28:38. In fact, this duty fell upon every priest, Nu. 18:1. Yet nowhere is there even the slightest hint that devouring their share of the sacrifice was in *any* way crucial in this vicarious duty. To be precise, God gave them the entire sacrifice “*to make atonement for yourselves on the altar*”, Lev. 17:11, not by digesting any of it. Perhaps this is why, although no blood enters the sanctuary from the sin offering mentioned in 5:7-10, the priest is not commanded to eat any part of this sacrificial bird.¹³

For another, although Moses was angry with Aaron’s sons for burning the sacrificial goat instead of eating it, there is no evidence at all that his concern was that the efficacy of the atonement ceremony itself had been compromised. In fact, when Aaron clarified that he had assumed that being upset at the time over the death of his sons was an exceptional circumstance, 19, “Moses... was satisfied”, 20!

There is no pathway, then, into the sanctuary for pollution from any individual’s sin. So Seventh-day Adventism seems to have **no** theological basis whatever for its prime distinctive dogma of cleansing heaven’s sanctuary, polluted day by day by **individual** sinners.¹⁴ Yet a final decision is unwise until the Day of Atonement rituals are fully comprehended. Here the paramount passage is Lev. 16, of course.

The Two Altars in Israel’s Day of Atonement Ritual

In broad perspective, Ellen White’s case can still survive if the altar purged by blood, 18f., is the altar of burnt offering outside the sanctuary proper, as most commentators state, where the blood of a sacrifice for individual sins remained. But if it is the altar of incense within the Holy Place, her case has no biblical foundation whatever. So it is crucial to be perfectly clear about both the differences between these altars and the precise details of the High Priest’s duties during the climactic Day of Atonement.

Several different altars feature in the history of the Children of Israel and the patriarchs. All that concerns the current study, though, are the two distinct altars associated with the wilderness sanctuary. A number of subtle variances exclude even Solomon’s and Ezekiel’s theoretical, post-exilic temples.¹⁵

First was the great bronze altar of burnt offering in the sanctuary’s courtyard. Measuring five by five by three cubits, with a projection at each corner, it was elaborately equipped, Ex. 27:1-8; 38:17. Its perpetual fire, Lev. 6:8-13, received the evening and morning burnt offerings, 29:38-43; Nu. 28:1-8, the Sabbath’s special offering, Nu. 28:9f., specific atonement offerings (the Hebrew has distinct nouns for burnt, guilt and sin offerings), Lev. 1; 4:1-6:13; 6:24-7:10; 9, grain offerings, Lev. 2; 6:14-18, and fellowship offerings, Lev. 3; 7:11-21. The specific rôle of this altar in the Day of Atonement’s ritual will be considered shortly.

The second, smaller, golden altar was within the Holy Place, right before the curtain shielding the Most Holy Place. Measuring just one by one by two cubits, with horns at each corner, Ex. 30:1-6; 37:25-

28, a specially prepared, fine-ground, fragrant incense, 30:34-38, was to be burnt upon it every morning and evening, 7f. No burnt, grain or drink offerings were allowed, 9. However, it did receive some of the blood of the sin offerings for any priest, Lev. 4:7, or for the entire nation, 18. Its special contribution to the solemn ceremonies of the Day of Atonement will be considered separately in due course.

Which of these was most important? Certainly the altar of incense. At very least, this is implied by the precious gold in comparison with the common bronze. But above all, the sweet incense which ascended from it before the inner curtain of the sanctuary symbolised the prayers of the faithful, Ps. 141:2 (compare Rev. 5:8; 8:3f.). That is, the bronze altar focused on the *external* features of the ritual of treating the perpetual problem of human sinfulness, while the golden altar focused on its *internal* features. As Micah the prophet reminded his rebellious nation, Mic. 6:6-8,¹⁶ in pointed personal fashion:

With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God?
 Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil?
 Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
 To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

In other words: “Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the ... LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams”, 1 Sam. 15:22.¹⁷

A final distinctive detail is that sometimes the golden altar is also designated as the one before the LORD, Lev. 4:7, 18; 16:12. In contrast, nowhere does the OT so label its bronze altar unambiguously. The significance of this phrase in Lev. 16:18 will be considered in due course, in its very instructive context.

The Day of Atonement Ritual

What, precisely, did the High Priest do during this climactic Day of Atonement – his *sine qua non*?

The first Hebrew noun of interest is קֹדֶשׁ (*qōdesʹ*), which makes manifest reference in Lev. 16:2 to the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary complex. This is so because it is “behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark”. This noun recurs in 3, 16, 17, 20, 23, 27, 33. It is also used in 4, 32 for the sanctity of the High Priest’s attire. These apart, consistency implies that reference throughout this chapter is always to the inner room, except in 3, where the complete complex, including the courtyard, appears to be in mind because all of the sacrificial animals were slaughtered at its bronze altar.

This conviction gains strength as it is noticed that the sanctuary structure itself is described throughout the chapter by the pair of nouns אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד (*ōhel mōēd*), literally rendered *tent of assembly*, 7, 16, 17, 20, 23, 33. This specificity does not invite the slightest notion that on occasions the noun which denotes the almost completely forbidden Most Holy Place is utilised in its stead, thus creating confusion.

Secondly, the various verbs of motion describing the High Priest’s movements are of great assistance in following him in his solemn duties. The first is בָּוֵא (*bōʹ*), with the sense *enter* in 2, 3, 17, 23 (*bis*), and the comparable nuance *carry* in 12, 15, 23. In 17 alone are we not immediately confident that we comprehend precisely which section of the sanctuary complex the ambulant High Priest is entering.

The second verb, with the complementary sense *emerge*, is יָצָא (*yāšāʹ*), 17, 18, 24. But only in 24 is it immediately certain which part of the complex he exits, for sacrifice was made in its courtyard alone.

The prime question for this study, in brief, is this. For which altar was atonement made, 18f.? Was it the altar of incense, 12, or that of burnt offering, 25? The most popular choice by far among the commentators is the latter, even though it depends upon the sheer supposition that in 17 it is the sanctuary building itself, not merely its Most Holy Place, which the High Priest enters then leaves. Certainly, the Hebrew script permits that reading in isolation. However, there are other pressing considerations.

For one thing, mention of the altar *before the LORD*, 12, certainly suggests at least the possibility if not probability that this is the very same altar *before the LORD*, 18, especially as the Hebrew text is virtually identical both times, while the bronze altar is never so termed elsewhere. For another, twice over Moses surveys the cultus relative to the sanctuary complex itself, atoning for “the Most Holy Place, (...) the Tent of Meeting and the altar”, 20, 23. This is no hint that any salient feature of this aspect of atonement is absent. Nor does it depict the one sprinkling of blood in the Most Holy Place atoning as well for the Tent of Meeting. The manifest meaning is that *there were three distinct, sequential ceremonies*.

Now the crucial question is, Where does the ritual of Ex. 30:10 fit? With specific, contextual reference to the incense altar, Yahweh’s behest is: “Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning *sin* offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD.” Notice that both the bull and the goat sacrificed on the Day of Atonement were sin offerings, Lev. 16:3, 9. Each burnt offering was a ram, one for the High Priest, 3, and one for the people, 5. Only the bull’s blood, mixed with the goat’s, provided atonement for the altar itself, 18f.

The inference is transparent! In fact, while Seventh-day Adventism naturally stands with the bulk of commentators in viewing the altar, Lev. 16:18f., as that of burnt offering,¹⁸ it follows its scholarly instinct to the opposite conclusion in carefully analysing the atonement ceremony of Ex. 30:10: "This refers to the great Day of Atonement... when the high priest was to take the blood and put it on the horns of the altar of incense 'and make an atonement for it' (Lev. 16:18, 19)."¹⁹ More interesting still, it is likewise Dr. G. F. Hasel, probably Seventh-day Adventism's most prestigious OT apologist for its distinctive dogma,²⁰ who faces the full force of the compelling evidence with complete candour, albeit in a mere footnote:

It is not entirely certain which altar is in view in Lev 16:18-19. The distinction between "tent of meeting" and "the altar" in vs 20 and 33 may suggest that the altar... is that of the burnt offering in front of the sanctuary... It should be noted, however, that in Lev 4:7, 18 where the "sin offering" is brought in the daily service the only altar that is sprinkled is the "altar which is in the tent of meeting before the Lord." Thus the "altar which is before the Lord" in Lev 16:18 can be understood as an abbreviation of the "altar which is in the tent of meeting before the Lord," i.e., the altar within the sanctuary. In Ex. 30:10 the altar of incense is said to be cleansed on the day of atonement.²¹

Yet it may still be opined that this ritual featuring the altar of incense is implied in the atonement of the Tent of Meeting. However, this conjecture survives no close scrutiny. For one thing, it is *scarcely* conceivable that the details of the solemn edict of Ex. 30:10 would be relegated to a mere *inference* when the lesser, bronze altar basks in replete *detail!* For another, the Hebrew text clearly records that the ceremony for the atonement of the Most Holy Place was repeated *precisely* in atoning for the Tent of Meeting *per se*: "He is to do *the same* (adverbial particle כֵּן (*kēn*)²²) for the Tent of Meeting," Lev. 16:16b. That is, the entire Tent of Meeting *as an entity* was cleansed by sprinkling the sacrificial blood of both the bull and the goat the second time in its Most Holy Place. There is no compelling cause whatever, then, to include the bronze altar in the ritual of cleansing on the annual, climactic Day of Atonement.

Yet this insistent question remains, Why ignore it completely? Dr. W. H. Shea, another prominent apologist for Seventh-day Adventism's paramount, distinctive dogma, offers us some food for very careful thought when drawing these instructive parallels between the corporate sin offerings of Lev. 4 and 16:

The *corporate* nature of these sin offerings should be compared and emphasized... in Leviticus 4. The first two involved the priest and the entire congregation; the latter two involved the individual... The manner in which the rites for the last two classes was conducted was also different. Thus the sin offering for the priest or for the whole congregation is emphasized by the parallels with the Day of Atonement blood rites. The Day of Atonement was not the time for dealing with *individual* sin... In a sense that opportunity had come and gone during the cultic year. Now, on the Day of Atonement, it was time to deal with all the sins of the children of Israel as a *corporate* activity.²³

The Day of Atonement Ritual in Summary

The flow of the awesome Day of Atonement's ceremonies may be summarised, then, as follows:

- The High Priest brings a young bull for his own sin offering and a ram for his own burnt offering to the courtyard of the sanctuary, Lev. 16:3;
- He bathes in water, then dons sacred linen attire, 4;
- His people provide two male goats and a ram for their sin and burnt offerings respectively, 5;
- He offers the bull for his sin offering, 6, 11;
- He casts lots over the goats at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, one for the Lord and one as the scapegoat, 7f.;
- He sacrifices the first goat as the people's sin offering but preserves the other alive, 9f.;
- He enters the Most Holy Place with the bull's blood, shielded from the atonement cover of the ark with incense activated by a censer of coals from the golden altar, 12f.;
- With his finger he sprinkles the bull's blood about the ark, 14;
- He duplicates this sprinkling with the slain²⁴ goat's blood, thus atoning for the Most Holy Place, made necessary by the people's sins, 15f.;
- This entire ceremony is repeated within the Most Holy Place to atone for the Tent of Meeting itself, 16b, which must be otherwise empty of people at the time, 17;
- He leaves the Most Holy Place and, with a mixture of the bull's and goat's bloods, he sprinkles the altar of incense to cleanse it of the nation's sinfulness, 18f.;²⁵
- He emerges from the Tent to transfer the total burden of national sinfulness to the live goat, 20f.;
- He re-enters the Tent, sheds the sacred linen garb, bathes and re-robes in his regular clothes, 23f.;
- He leaves the Tent for the final time to further atone for himself and his people in turn by sacrificing the ram for his own *burnt* (observe, not *sin*) offering and the one for the people's, 24a;
- Finally, he burns the fat of the sin offering on the bronze altar, 25;
- The scapegoat is released as a bloodless atonement into the desert, 10, 21bf., 26;
- The bodies of the sin-offering bull and goat are burned outside the camp, 27.

Conclusion

Ellen White is quite emphatic that day by day, the sins of individuals polluted both the earthly sanctuary and its heavenly reality, though thus far we have considered in detail no more than the former.

Scripture makes it quite clear, in stark contrast, that *the blood of the sacrifice for the sins of individuals never entered the sanctuary building itself*. Rather, all of this blood went no further than the bronze altar in the courtyard **outside** the building. Before the Day of Atonement the only blood **ever** to enter the Holy Place was that from the sacrifice for the priest's *personal* sin or for the entire nation's. Nor is there any definitive Bible evidence whatever that the sanctuary was polluted by a priest's eating any portion of the individual's sacrifice, let alone that the blood of his *personal* sacrifice transferred *corporeal* corruption. In brief, *there is absolutely no pathway for individual sinners to foul the sanctuary*. Moreover, since the bronze altar experienced no cleansing whatever on the Day of Atonement, there is no rational sense in which it can be said that the pollution of *individual* sins was cleansed at that time.

It follows that here we observe another striking theological error within the writings of Ellen White. The manifest inference is that, quite apart from the veracity of its interpretation of Dan. 8:14, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has no biblical foundation, at least in the earthly sanctuary, for its chief dogma of a protracted review of the heavenly records of every believer, one by one, prior to Christ's Return.

Where Next?

Having examined the *foundation* of the Seventh-day Adventist dogma of a pre-Advent judgment, it is time for a careful inspection of the "*structure*" itself. For the open-minded observer always accepts the possibility that a perfectly sound building rests upon a flawed foundation. For example, if the NT teaches clearly and unambiguously that there will be a scrutiny of the saints before Christ returns, the nature and the timing of that pre-Advent judgment concern this study. *It need not necessarily involve scrutinising any books detailing mankind's moral performance or fulfilling any prophetic timetables!* Far too many critics toss the proverbial baby out with the bath water when rightly rejecting Seventh-day Adventist heresy, often with clear, cathartic overtones. Healing is important, but not at the cost of truth.

The "building" to be examined has three distinct portions. The first is Seventh-day Adventism's confident claim that, just as the OT sanctuary had two separate apartments, so does heaven's original. Its corollary is that, just as the earthly priest ministered day by day in the Holy Place, while the High Priest alone served for only one single day in the Most Holy Place as the Jewish year closed, so also Jesus Christ ascended, his Passion complete, to serve sinful mankind for long centuries in heaven's Holy Place, moving just once to its Most Holy Place for the short period of time before his Parousia.

The third part of Seventh-day Adventism's "building" is its claim that Christ's change of ministry fulfilled the temporal forecast of Dan. 8:14 in 1844. Actually, this is where its pioneers started, under the quite sincere yet deluded leadership of William Miller, only gazing backwards to the Book of Leviticus and forwards to the Book of Hebrews with their dogma fairly firmly in place. Logical sequence offers a fresh, edifying perspective here. The tragedy is that it may have averted this detour from the outset.

The "Partitions": How Many "Apartments" in the Heavenly Sanctuary?

What Ellen White Claims

Ellen White rightly reminds her reader that, though the "matchless splendor of the earthly tabernacle reflected to human vision the glories of that heavenly temple where Christ our forerunner ministers for us before the throne of God... that temple, filled with the glory of the eternal throne,... could find, in the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands, but a faint reflection of its vastness and glory."²⁶ However, what counts here is her claim that God's heavenly temple "is the great original, of which the sanctuary built by Moses was a copy,"²⁷ in accordance with the divinely revealed pattern:

It was "a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and offerings;" its two holy places were "patterns of things in the heavens;" Christ, our High Priest is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man." Hebrews 9:9, 23; 8:2. As in vision the apostle John was granted a view of the temple of God in heaven, he beheld there "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." He saw an angel "having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne." Revelation 4:5; 8:3. Here the prophet was permitted to behold the first apartment of the sanctuary in heaven; and he saw there the "seven lamps of fire" and the "golden altar" represented by the golden candlestick and the altar of incense in the sanctuary on earth. Again, "the temple of God was opened" (Revelation 11:19), and he looked within the inner veil, upon the holy of holies. Here he beheld "the ark of His testament" (Revelation 11:19), represented by the sacred chest constructed by Moses to contain the law of God.

Moses made the earthly sanctuary, “according to the fashion that he had seen.” Paul declares that “the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry,” when completed, were “the pattern of the things in the heavens” Acts 7:44; Hebrews 9:21, 23. And John says that he saw the sanctuary in heaven.²⁸

Moreover, Ellen White actually claims to have been given a “guided tour” of God’s heavenly temple:

I came to the first veil. This veil was raised, and I passed into the holy place. Here I saw the altar of incense, the candlestick with seven lamps, and the table on which was the shewbread. After viewing the glory of the holy, Jesus raised the second veil and I passed into the holy of holies.

In the holiest I saw an ark; on the top and sides of it were 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.²⁹

She likewise claims to have viewed the earthly sanctuary, facilitating broad and close comparisons:

I was also shown a sanctuary upon the earth containing two apartments. It resembled the one in heaven, and I was told that it was a figure of the heavenly. The furniture of the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary was like that in the first apartment of the heavenly. The veil was lifted, and I looked into the holy of holies and saw that the furniture was the same as in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.³⁰

There is no doubt whatever, then, that Ellen White insists that, *detail by detail*, a close copy of the heavenly sanctuary was constructed by Moses as Yahweh’s wilderness sanctuary. Most importantly, she asks then answers one of the major questions for the paramount Seventh-day Adventist dogma:

What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? That there was such a service in connection with the earthly sanctuary is stated in the Old Testament Scriptures. But can there be anything in heaven to be cleansed? In Hebrews 9 the cleansing of both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught. [22f. quoted]

The cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood of Christ. Paul states... that without shedding of blood is no remission. Remission, or putting away of sin, is the work to be accomplished.³¹

What the Word of God States

The Reference Moses Employed in Building the Earthly Sanctuary

Ellen White’s basic surmise is that Moses saw “a miniature representation of the heavenly temple”;³² like a scale model. Actually, the key Hebrew noun is תַּבְנִיִת (tabnîṭ), with the sense *blueprint*,³³ cognate with the verb בָּנָה (bānâ), *he built*. But, beyond first impressions, this scarcely validates Ellen White’s claim. For one thing, in Ex. 26:30 Moses’ “blueprint” is not denoted by *tabnîṭ* but by the noun מִשְׁפָּט (mišpāṭ), frequently behind *justice*, hence a mere *specification*, as in 1 Ki. 6:38. This implies an *ideal*, not a *scale model*, as *tabnîṭ* possibly means.³⁴ For another, alluding to Ex. 25:40, Acts 7:44 and Heb. 8:5 employ the Greek noun τύπος (*typos*). This draws us into the fascinating realm of biblical typology.

All that needs to be said here is that Scripture does not teach the common lay notion that there is a point-by-point, *positive* correlation between type and antitype, quite apart from the fact that in Heb. 9:24 the earthly sanctuary is the antitype of the heavenly! For example, in Ro. 5:14 Adam is a type of the coming Christ. Yet the correspondence extends merely to their *uniqueness*. In *all* other respects, they diverge sharply: “just as *through the disobedience of the one man* the many were made sinners, so also *through the obedience of the one man* the many will be made righteous”, 19. Shortly this will become even more manifest when Christ’s High-priestly ministry is compared carefully with Aaron’s.

What the NT Reveals about the Heavenly Sanctuary

For yet another, the NT offers no unequivocal support to the notion that, like its earthly counterpart, heaven’s sanctuary consists of two separate rooms, even if the detailed evidence directly pertinent to Christ’s High-priestly ministry in that sanctuary still awaits our open-minded evaluation. For example, note the sublime scene greeting John of Patmos as he peers through heaven’s open door, Rev. 4:1.

God’s throne, 2, must be in the Most Holy Place, if heaven’s temple does have rooms. Yet here, too, are the golden incense bowls depicting the prayers of the saints, 5:8, associated with “the golden altar before the throne”, 8:3, where their prayers are cited again, 3f. The incense altar stood in the Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary. Likewise, despite Ellen White’s claim to have seen just a *single* lampstand in heaven’s temple, seven *separate* lamps burn before God’s throne, 4:5b, above all depicting his Holy Spirit, albeit rather enigmatically. Even the relevant lexis is decisive. For the earthly Holy Place’s *single*, seven-branched lampstand is designated λυχνία (*lychnia*) in the Greek, as in Heb. 9:2, while heaven’s temple is quite distinct with seven *separate* lamps, labelled λαμπάς (*lampas*) in John’s Greek, Rev. 4:5.³⁵

Objectivity surely demands a candid reply, too, to the searching question, If this is the prototype of the OT sanctuary, **detail by detail**, what about that “sea of glass, clear as crystal”, before God’s throne, 6, just like those seven lamps? If it has any earthly counterpart, the best if not only option is the bronze basin³⁶ between the bronze altar and the duplex tent’s first curtain, *outside in its courtyard*, Ex. 30:1721.³⁷

Objectivity equally asks, What about the table on which the bread of the Presence was renewed each Sabbath, Ex. 25:23-30? Ellen White reports seeing it in heaven’s temple. In contrast, one searches the NT quite in vain for any hint whatever that this item of furniture exists, in either reality or symbol.

In short, were John inspired to provide us with an unambiguous glimpse of the heavenly sanctuary as the *precise* prototype of the earthly, he has made a remarkably poor job of it! We deduce at times that we are in its Most Holy Place, at others in its Holy Place, and once even outside in its courtyard, with no hint of any partitions between. Obviously, *he had no such intent*. There is a temple in heaven, where the Father sits enthroned. But we cannot even be dogmatic that it has “bricks and mortar”, in view of the manifest symbolism associated with it. If Ellen White’s theology is to survive, it depends, then, *entirely* upon the Book of Hebrews and its doctrine of Christ’s High-priestly ministry in heaven.

The “Walls”: Where did Jesus go in Returning to his Father in Heaven?

What Ellen White Claims

Ellen White expresses her belief and its most important theological implications with perfect clarity.

After His ascension, our Saviour was to begin His work as our High Priest. Says Paul, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” Hebrews 9:24. As Christ’s ministration was to consist of two great divisions, each occupying a period of time and having a distinctive place in the heavenly sanctuary, so the typical ministration consisted of two divisions, the daily and the yearly service, and to each a department of the tabernacle was devoted.

As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the sinner’s behalf.

The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.

In the great day of final award, the dead are to be “judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Revelation 20:12. Then by virtue of the atoning blood of Christ, the sins of all the truly penitent will be blotted from the books of heaven. Thus the sanctuary will be... cleansed... from the record of sin. In the type, this great work of atonement, or blotting out of sins, was represented by the services of the Day of Atonement – the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary, which was accomplished by the removal, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, of the sins by which it had been polluted.³⁸

Ellen White also sketches this spectacular portrait of what she believes happened in heaven in 1844:

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 from the throne... 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.³⁹

That is, she appears to view God’s throne before 1844 in the heavenly Holy Place, even though the Shekinah glory dwelt above the ark within the Most Holy Place of the earthly tabernacle, Lev. 16:2! If the details of the earthly structure are to be applied as stringently as she insists in comprehending its heavenly reality, she may have a gargantuan problem here – unless God moved from the Most Holy Place to the Holy Place before 1844. Even her statement that in Isa. 6:17 Isaiah viewed God’s glory enthroned in the temple’s Most Holy Place is of scant assistance in clarifying where she envisioned his throne was before Calvary. For she clearly sees this temple as both the earthly⁴⁰ and the heavenly!⁴¹

At very least, then, the transparent inference is that Ellen White thought God moved from the Most Holy Place to the Holy Place of his temple as soon as Christ rose and returned to his home in heaven. She also adds much more about Jesus’ actual work in heaven’s Most Holy Place. In the earthly type,

only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work... “Judgment must begin at the household of God...” 1 Peter 4:17.

The books of record in heaven... are to determine the decisions of the judgment. Says the prophet Daniel: “The judgment was set, and the books were opened.” The Revelator, describing the same scene, adds: “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.” Revelation 20:12.⁴²

She cites several references in support of her confident assertion that the Book of Life records the names of all of those who have ever entered God’s sacred service,⁴³ that the book of remembrance details all of their good deeds,⁴⁴ and that human sins are also rigidly itemised.⁴⁵ She then continues:

As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected. When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance. The Lord declared to Moses: “Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book.” Exodus 32:33. And says the prophet Ezekiel: “When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, ... [sic] all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.” Ezekiel 18:24.

All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life. The Lord declares, by the prophet Isaiah: “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Isaiah 43:25. Said Jesus: “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 will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.” “Whosoever... shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.” Revelation 3:5; Matthew 10:32, 33.⁴⁶

It is beyond the bounds of this brief review to weigh all of Ellen White’s teachings about the close of the Investigative Judgment.⁴⁷ But this final word is apropos. Its work, with the blotting out of sins, is accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated. But the apostle Peter distinctly states that the sins of believers will be blotted out “when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ.” Acts 3:19, 20. When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come...⁴⁸

What the Word of God States

Where Christ Really Went in Returning to his Father

Our initial quest is the location of God’s throne. However, the humility and wisdom of Solomon are essential: “The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!”, 1 Ki. 8:27.⁴⁹ Whatever its reality, Holy Scripture often speaks of his throne in terms of the heavenly temple, as in Ps. 11:4; Rev. 16:17. Specifically, God is “enthroned between the cherubim”⁵⁰ – a transparent reference to the earthly type in Ex. 25:22.⁵¹ In stark contrast, nowhere does it even hint that his throne is ever within any Holy Place of his temple above. Likewise, if the earthly sanctuary does teach us anything, it confirms that, whatever may be the heavenly reality of its Most Holy Place, there and there *alone* is enthroned him whom unholy humanity cannot approach without a holy Mediator.

Beyond quibble, it follows that, when the resurrected Christ ascended to heaven, he returned to that “Most Holy Place”. For the NT repeatedly states that, “[a]fter he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”⁵² In fact, it is specifically in his new rôle as our High Priest that Christ “sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and... serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man”, Heb. 8:1f. There he is actively “interceding for us”, Ro. 8:34. And right there “he *waits* for his enemies to be made his footstool,” Heb. 10:13.

Even if Christ’s sitting down is merely inauguration, as when a delegate is seated at a conference, nothing here even remotely hints that he did anything other than return to heaven to commence his High-priestly ministry within whatever passes for its Most Holy Place. In fact, Seventh-day Adventism’s hidebound efforts to read some Holy-place service in such references is just as sterile as a Sunday-keeper quoting Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 16:2 or Rev. 1:10 against regular worship on the seventh-day Sabbath!⁵³

But by no means does the decisive evidence end there. Heb. 6:19 assures us that our hope “enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered... having become a high priest forever”, NASB. The decisive phrase *within the veil* makes patent reference to the heavenly sanctuary. But which curtain does the author have in mind, the outer or the inner? The most credible answer comes in answering another: How would the pristine recipients of this epistle have comprehended these words? There is only one guaranteed answer. They would have recognised them as a *specific OT citation from the Septuagint*.

Of more than 40 such citations in the epistle, the vast majority come from this Greek translation, often precisely or almost so, rather than from the Hebrew original.⁵⁴ This is no place to subject my lay readers to Scripture's completely unfamiliar, very daunting Greek text. But this point is so important that I hope I will be forgiven for this single, fleeting comparison, with its relative clarity in patient lay eyes:

εἰς τὸ ἅγιον ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, Lev. 16:2, Septuagint;

εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, Heb. 6:19.

There can be no quibble whatever that Lev. 16:2 has the Most Holy Place specifically in mind. It is no surprise, then, that the vast majority of commentators conclude that the apostle has heaven's inner sanctum, not some mere Holy Place, likewise in mind in his very close quotation assuring his flock that "Jesus... has entered on our behalf", Heb. 6:20. Seventh-day Adventism's apologist Dr. G. W. Rice is a rare exception, and his strong objections are certainly well worth evaluating. However, here I will not burden my lay readers with more than a selection of the weightier points of my detailed critique, which I have relegated to a distant Technical Excursus, where those who wish may ignore it entirely.

Above all, the adverb ἐσώτερον (*esōteron*), employed here as a preposition, is extremely rare, even in the Septuagint. It appears a meagre six times,⁵⁵ most frequently with καταπέτασμα (*katapetasma*),⁵⁶ the noun for *curtain*. More here anon. In striking contrast, the simple preposition ἐν (*en*), which readily embraces the identical, spatial nuance *within*, rendered here by *esōteron*, occurs about 2,000 times! Can there be even the remotest uncertainty, then, how the author's highly OT-literate flock heard him as he applied *esōteron* as a preposition to the noun *katapetasma*, especially when it is not used as a preposition anywhere else in the entire NT? None at all! They would most certainly have grasped that he was referring to the **inner** sanctum, not merely some Holy Place, of the heavenly sanctuary.

Nor does the fact that the curtain here has no numeral, unlike 9:3, introduce any uncertainty. For the curtain is likewise unnumbered in 10:20. Yet there the extremely striking metaphor of Christ's sacrificial body as a curtain before τὰ ἅγια (*ta hagia*) is best comprehended in terms of the tearing in two of the *inner* curtain of the earthly temple the moment he died. In fact, the noun *katapetasma* is chosen outside the epistle to the Hebrews when the synoptic Gospels report this detail, and then entirely alone!⁵⁷

However, one clear, almost passing, reference hardly excuses me from evaluating the paramount evidence by far in the Epistle to the Hebrews, its protracted, *specific* comparison of the earthly and heavenly sanctuary services, 8-10. But first, this entire topic is very well prefaced by an equally compelling comparison, albeit more general, between Christ's celestial priesthood and its earthly type.

A Priest Forever in the Order of Melchizedek

The meticulous student of typology in the Book of Hebrews is cautioned from the very outset that there is no close, point-by-point similarity between the type, Jesus our High Priest, and the antitype, the earthly priests, even in their high-priestly heads. The latter, like Aaron, 5:4, were Levites, 7:5; the former is "a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek", 5:6,⁵⁸ of the tribe of Judah, 7:13f. The latter were both sinful, 5:2f., and mortal, 7:23; the former is both sinless, 26:28, and immortal, 3, 16f., 21, 24f. Above all, though, the earthly priests' incessant round of daily and yearly sacrifices was no ultimate solution to the sin problem.⁵⁹ In starkest contrast, Christ's once-for-all self-sacrifice⁶⁰ is its all-sufficient solution.⁶¹

Such *contrasts* scarcely hint that, in its *specific* typology, the epistle will reveal any close analogy between the heavenly sanctuary and its earthly shadow, upon which these respective ministries focus.

Ta Hagia

To read the highly esteemed NIV, there is no doubt where Jesus went when he returned to heaven: "he entered the Most Holy Place", Heb. 9:12. Compare the GNB. However, both the RSV and its revision the NRSV have "the Holy Place", like the NASB, while the NEB chooses simply "the sanctuary".

Such confusion obtains through uncertainty over the import of *ta hagia*, which Jesus entered upon his Ascension. While it is completely impossible to do the important subject of this Greek adjective employed as a plural noun sufficient justice here,⁶² the following survey should suffice for lay readers.

This "noun" first occurs in 8:2 defining the sphere of service of our High Priest. Here it equates with the true tabernacle (σκηνή (*skēnē, tent*)), in contrast to the earthly tabernacle, precisely as in 9:24. This makes far better sense if *ta hagia* denotes heaven's *complete* temple instead of its Holy Place or Most Holy Place, if this temple does have more than a single "apartment". Indeed, because it was heaven itself which Christ entered, 24f., there is no hint of any specific Holy-place or Most-holy-place ministry in 8:1f. Moreover, as Jesus' service follows his seating beside his Father, 8:1, the notion of moving from one room to another, or starting a new phase of service, at any later time is foreign to the entire book. On one hand, the *until* of 1:13, the *since that time* of 10:13 and the dynamics of 9:23-28 all imply that our High Priest never leaves his Father's presence once in heaven. Compare the forceful *once for all* in 9:12,

with precisely the same singular nuance as in 7:27 and 10:10. Indeed, he entered heaven *specifically* “to appear for us *in God’s presence*”, 9:24. On the other, now that our access to *ta hagia* has been revealed, 9:8, it is not Christ our great High Priest alone whom we approach freely and confidently, but God our holy, heavenly Father himself, 7:19, 25; 10:22, seated upon his supreme throne of grace, 4:16.

The “noun” *ta hagia* appears above all in 9, with patent typological overtones. As *hagion*, its only singular occurrence in the entire book, 1, it obviously denotes the whole wilderness sanctuary treated in the remainder of the passage till 10. This is designated quite uniquely as “a tent..., the first one,... called the Holy Place (*hagia*)”, 2, along with “a tent called the Holy of Holies” (*hagia* of *hagia*), 3, NRSV. Such specific expressions have their unmistakable genesis in the Septuagint. For example, within the Septuagint, the noun *skēnē* repeatedly denotes the composite sanctuary, especially in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. Conversely, however, *skēnē* is never numbered in the Septuagint as it is in Heb. 9. In fact, Ex. 26:6 has specific furnishing instructions to ensure that “the tabernacle (*skēnē*) is a unit.”⁶³

Our author appears to be rather more faithful to his sources with his employment of *hagion*. For in Ex. 26:33 the inner curtain serves as a partition “between the Holy Place (*hagion*) and the Most Holy Place (*hagion* of *hagia*)”.⁶⁴ However, it is not until 1 Ki. 8:8 that at long last we discover even the Holy Place labelled *ta hagia*. For this is the room in front of *dabir*, which transliterates into Greek the Hebrew noun for the inner sanctum of Solomon’s temple. Likewise, there is no certain description of the Most Holy Place as *hagia* of *hagia*, as in Heb. 9:3, until 1 Ki. 8:6, where it is specifically equated with *dabir*.

Like the Book of Hebrews, with the wilderness *skēnē* in specific view the Septuagint applies the unqualified adjective *hagion* quite indiscriminately, in the singular, to both its Holy Place, as in Ex. 26:33, and its Most Holy Place, as in Lev. 16:2. However, some 30 relevant times, it refers to the entire *skēnē*, as in Ex. 30:13; 36:3; Lev. 4:6; Nu. 3:31. In Nu. 4:16 the complete *skēnē* is even equated with the *hagion*.

Unqualified, *hagia* also denotes the whole sanctuary some 15 relevant times, as in Ex. 36:1, 8; Lev. 10:4; 19:30; Nu. 3:28; 8:19. But nowhere does it label either its Holy or its Most Holy Place indisputably.

In view of such a wealth of explicit data, no meticulous exegete will appeal to the Septuagint to insist that *ta hagia* undoubtedly designates the Most Holy Place of God’s heavenly temple.⁶⁵ If it is the Septuagint which most moves him, he will opt for the entire temple. But if it is our author’s voice in Heb. 9:2 that speaks loudest to him, his vote will grace what passes there for some mere Holy Place.

However, an astute exegete will suspend all judgment until our author is finished. Having sketched the wilderness Holy and Most Holy Places, he turns to their services. The first, utilised day by day, is still called the first tent, 8, while the second, open just once a year, is still called the second (tent), 7.

It is quite crucial to our appreciation of Christ’s High-priestly ministry, then, to grasp the spiritual intent of the earthly services surveyed in 8-10. The primary question is, What does our author mean by *ta hagia* and first *skēnē* in 8? Clearly, *ta hagia* is the heavenly temple. But in what form? Leaving the decisive, broader context of the remainder of the chapter aside for a moment, this depends upon whether he still means by the first *skēnē* in 8 what he transparently means in 2 and 6. If the immediate context is decisive, we are informed that the Holy Place of the OT tabernacle signified the temporary, deficient services of the first covenant, the topic which launches this entire chapter, 1, while its Most Holy Place illustrated the services of *ta hagia* in heaven under the new covenant, 15. It should be appreciated, however, that the subject of covenant controlling this chapter’s *entire* discussion is broached in 7:22, discussed from 8:6 until 10:18, and referred to in 10:29, 12:24 and 13:20. Therefore, our author’s purpose in this entire discussion with *both* *skēnē* and *ta hagia* bears heavily upon his meaning in 9:8.

Simply stated, *skēnē* is applied with no numeral to the entire OT sanctuary in 8:5; 9:21; 13:10. It is applied equally with no numeral to heaven’s sanctuary in 8:2 and 9:11. Quite probably, then, our author glides from an atypical *spatial* nuance of *first* in 9:2, 6 to a *temporal* sense in 8.⁶⁶ If so, he returns here to the meaning that *ta hagia* has when he first utilises it in 8:2. As noted, he there applies it to heaven’s complete tabernacle. In light of his selecting the adjective *true* in 8:2 and 9:24, as well as repeating the former’s sentiment, *not by man*, in *(not) made with hands* in the latter,⁶⁷ in 9:24 *hagia* refers to the total OT sanctuary. Here, therefore, *hagia*, which is implicit in *true*, designates the entire heavenly temple.

The inference is lucid enough, then, that at 9:8-10 our author is about to expand upon his covenant theme that the obsolescence of the old, with its *complete* sanctuary ritual, opened the way into the real *hagia*, the *entire* complex of the heavenly sanctuary. In 11:28 he describes the place where Christ has entered to minister since his exaltation as the greater and more perfect *skēnē*, 11, *ta hagia*, 12, and even heaven itself, 24. In such company, the transparent inference again is that *ta hagia* denotes the *entire* heavenly sanctuary, not merely some Holy Place or even Most Holy Place of that sacred entity.

However, our learned author further clarifies his inspired message with this very forceful *contrast* – not *comparison* – between the earthly high priest, 7, and our ethereal High Priest, 11f., 14. So paramount is this arresting contrast in his polemic, in fact, that he both revisits and amplifies it close by in 24:27:

Earthly High Priest

The high priest
entered
the second *skēnē* = *ta hagia*
once a year
with the blood of goats and calves
which he offered
for himself and for the sins of the people.

Heavenly High Priest

Christ as High Priest
entered
ta hagia
once for all
by his own blood.
He offered himself
unblemished.

It is extremely tempting, therefore, to deduce from this pointed contrast that Christ entered the Most Holy Place of heaven's sanctuary at his Ascension. This is thoroughly consistent with the patent import of both 6:19f. and 10:19f., as above. Yet our author equally intimates that he entered this temple as a unit. We appear, therefore, to have quite a challenging interpretive dilemma on our hapless hands.

The strikingly simple solution to this "dilemma" is to realise that *the Book of Hebrews says nothing whatever about either distinct apartments in the heavenly temple or separate ministries of Christ because there are neither two rooms in it nor two phases of his ministry.* For one thing, Seventh-day Adventism's entire typological apology swings by the perilously slender thread of its pure surmise that in Ex. 25:40 the Hebrew noun *tabnîṭ* denotes a scale model or at least a plan of the heavenly temple. In fact, it implies merely that Moses studied a "blueprint" of the *specific* structure he was to erect in the wilderness. It should be scrupulously observed, though, that, even if there are two "apartments" in God's ethereal tabernacle after all, the overwhelming evidence is that Christ ascended to enter its Most Holy Place.

Judgment

For another, the Book of Hebrews certainly speaks of looming judgment, starting with the warning, "how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?", 2:3. But nowhere does it share even the slightest hint of any pre-Advent, heavenly scrutiny of the records of the lives of those who have professed faith, as Seventh-day Adventists insist. Rather, on one hand its closest approach to a theology of divine scrutiny is its sobering caution: "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account", 4:13. That is, *God always knows our true character.* He requires absolutely no books of records to assess any of us.⁶⁸

On the other, the promised judgment is repeatedly associated with Christ's Parousia, not with any prior period. For example, the mindful balance of *just as... so*, 9:27f., is a manifest invitation to equate the judgment of 27 and *he will appear*, 28. In context, the judgment of 10:27 can refer to the Parousia alone, specifically quoted in 37. Compare 12:23, in a context of fiery retribution, 25-29. And with the account to be rendered in 13:17, we have been brought back to the precise point from which we began.

Indeed, the epistle's first audience was certainly warned to expect Jesus' Return *in its day*, not beyond 1844. It would surely have identified with the *personal* pastoral appeal of 10:32-34. The conclusive conjunction *so*, 35, builds a bridge from that appeal to the *personal* promise, "in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'", 37. Of special note, beyond the potent imminence of *very little while*, is the rare verb *χρονίζω* (*chronizein*). It is used in Hab. 2:3f., from which our author cites freely. Yet above all, it echoes all but one of its other four NT appliances, always on Jesus' lips about the delay in his Return.⁶⁹ Compare the cognate noun *χρόνος* (*chronos*) used likewise in Mt. 25:19.

In brief, the author of the Book of Hebrews shares an *inspired interpretation of the delay in the Parousia forecast by Christ.* That delay was *all but over* in his day! There is *no* room for any future period of scouring heaven's records, let alone almost two millennia of extremely protracted delay until 1844!

Where Judgment Begins

But what of 1 Pet. 4:17? Ellen White may be quoting it homiletically, although this is scarcely the impression her "Peter *distinctly* states that..."⁷⁰ leaves her attentive reader! If not, she is guilty of inept proof-texting. For one thing, the context clarifies beyond the shadow of a doubt that the judgment in Peter's mind is in progress in his day, even as he is speaking: "it *is* time..." For another, it consists in the trial of the believers' faith through persecution, 1:6; 4:12, not in any analysis of any records of their deeds.

Blotting out Sin

Is Ellen White correct, though, that Scripture schedules sin's blotting out just before Christ's Return? Notice the contents of the books. Mal. 3:16 records an obscure detail: "A scroll of remembrance was written in (Yahweh's) presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name." This is no exhaustive record of human deeds.⁷¹ For one thing, Malachi intimates that *nothing but names appears.* For another, context confirms that this scroll, mentioned here alone in the entire Word, existed only in his day. Moreover, it holds nothing more than the names of those faithful to God *at that time.*

Almost as obscure are two accounts of open judgment books, Dan. 7:10, Rev. 20:12. The dilemma for Seventh-day Adventism's dogma of a pre-Advent judgment is that *only the wicked are judged each time*. Yet it insists that this judgment entails *none of the wicked who have never believed*. This includes that vicious Little Horn. For Daniel never even hints that he was ever a believer, Dan. 7:8, 20:22, 24:27.⁷²

In Dan. 7:11, 21f., 26 it is the fourth beast and the Little Horn who are damned. Nor does a "judgment in favour of the saints",⁷³ 22, imply their scrutiny. They are "judged" *alone* in that indicting the beast and Little Horn terminates their persecution, permitting the faithful to enter God's eternal Kingdom. In fact, Satan does not persecute his own! Worse, in Rev. 20:11-15, quite contrary to Ellen White's schedule, the judgment begins *after* the millennium, before which all of the righteous have received their rewards.

Our only remaining quest is the rôle of the Book of Life. This is a manifest record of the names of all who profess faith in Christ and/or his Father.⁷⁴ Saliiently, *each* time Scripture speaks of blotting anything from it, it is a *name*.⁷⁵ Yet equally saliently, *nowhere* is the timing revealed. So, once more Ellen White's claim that this is done *systematically* in a pre-Advent judgment completely outpaces Scripture.

Conversely, when God blots out sin, it never relates to books, let alone to any pre-Advent judgment. Rather, *sins are blotted out as soon as they are forgiven*,⁷⁶ and hurled **far** away from the truly penitent.⁷⁷

What, though, of Acts 3:19f.? This is a tragic yet instructive case of Ellen White seeing no further than her KJV, even though it is badly *mistranslated* at this point! Even the NKJV puts it: "Repent... and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus Christ". The unequivocal timing once more is that *sins are blotted out completely as soon as they are forgiven*. We are not informed here or elsewhere in Scripture precisely what Peter means by these times of refreshing. Nevertheless, this *consequence* of blotting out does not influence its *timing*. So Ellen White has done her prophetic credibility no good whatever with her dearth of insight here. She makes it perfectly patent that she believes she is explaining *precisely* what Peter intended. Yet she is blissfully unaware that he is distorted by a translational error.⁷⁸

Cleansing the Heavenly Sanctuary

All very well. But Seventh-day Adventism will never even contemplate any open-minded review of its precious dogma while it appears to have strong support in Heb. 9:23: "It was necessary... for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves (to be **purified**) with better sacrifices than these." At first sight, this well-worn proof-text certainly seems to bespeak ridding God's heavenly temple of the pollution from the records of the sins of his people.

However, this is a naïve interpretation. The context makes it quite clear that a comparison is being drawn between the earthly and the heavenly sanctuaries, but quite specifically in terms of their **dedication before employment**. There is no hint whatever in either the antitype or the type that the sanctuary, having long served the Lord's purpose, is being cleansed at long last of the accumulated sins of God's people. In fact, the reference to remission – forgiveness – in 22b is virtually a parenthesis that anticipates 26:28. It does not define the substance of either the typical or the antitypical purifications.

Conclusion

Ellen White has scarcely served her Church fruitfully with her repeated assertions that there is a two-apartment, heavenly tabernacle, the prototype of the OT sanctuary. Worse, she is completely astray in her consequent sectarian dogma that, to his intercessory ministry in the ethereal Holy Place since the Cross, our High Priest appended a new ministry in 1844, one of pre-Advent judgment in heaven's Most Holy Place. Rather, Jesus returned to his Father's throne, in his heavenly temple which is **all** Most Holy Place. *There is no heavenly Holy Place!* Moses was given nothing more than a "blueprint" of the earthly structure he was to erect. And the typology of the Book of Hebrews operates repeatedly in terms of stark *contrasts*, not close *comparisons*, between the heavenly type and the earthly antitype.

However, even if there are two "apartments" in God's heavenly temple after all, the completely overwhelming NT evidence is that Christ ascended immediately to its Most Holy Place. In fact, any mere Holy Place in heaven is so completely *irrelevant* in the Book of Hebrews that it may as well not exist.

The final nail in the coffin of the dogma of a pre-Advent judgment in 1844, at least in Hebrews, is that it allows no time for it. *Jesus is about to return to its pristine readers!* In fact, no systematic blotting out of sins after judgment is at all necessary. God "*forgets*" them as **soon** as they are forgiven, Heb. 8:12; 10:17f.

In brief, Seventh-day Adventism's crucial dogma of a pre-Advent judgment beginning in 1844 has no foundation. And an equally candid inspection of the first and second parts of the "building" exposes its lack of walls or partitions. The final distinct analysis, in which we treat the highly emotive verses at the heart of the birth of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, awaits our equally meticulous scrutiny.

The "Roof": the True Import of Daniel's 2,300 Evenings-mornings

What Ellen White Claims

Ellen White sets the scene for us by explaining where the movement she helped to pioneer began: the sanctuary... sheds great light on our present position and work, and gives us unmistakable proof that God has led us in our past experience. It explains the disappointment in 1844, showing us that the sanctuary to be cleansed was not the earth, as we had supposed, but that Christ then entered into the most holy apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and is there performing the closing work of His priestly office, in fulfillment of the words of the angel to the prophet Daniel, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."⁷⁹

Recent Seventh-day Adventist apologists echo this theme with great assurance, as we have seen.⁸⁰

Ellen White's specific theology dominates the current study. But interested readers may also survey her endorsements even of some Millerite errors, as they stumbled towards Seventh-day Adventism's dogma.⁸¹ At times she actually claims that God deliberately hid such errors from her and her fellows!⁸²

Logically, the first point in Ellen White's whole polemic in the Book of Daniel strives to justify her belief that a pre-Advent judgment is forecast in 7:9f. The prophet saw the great, solemn day when the characters and the lives of men should pass in review before the Judge of all the earth, and to every man should be rendered "according to his works." The Ancient of Days is God the Father... It is He... that is to preside in the judgment. And holy angels as ministers and witnesses... attend this great tribunal.

[7:13f. cited] The coming of Christ... is not... to the earth. He comes to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him at the close of His work as a mediator... Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.⁸³

Second in logical order is her grasp of the theological import of those enigmatic 2,300 evenings-mornings of Dan. 8:14: "the prophecy... unquestionably points to the sanctuary in heaven."⁸⁴ Yet the

most important question remains...: What is the cleansing of the sanctuary? That there was such a service in connection with the earthly sanctuary is stated in the Old Testament Scriptures. But can there be anything in heaven to be cleansed? In Hebrews 9 the cleansing of both the earthly and the heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught. [22f. cited]⁸⁵

The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the end of the year, so before Christ's work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary.⁸⁶

Here Ellen White must appeal, as we have noticed,⁸⁷ to Lev. 16 to explain this cleansing. More strikingly, here she also appeals to the Master's own extremely familiar parable of the ten virgins, Mt. 25:1-13:

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage...

In the summer and autumn of 1844 the proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," was given... In the parable, when the bridegroom came, "they that were ready went in with him [*sic*] to the marriage." The coming of the bridegroom... takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The... New Jerusalem... is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." [Rev. 21:9f. cited]... Clearly, then, the bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church... [T]he people of God are said to be guests at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If *guests*, they cannot be represented also as the *bride*... [*italics sic*] ... They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven... The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when He will *return from* [*italics sic*] the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are... to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they... go in to the marriage...

When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut," we are carried down through the Saviour's final ministration, to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be completed.⁸⁸

Observe, too, that Ellen White insists that her explication is supported by "Scripture **proof**" that is "**clear** and **conclusive**."⁸⁹ That is, she firmly believes that she is giving the **literal** meaning of Jesus' parable, even though in COL 403-421 she applies it completely differently, but still literally, to his Parousia!

Third in logical sequence is her temporal grasp of the 2,300 evenings-mornings, via Gabriel's forecast of Dan. 9:24-27. He was sent to Daniel specifically to explain what puzzled him in his vision of 8, the statement relative to time—"unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." After bidding Daniel "understand the matter, and consider the vision," the very first words of the angel are: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy Holy City." The word here translated "determined" literally signifies "cut off"... But from what were they cut off? As the 2300 days was the only period of time mentioned in chapter 8, it must be the period from which the seventy weeks were cut off; the seventy weeks must therefore be part of the 2300 days, and the two periods must begin together. The seventy weeks were declared by the angel to date from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem.⁹⁰

Via Ezra 6:14, Ellen White regards this edict as that of Artaxerxes of 457 B.C. She surveys the fulfillment of the 70 weeks, above all in the Christ-event, beginning in A.D. 27, and preaching the gospel to the gentiles, from A.D. 34.⁹¹ So it is simple to calculate the terminus of these 2,300 evenings-mornings:

The seventy weeks—490 days—having been cut off from the 2300, there were 1810 days remaining... From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. Consequently the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 terminate in 1844.⁹²

What the Word of God States

The Fundamental Purpose of the Book of Daniel: "**You** are..."

A broad view of the Book of Daniel's chronology will greatly assist in testing Ellen White's tacit assertion that its time prophecies, including the 2,300 evenings-mornings, must be interpreted by historicism's crucial year/day dictum. To begin, Nebuchadnezzar's initial dream warrants close inspection.

Among conservative Christians, it is a popular introduction to the Book of Daniel to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's complex statue, 2:31-45, *historically* in terms of Babylon and its successors, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. This impressive, evidently flawless fulfillment engenders confidence in historicism's credibility. Seventh-day Adventists keep the history books open to read modern Europe into the feet of iron and clay, 33b, between Rome's disintegration and God's eternal Kingdom, 44.⁹³ Assurance is further bolstered by the details of Daniel's parallel forecasts. For example, it is Gabriel himself who explains the ram of 8:3f. as "the kings of *Media* and *Persia*", 20, and the goat of 5-8 as "the king of *Greece*", 21. And the bear's raised side, 7:5, like the ram's younger, larger horn, 8:3, eloquently represents the historical detail that the Median Empire was soon amalgamated with the later, stronger, Persian Empire.

However, *Nebuchadnezzar's dream was never primarily history in advance, if at all.* And to comprehend its divine intent is a major step in understanding the entire book. First and foremost, it records Yahweh's most intense efforts in the entire OT to woo a prominent pagan to worship and serve him.

This is best observed in Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, 4:10-17. There can be no mistaking the import of its symbol of a huge tree "providing food for all, giving shelter to the beasts of the field, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds of the air", 21. For Daniel himself interprets it thus, 22:

you, O king, are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches to the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

However, this dream has a dark side as well, which Daniel also interprets faithfully yet reluctantly, 25f.:

You... will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass... until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes... [Y]our kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.

And there is *one* way alone for this very arrogant monarch, 30, to avoid such sustained humiliation, 27. It is especially important to observe the *conditionality* of this entire forecast in the *choice* he faces:

Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.

Tragically, the monarch ignored the prophet's advice. So his dream was fulfilled in minute detail: "All this happened to king Nebuchadnezzar", 28. And this verifies that *all of it applied to him personally.*

With this tree symbolism in sharp focus, compare these strikingly similar details, likewise in Daniel's explanation of the head of gold crowning Nebuchadnezzar's statue, in his initial, major dream, 2:37f.:

You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. **You are that head of gold.**

That is, Daniel identifies Nebuchadnezzar *personally* again, not merely as the king of Babylon but also as Babylon's final king. The major dilemma, though, for all who would interpret Bible prophecy through their history books is that *he wasn't!* That dubious distinction fell to his grandson Belshazzar.

Here some astute Bible student may object since Jeremiah forecast that Judah's neighbours would be enslaved by "Nebuchadnezzar... and his son and his grandson", Jer. 27:6f., until Babylon fell. The obvious inference, in context, is that Judah would serve all three, too. Then do I err rather gravely in deducing that Daniel warned Nebuchadnezzar that he would be Babylon's final monarch? Quite apart from the historical realities,⁹⁴ the simple fact is that Belshazzar's fall offers my thesis *striking* support.

As Belshazzar quails at the supernatural writing on the wall, Dan. 5:5f., Daniel rebukes him sharply with Nebuchadnezzar's experience, 18-21. The clear inference, 22f., is that he should have heeded his ancestor's lofty example, albeit belated, of contrition, 4:13, 37. *His obduracy caused his nation's demise*. For the handwriting specifically responds to his turpitude: "Therefore he... wrote the inscription", 24. Moreover, it goes far beyond merely condemning Belshazzar *personally*. Its fearful climax is the very downfall of Babylon: "**Your kingdom** is... given to the **Medes and Persians**", 28. Yet that need never have occurred – at least, until God's Kingdom obsolesced it. In saving mercy he extended Nebuchadnezzar's noble reign. Yet even his patience was finally exhausted by Belshazzar's drunken sacrilege.

The second thoroughly fatal flaw for historicism in Nebuchadnezzar's initial dream is that *he never views more than the four world empires here*. Nowhere are those minor "ten", so significant for Seventh-day Adventists, to be seen. Two distinct, related lines of evidence suffice to prove this decisive fact.

First, Daniel does not even predict that the fourth kingdom will break up into ten. Carefully observe his precise words: "(T)here will be **a** fourth kingdom," and "**it** will crush and break", 40; "**this** will be **a** divided kingdom; yet **it** will have some of the strength of iron in **it**," 41. In a word, "**this** kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle", 42. Nothing here even hints that this fourth world empire will fissure into separate kingdoms. This applies even to the verb פָּלַג (p^{el}lag), rendered *divided* in 41. It is not utilised elsewhere, but its cognate noun פְּלִיגָה (p^{el}lūggā) is applied in Ezra 6:18 to the *sub*-division of the *single* priestly office, 1 Chr. 24:1-19. So the fourth empire would be unstable, but still simply *one* empire.

Secondly, the dramatic climax of Daniel's prediction is that the rock "struck the statue on the feet... and smashed them", 2:34. The inspired interpretation, 44, is the commencement of God's eternal Kingdom. Above all, "(i)t will crush **all those kingdoms** and bring them to an end". Nor are they the nations of modern Europe, despite Seventh-day Adventist missionary zeal. The rock smashed far more than the statue's feet. For maximum stress, it is in his very summary, 45, that Daniel explicitly explains that the rock "broke the *iron*, the *bronze*, the *clay*, the *silver* and the *gold* to pieces." The relatively random sequence of the constituent components in this list also suggests that they were all broken **concurrently**. It is Daniel himself who stresses this very point, in fact. The rock "struck the statue on its feet... Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces **at the same time**", 34f.

Just as clearly as words can convey meaning, then, Daniel's simple forecast is this. When the rock strikes the composite statue upon its feet, it pulverises it *in toto*. So "all those kingdoms" crushed by God's perennial Kingdom, 44, are the four, not the altogether suppositious "ten". In fact, precisely the same Aramaic verb דָּרַס (d^{er}qas) is employed in 34, 35, 44 and 45 back of *break*, *crush* and *smash*.

Simply stated, *all four "world" empires* – Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome – *were originally scheduled for annihilation together at the Eschaton*. The unequivocal reality that *nothing even remotely like that ever happened* is mute yet eloquent testimony that Daniel's initial prediction was **conditional**.

"But what about the fourth beast in 7?", I hear a host of devout Seventh-day Adventists protest. "Its horns are ten kingdoms that it spawns!" Of course they are. There is no mistaking the inspired interpretation in 21. However, this is no hindrance whatever to my polemic. For nothing in Daniel's details intimates that any power rules only through the extinction of its predecessor(s). On one hand, the detail which most invites such an interpretation is "(a)fter them", 24b. Yet the Little Horn emerges among the ten, 8. So our prophet's broad temporal interest is only in the *sequence* in which each character enters the scene. On the other, he actually clarifies that, *while the fourth beast is in power*, **all four** of his predecessors *live on*, albeit subservient, 12, *precisely* as cogent exegesis of his first forecast concludes!

The ten horn kingdoms are mentioned merely to explain the Little Horn's genesis, 8. Daniel seeks clarification, 15f. Yet, except for mention of the saints, he hears no more than he first gleaned from the statue, 17f. There will be four vast empires, but God's Kingdom will prevail. Only in persisting, 19-22, he learns that the fourth empire will spawn ten more, three of which will be routed by an eleventh, 23f.

Whatever these horns signify, another key, temporal parallel with Daniel's first forecast sheds great light upon his overall message. The temporal logic of 7:8-11 persuades Seventh-day Adventism that its judgment is pre-Advent. Daniel first notices the Little Horn in 8. **As he watches**, 9a, the judgment convenes, 9f. **As he keeps watching**, 11a, the Little Horn regains his attention. This judgment certainly begins, then, **while this cruel tyrant is still active**. However, there is still more for Daniel, fully absorbed, to monitor! The trouble is, Seventh-day Adventism has long been so totally absorbed in extracting its distinctive dogma from this portion of Sacred Scripture that it has scarcely perused its full message.

As Daniel **sustains** his close scrutiny with no interruption whatever, 11b, it is the **fourth beast**, not the *Little Horn*, that is destroyed. The latter perishes at the Eschaton, too. Yet Daniel hears of this only in 26. What counts is that, as in 2, so in 7, *the Eschaton routs the fourth empire*. This one detail denies all claim that Daniel is deterministic! Pagan Rome is long gone! So neither 2 nor 7 can ever be fulfilled *in toto*.

What, though, about those other three kingdoms, let alone the ten, or the Little Horn tyrant? Simply stated, if Babylon had *never* fallen,⁹⁵ they may *never* have added to history's protracted panorama! Its realities do not deny that Daniel expected Nebuchadnezzar to be Babylon's final king. Likewise, it is edifying to step back further to view his book within the broader context of the Word as a whole.

Daniel's final vision concludes with the directive: "close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase **knowledge**", 12:4. He craves enlightenment, 8, but the rebuff is decisive: "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end... None of the wicked will **understand**, but those who are wise will **understand**", 9f. The intimation beyond doubt is that *the Book of Daniel could not be understood until it was unsealed*. Equally transparently, such decisive facilitation would be quite impossible before the time of the End.

Jesus' imperative words to his contemporaries in Mt. 24:15 are therefore especially salient in revealing the true nature of Daniel's book: "when you see... the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader **understand**". Even without the constraint that the verb Christ chose – νοεῖν (*noein*) – is cognate with Daniel's in the Septuagint⁹⁶ – διανοεῖσθαι (*dianoesthai*) – the transparent inference is that *Daniel's book was fully open for complete comprehension in Roman times*,⁹⁷ almost two whole millennia ago. This should not surprise us when at least twice Daniel saw pagan Rome's demise *at the Eschaton*. It did not remain sealed till around 1844, as Seventh-day Adventism claims. The corollary is that Daniel's forecasts were never intended to stretch past Jesus' era!

Likewise, in stark contrast to Daniel, John the Revelator is commanded: "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near", Rev. 22:10. One must ask, then, if Seventh-day Adventism has even begun to think very carefully through its thesis, especially if it sees Daniel as John's major source. For it implies the sheer nonsense that the Revelation, which was *never* sealed from its first-century genesis, is founded on the Book of Daniel, which was sealed till the 19th century!

In brief, Daniel was not written as history in advance but as a record, initially, of God's supreme effort, *inherently conditional*, to convert a prominent gentile. Babylon need **never** have fallen had Belshazzar shown reverent humility like his predecessor. Even then, it is already quite manifest that God did not inspire his seer to predict what he knew such rulers would do. For one thing, Nebuchadnezzar was not Babylon's final monarch. For another, human history has lingered long past the fall of pagan Rome.

The Judgment

Strictly speaking, Daniel's only explicit references to judgment are 7:9f., 22, 26. I am quite happy with Seventh-day Adventism's *temporal* polemic that this begins before the End, while the Little Horn is still at the peak of his cruel power. I am dubious, though, about its notion of the *nature* of this judgment.

Above all, there is not even the slightest hint of the saints *ever* being scrutinised, let alone *individually*, in this pre-Advent trial. Rather, it is the **Little Horn** that is judged and stripped of power, 26. Nor does 22 sway me. For judgment "in favour"⁹⁸ of the saints of the Most High" is merely the positive expression of the Little Horn's damnation. By removing this fiend from their path, the saints can possess God's eternal Kingdom.⁹⁹ Moreover, they are "judged" *collectively* and *simultaneously*, not in sequence since 1844. The thought of the records of their works being perused to decide their fitness for this blessing is so absurdly **alien** to the complete context that it should have entered no Bible student's mind. Persecution proves my point: Satan does not martyr those under his entire control! Even Daniel's implicit reference to judgment in 12:1 does not assist Ellen White's case. For its *single* book is doubtless the Book of Life,¹⁰⁰ while 7:10 speaks of **books**, which only ever apply in Sacred Scripture to the wicked.¹⁰¹

The 2,300 Evenings-mornings

Strictly speaking again, Dan. 8 scarcely needs to engage us here since it records not a solitary hint, even in the 2,300 evenings-mornings, of the saints enduring God's scrutiny, pre-Advent or otherwise. Indeed, it is the Little Horn¹⁰² *alone* which desecrates the sanctuary pervasively, 9:13. And never does Daniel offer the slightest suggestion here or in 23:25 that this tyrant ever professed allegiance to God. So the first point in Ellen White's appeal to Daniel's book confirms that she does not rise above her fellow pioneers, who were the products of a theologically naïve era. It engenders no confidence whatever that precisely the same prophetic Spirit who inspired Daniel equally inspired her to interpret him.

However, as the bulk of her polemic strives to interpret the 2,300 evenings-mornings, we owe her the courtesy of an adequate evaluation. In fact, in Appendix A I have even critiqued recent efforts by

her Church's scholars to support her. Having satisfied myself that Daniel's 2,300 evenings-mornings are eschatological and therefore literal,¹⁰³ the first issue to be settled here is the identity of this sanctuary.

The only reason, even today, that Seventh-day Adventism has for its crucial conviction that Dan. 8:14 refers to the heavenly temple stems from its historicist surmise that this forecast reaches our modern era, when the earthly edifice lies in ruins. But if Daniel himself saw no further than pagan Rome, *we have no cause at all to look beyond the first Christian century*, even though this raises a fresh problem.

First, though, it is convenient to probe Seventh-day Adventism's claim that the point here is cleansing the sanctuary. Although the verb שָׂדַף (*šādaq*) has an unmistakably forensic sense, as in "declaring one to be in the right", Deut. 25:1, NRSV, various DARCOM scholars have gone to quite extraordinary lengths to demonstrate that it can also mean *cleansing*.¹⁰⁴ Yet this proves nothing whatever regarding Daniel's intent in Dan. 8:14. Bible words have a semantic range. But it is the author, not the reader, who selects the *specific* nuance at each usage. And he does so through *context*. Though Daniel employs cultic terms in his passage, this is no cause to interpret it in terms of the Day of Atonement in Lev. 16.

The simple, decisive impediment is that Daniel is not discussing the sanctuary's *normal* function of treating the people's sins but the *aberrant* circumstances of an enemy sabotaging the complete cultus. And *the OT happens to record a parallel desecration, along with the precise procedure in its reversal!* Had Seventh-day Adventism's pioneers employed their concordances more rigorously, they would have interpreted Dan. 8:14 in light of 2 Chr. 29:3-19, not Lev. 16, even if they saw *nothing* more than cleansing in Dan. 8:14. For both Lev. 16:19 and 2 Chr. 29:15, 16, 18 employ the identical Hebrew verb טָהַר (*tāhēr*) behind *cleanse* or *purify*. In the latter case, though, the instrument is not blood but a *wheelbarrow*, as it were. For the pollution is no human sin but the physical havoc left behind by a pagan vandal.

Looking closer at Dan. 8:13f., the Hebrew noun behind *sanctuary* is קֹדֶשׁ (*qōdeš*). But in recording the Little Horn's actual desecration, our prophet selects its cognate מִקְדָּשׁ (*miqdāš*), 11, as in 11:31. And this *miqdāš* lies desecrated by Nebuchadnezzar, 9:17. The lucid inference is that this will be restored with Jerusalem, 25, though the noun in 26 is *qōdeš*. This appears in 24 in the intensive form *qōdeš qādāšim*. This never applies elsewhere in the OT *personally*. So it should not be seen here as meaning the Messiah, but the Most Holy Place, as in Ex. 26:33. This is fortified in that the verb מָשַׁח (*māšah*) in Dan. 9:24 is used in Ex. 40:9-11¹⁰⁵ for anointing the sanctuary and its contents in initial consecration.

Regardless, such interpretive finesse does not prevent many Bible students still reading Dan. 9:24-27 Messianically.¹⁰⁶ However, if 24 is the only guide to fulfilling the pledge of 8:14, the perplexing question is, Why should the temple, desecrated by the Romans, be reconsecrated after being obsolesced at Calvary? The answer may lie in the uncertainty whether this passage really is Messianic. Its Hebrew text is not easily plumbed, and its Greek translators suggest at least two major options, causing some stark differences among our English versions.¹⁰⁷ All that I will state here, then, is that, unless it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that it is the heavenly sanctuary which the Little Horn desecrates in Dan. 8, Seventh-day Adventism has *no rational reason* whatever to observe that temple in 14.

Even if it does, however, Ellen White has no cogent cause to interpret this verse in light of the Day of Atonement ritual of Lev. 16, as we have just concluded, let alone to leap to the NT Book of Hebrews.¹⁰⁸ So we may move on to her employment of Jesus' parable of the ten virgins to support her belief in a pre-Advent judgment of the saints. Frankly, the palpable puzzle here is how she can display competence with Holy Writ in COL, yet offer an alternative, *incompatible* interpretation in GC, still insisting that this is *the* meaning of the parable. Because the former readily passes the test of sound biblical hermeneutics, the latter simply does not. She is totally astray to view Jesus' coming here as anything except his Return, as its various close links with its broad context consistently confirm. For one thing, the temporal phrase *at that time*, 1, links it to the caution *keep watch* which closes 24, 36-51, precisely like this very parable, 25:13. For another, the rest of 25 continues to treat the Parousia in caveat terms.

In sum, the paramount Berean test decisively rejects the second point of Ellen White's appeal to the Book of Daniel, and brings even further into question her crucial claim to divine, prophetic inspiration.

Ellen White is equally astray in claiming, finally, that the verb חָטַק (*ḥātak*) in Dan. 9:23 means *cut off*. It acquires this literal nuance only in post-biblical times.¹⁰⁹ In Daniel's day it means *determined* (*decreed*), as even her beloved KJV clearly indicates. Her whole argument for commencing the 2,300 evenings-mornings in 457 B.C. therefore collapses, and with it, more devastatingly, their crucial closure in 1844.

Although Ellen White passes rapidly over her Church's prime interpretive claim that what Daniel did not comprehend, 8:27, and what Gabriel clarified, 9:22, was the 2,300 evenings-mornings, 8:13f., she moves even more rapidly over her modern minions' stressing that Gabriel specifically referred Daniel back to a prior vision, 9:23.¹¹⁰ This review should therefore assess the credentials of this detail. However, its unavoidable technicalities, which never bothered Ellen White, would sidetrack it too far from her apologetic. I have therefore confined all of my relevant critique to my separate, concise Appendix B.

Conclusion

Ellen White has by no means presented any persuasive defense, through Daniel's 2,300 evenings-mornings, of this crucial Seventh-day Adventist dogma of a pre-Advent judgment beginning in 1844.

First, she utterly misconstrues the judgment's substance and timing in 7:9f. It involves no professors of faith in God and/or Christ judged from 1844 to probation's close. Rather, it reviews the fourth beast and its Little Horn, and was timed for the first Christian century. Likewise, she quite distorts the nature and timing of the 2,300 evenings-mornings. These have no nexus with the Day of Atonement, either in type or antitype, let alone with judging professors. And they do not yield to historicism's year-day equation. Rather, they deal *exclusively* with the restoration of the sanctuary polluted by the Little Horn.

Finally, even if the 2,300 evenings-mornings were not both literal and eschatological, no starting date for them can be calculated because those 490 years bear no relationship to them. So the Seventh-day Adventist Church's much-vaunted 1844 is a sectarian dogma completely without biblical support.

The sober deduction about this Church's origin should not be missed. William Miller's spurious forecasts of the date of the Parousia led some of his shattered disciples to conclude that only the nature of the sanctuary of Dan. 8:14 had been misconstrued. In fact, *1844 features nowhere in the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy*. Therefore, Seventh-day Adventism looks in sheer futility to the Great Disappointment to explain its genesis, except in purely psychological and sociological terms. That is, as we have carefully observed, its crucial "building" labelled 1844 lacks a foundation, just as it lacks all walls and partitions. Without Daniel's co-operation, we must now conclude that it is equally devoid of any roof.

Ellen White's credentials are again highly suspect, for her readings of Daniel's predictions are heretical. Were she a mere pioneer in an age of naïve theology, this would be excusable. But an inspired prophet, claiming to interpret another's predictions, certainly does not *completely* misconstrue them!

The Genuine pre-Advent Judgment of Scripture

It is a sorry trait of human nature, even among mature, sincere Christians, that we often throw the doctrinal baby out with the heretical bath water. For example, certain well-meaning Seventh-day Adventist zealots counsel the dying to resist Satan strenuously in his or her last moments lest a *single* unconfessed sin rob him or her of God's eternal Kingdom! Such virtual slavery to an extremely legalistic view of the dogma of a pre-Advent judgment gives way to immense joy when Christ's authentic gospel is finally embraced. However, it is all too easy to forget his edict to feast upon "every word that comes from the mouth of God", Mt. 4:4, not on some mere selection of convenient "culinary" delights.

Specifically, Seventh-day Adventism's critics rightly chide it for ignoring Scripture's context and broad sweep in favour of proof-texts like Dan. 8:14 and Rev. 14:7 in its sectarian efforts to promote a pre-Advent judgment. Yet all too often these very critics *equally* abuse the Word in denying this heresy. For a careful reading of even the NT reveals that there is a genuine pre-Advent judgment after all!

"Shock! Horror!" I hear the crowd gathering already to stone me. But please! Closed minds have no place in the gospel's company. I welcome the Berean Test – after you grant me a fair hearing.

Salvation's very fount is divine justice, Ro. 3:25f. And central among its farflung motifs is God's gift of justification, revoking his judicial sentence of condemnation, 5:16. So Satan our dogged accuser was cast out after Calvary, Rev. 12:7-10,¹¹ and in heaven's "court", God tolerates **no** charge against his sincere servants, Ro. 8:33f. So, in a very real sense, *they will never face the fear of personal judgment*, Jn. 5:24.

Yet even the apostle Paul, renowned for his gospel expertise, cautions that "we will **all** stand before God's judgment seat", Ro. 14:10, to account for ourselves, 12.¹² Despite first impressions, this is no paradox. For Calvary's rich blessings are certainly ours today *in Christ*. But they will be ours *in fact* at his Return alone.¹³ It is unclear precisely how we "report" at that time.¹⁴ However, even in his severe shepherd metaphor, Mt. 25:31-46, there is no hint that anyone's destiny depends upon his or her defense. Likewise, the possibility of hyperbole aside,¹⁵ no decisions stem from the accounting mooted in 12:36f.

We should therefore be stalwart in our faith in Christ our Lord, 1 Cor. 16:13,¹⁶ despite all of Satan's extreme pressures, 1 Pet. 5:9f., ever cautious that we **can** fall away, to our eternal loss, Heb. 3:12-14.¹⁷ As the once saved, always saved notion is specious, even a Christian should heed Paul's words carefully as he warns us repeatedly that certain practices will debar us entirely from the eternal Kingdom.¹⁸

Regardless, our best defense against all disaster is the assurance that God is on our side: "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day", 2 Tim. 1:12. For our Father will "keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God... is faithful", 1 Cor. 1:8f. Compare 1 Thess. 5:24; Jude 24.

Few passages achieve the perfect balance more succinctly than 1 Jn. 4:7-21. God loved us through his Son, so we should love each other, 8-11, 19-21. Through his Spirit, he lives within us, 13. His love may mature there, 12, 17, then, “so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment... There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment”, 17!¹⁹

Then is there a final judgment to update the count of Christians to inform Christ whom to take home? Such a notion ignores one prime fact. At **every** instant, “(t)he Lord **knows** those who are his”, 2 Tim. 2:19.²⁰ He who sees each sparrow fall *always* knows my spiritual state. Divine omniscience embodies judgment *as a divine attribute*. Pre-Advent judgment is not a process involving “books”, nor one beginning in 1844 or at any other time. Rather, **God is ever fully informed simply because he is God!**

Such soaring, balanced averments pave the way for our perusal of the NT’s pre-Advent judgment.

The Fundamental Chronology of the Book of Revelation

This is no place to treat Seventh-day Adventism’s claim that the Revelation must be interpreted in historicist terms as a series of **pre-ordained** events between Christ’s First and Second Advents. But a broad appreciation of its chronology will probably facilitate comprehension of my primary point.

At first sight the Book of Revelation seems to be deterministic. For it reveals “what **must** soon take place”, 1:1. However, this ignores the cardinal principle that Scripture interprets itself. The Greek verb behind *must* is δέιν (*dein*). It bespeaks *obligation*, but not necessarily absolute *certainty*. For example, it often takes the form denoting *unfulfilled duty*,²¹ as in Acts 27:21: “(Y)ou *should* have taken my advice”. So this verb is not *inherently* deterministic. It is even employed in its inherently *uncertain* Greek subjunctive mood – the precise *converse* of determinism! – as in Mt. 26:35: “*IF* I have to die with you”.

Indeed, the historicist can raze his own structure if he insists that this verb *dein* is deterministic in prophecy. Above all, John utilises it in Rev. 1:1 to announce God’s purpose for his book. However, if its contents really are deterministic, although one thoroughly decisive qualification should not be ignored, it has often been in Seventh-day Adventism’s regular expositions of the Book of Revelation.

The verb *dein* places no bounds on the bare verb *take place* (γίνεσθαι (*ginesthai*)). For *ginesthai* is specifically restricted by the adverb *soon*. True, some commentators prefer to render it *quickly*. However, this option is untenable in light of John’s unequivocal assertion at the close of this introduction, just two verses distant: “the time is **near**.” Nor should it be suggested that this need mean nothing more than that the details of John’s prophecy began to be fulfilled in his day. For both the expression *the words of this prophecy* and the clause *what is written in it* are manifestly all-inclusive.

Therefore, every historicist who insists that here John employs the verb *dein* deterministically faces an impregnable barrier to his or her credibility. If even John’s major prophetic details **must** take place, they must happen **soon**. And beyond quibble, this imminence applied to his pristine reader and his audience – so much so that, unlike Daniel, who was instructed to seal his book till the time of the end, Dan. 12:4, 9, John was directed from the very outset: “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,” (all-inclusive again, please observe) “because *the time is near*”, Rev. 22:10.

My point is a very simple one. All even of the major details of John’s prophecy certainly did not occur *soon*. So the clause “what must *soon* take place”, Rev. 1:1, can **never** have been deterministic.

Jesus’ Letters to the Seven Churches

Comfortable Fit?

Broad parallels with successive epochs of church history may be seen in the seven churches. But how close is the fit? No prophecy is fulfilled unless it dovetails with *every* inspired detail. While it is beyond the bounds of this study to explore prophetic fulfilment in fine detail, the simple, sobering answer is, They fit only if some of John’s very own prime specifications are completely ignored!

Without exception, when Jesus names a church, he has that total church in mind. Within his message, if he wishes to address just part of any congregation, he does so explicitly, whether to praise, as in 2:24; 3:4, or to rebuke, as in 2:14f., 22. His overall opinion of each church is therefore as follows:

Church	Proportion Praised	Proportion Rebuked
Ephesus	whole	whole
Smyrna	whole	none
Pergamum	whole	part
Thyatira	whole	whole/part
Sardis	part	part
Philadelphia	whole	none
Laodicea	none	whole

What, then, is history's supreme verdict? Ephesus allegedly typifies Christians *in toto*, starting to falter as the first century closed. Yet Jesus' own *pure* praise of contemporary Smyrna and Philadelphia is ample rebuttal. Historicism would be more credible had he rebuked the Ephesians only *partially*.

In contrast, Smyrna applies to a *select group* of persecuted saints, not the *majority* slipping deeper into apostasy. Where, then, is Jesus' rebuke? Pergamum reverts to the *entire* church. But as the historic church was then decidedly corrupt, why does he laud it *pervasively*, and chide it only *partially*?

Worse, if Thyatira actually depicts the fearful nadir of apostasy in the Dark Ages, why does Jesus laud it *overall*, criticise it mildly *in toto*, and damn only *part* of it harshly? Sardis is likewise the *whole* church, this time being awakened by the Protestant Reformation. Yet, since even leaders like Luther needed to "wake up", whom did Jesus mean by the few who had *never* "soiled their clothes", 3:4?

In contrast, Philadelphia is allegedly just the faithful *core* of Christians who rejoice in the Reformation. Where, then, is his censure of the faithless *majority*? Laodicea reverts to the *whole* church. But do *all* modern Christians merit his utter rebuke? Indeed, if he stands outside his *whole* church, 3:20, where are the gospel's *myriad* genuine converts? I count some of them amongst my closest friends.

Like most women, my wife keeps a loving eye on her husband's wardrobe. At times she runs the gauntlet of my cryptic tastes and buys an item of clothing. Yet, even if it meets my general approval, she may have to return it because "it doesn't fit." Even on this partial evidence, historicism's stance on Jesus' letters should likewise be "returned" as a sorry misfit, baggy in places, stretched tightly at others, but fitting snugly scarcely anywhere. This is the garb of paupers and clowns, not monarchs!

Firmly Anchored in Space and Time

At the other end of the spectrum, John's several fine details firmly anchor his letters in space and time. Just one case must suffice. It makes perfect sense to describe Antipas to the localised Pergamenes in John's day as the one "who was put to death in *your* city", 2:13. Yet it makes little if any to fit the historical let alone geographical detail to the *totality* of saints of the alleged Pergamene era, A.D. 313-538. For during that "era" they were scattered very widely indeed in both space and time!

In the Shadow of the Parousia

It is striking that Jesus explicitly mentions his Return to every church except Smyrna and Laodicea. Even then, the first omission is quite explicable, for the Smyrnans face the threat of death, 2:10. Possibly, too, Jesus' pledge, "I will come in and eat", 3:20, implies the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, 19:6-9. Whatever, even historicists agree that the Advent is near for the Laodiceans, last on his list.

Still more striking is his uniform, parousial counsel for each church, as even this brief survey reveals.

Jesus warns the Pergamenes, "I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth", 2:16. This weapon is clearly *parousial*, 19:15, 21. Likewise, Jesus' simple promise to the Philadelphians, "I am coming soon", 3:11, repeats his sweeping *parousial* pledge of 22:7, 12, 20. Significantly, the identical temporal Greek syntax is employed in John's statement of intent: to reveal what "must soon take place", 1:1; 22:6. This he defines through his assertion, "the time is *near*", 1:3. So at very least, these two churches both share Christ's personal assurance that he will return in their day.

Jesus is most lucid at Sardis: "I will come *like a thief*, and you will not know at what time I will come to you", 3:3. The parousial simile *thief* is his own, Mt. 24:43, and his apostles repeat it, 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Pet. 3:10. As Rev. 16:15 verifies, its import is unaltered for John. Likewise, the familiar caveat, *you will not know at what time*, is distinctly end-time, Mt. 24:44, 50; 25:13, in company, too, with γρηγορεῖν (*grēgorein*), the Greek verb behind *wake up*, Rev. 3:3, and *keep watch*, Mt. 24:42; 25:13. Why should the former differ in Rev. 3:3, especially when, very impressively, *grēgorein* recurs only in 16:15 in the entire Book of Revelation? So Sardis easily joins Laodicea, Pergamum and Philadelphia. This is a striking majority, especially as no Smyrnan martyr qualifies for a list of those alive at Christ's Return.

Again, as Jesus punishes Jezebel at Thyatira, 2:22f., "**all** the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will reward *each* of you according to your works", 23. The forceful inference is that *her judgment occurs while all seven churches still coexist*, as an exemplary caveat to *all* the wayward. Indeed, the sins which she implants, 20, also trouble Pergamum, 14. Even the verb *to teach* recurs. Moreover, Jezebel suffers on the very verge, at least, of the Parousia. For the phrase *according to your works* is transparently eschatological, 18:6; 22:12. And Jesus' directive, "hold on to what you have *until* I come", 2:25, excludes *all* intervening death. He makes the striking distinction, in fact, when relevant, as at Smyrna. So Thyatira readily joins this long list of pre-Advent churches, too.

As for the Ephesian church, Jesus' caution, "I will come", 2:5, scarcely denotes a different advent than his Return in 16, 25; 3:3, 11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20! Rather, this church is manifestly in no way unique.

Finally, the imminence of Jesus' Return for *every* church is manifest in his vow to the faithful Philadelphians: "I will... keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth", 3:10. Scope and intent both affirm that this is parousial.¹²² So such care is not confined to the Philadelphians. In fact, all true worshippers are safe for the 42 months, 11:1f.¹²³ The woman escapes Satan, 12:13-16.¹²⁴ The faithful enter heaven straight "out of the great tribulation", 7:14. And the full 144,000 sealed in 1-8 reach Mt. Zion, 14:1. Generally, too, what Jesus says to one church he says to all: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."¹²⁵

The Diction of Judgment

John's initial view of Jesus, 1:12-18, sets the tone of his following counsel. Typically, he introduces himself to each church through a symbolic feature especially apropos to its need. For example, he who walks among the lampstands, 1:13; 2:1, is about to cast Ephesus from the select circle of fellowship, 5. He whose mouth wields the sharp sword, 1:16; 2:12, is about to employ it on Pergamene rebels, 16. He who died to rise again, 1:18; 2:8, has eternal life for the Smyrnans who are faithful until death, 10f. And he whose eyes burn like fire, 1:14; 2:18, uses them to search Thyatiran hearts and minds, 23.

Moreover, these details attest that John first sees Jesus as a *judge*. This is confirmed even by the vision's other minutiae. His stark white hair, 14, is reminiscent of Yahweh's as Judge, Dan. 7:9. And his golden sash, Rev. 1:13, recurs only on the judgment angels with those fearful, final plagues, 15:6.

Even Jesus' foot-length robe, 1:13, befits a judge. The Septuagint uses the relevant Greek noun for the High Priest's garb, Ex. 28:4. Yet it also details the judgment angel's attire, Eze. 9:2, 3, 11. This is salient since John's main source among hundreds of OT references is Ezekiel.¹²⁶ True, this scarcely verifies *per se* that Jesus is dressed as a judge. Yet John does not even view him here in the heavenly temple so loved by Seventh-day Adventism, but on earth, among the seven churches themselves.¹²⁷

In all, then, John's first vision is as replete with patent tokens of Jesus' judgmental rôle as it lacks any hint of his High Priestly office. And, as noted, such tokens punctuate most of his advice to the churches, too. Equally, this is repeatedly judicial. To each one he says, "I know...", 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15, and most details of his praise or rebuke bespeak assessment. More forcefully, he warns the Sardians, "I have not *found*...", 3:2. This implies scrutiny. Above all, he identifies himself to all seven churches as "he who *searches* hearts and minds", 2:23. This has eternal consequences: "I will repay each of you *according to your deeds*" – a transparent reference to Jesus' judicial Parousia, 22:12.

In brief, the primary purpose of John's first vision, including Jesus' letters, is to depict him as judge of all John's fellow Christians, typified by seven local churches. Moreover, as they live in the very shadow of his Return, to which his assessment often refers, this may well be termed their pre-Advent judgment, with 1844 not even remotely in view. This merely verifies that *divine omniscience embodies judgment as a divine attribute. No books are required, and no specific timetable is necessary. For God always knows simply because he is God!* If Seventh-day Adventists would preach this pre-Advent judgment, other Christians would accept it gladly because it is biblical, and benefit greatly from it.

Ellen White "Sheds" the Shackles of Historicism

In essence, this study is an appraisal of the inspirational claims of Seventh-day Adventism's seer through the prime criterion, her grasp of Scripture. So it is apropos that she has "the final word", at least about Jesus' letter septet. She certainly endorses her Church's standard practice of interpreting John's Book of Revelation in historicist terms. For example, she reads the seven churches of 2f. thus:

The names... are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.¹²⁸

However, historicism's champion also recognises that John spoke to his contemporaries as well:

The Lord Himself revealed to His servant the mysteries contained in this book... Its truths are addressed to those living in the last days of this earth's history, as well as to those living in the days of John.¹²⁹

Ellen White's reflexions on Jesus' messages to the Ephesian and Sardian Churches reveal a third perspective. She applies Rev. 2:1:5 and 3:13 equally to her own generation thus: "We are seeing the fulfillment of these warnings. *Never have scriptures been more strictly fulfilled than these have been.*"¹³⁰

This is no place to deduce whether she is applying Scripture here, or offering what she considers *the inspired intent*.¹³¹ However, two points may be made confidently. On one hand, in the KJV, Rev. 2:10 is translated thus: "behold, the devil shall cast *some* (sic) of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." In

strict exegetical terms, this refers to John's Smyrnan flock alone. Yet even if viewed through historicist eyes, it applies to Diocletian's persecution from 303 to 313. However, she *deliberately* deletes all reference to those ten days at least once, permitting her to **reapply** John's words much more generally.

Looking down through long centuries of darkness and superstition, the aged exile saw multitudes suffering martyrdom because of their love for the truth. But he saw also that He who sustained His early witnesses would not forsake His faithful followers during the centuries of persecution that they must pass through before the close of time. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer," the Lord declared; "behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation: ... [deletion *sic*] be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10.¹³²

On the other, at Jesus' fearful warning, 3:3, she lays aside historicism, which dates the Sardian era between 1517 and 1755, with two more eras until he returns. For she interprets him with some exegetical care, applying it at least three times to his Return, albeit pastorally to our day, not John's:

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee." Rev. 3:3. The advent of Christ will surprise the false teachers. They are saying, "Peace and safety." Like the priests and teachers before the fall of Jerusalem, they look for the church to enjoy earthly prosperity and glory... But what saith the word of Inspiration? "Sudden destruction cometh upon them." 1 Thess. 5:3. Upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth... the day of God will come as a snare. It comes to them as a prowling thief.¹³³

The condition of the church at this time [awaiting Christ's Return] is pointed out in the Saviour's words...: "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." And to those who refuse to arouse from their careless security, the solemn warning is addressed: "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Revelation 3:1, 3.¹³⁴

Though no man knoweth the day nor the hour of His coming, we are... required to know when it is near. We are further taught that to disregard His warning... will be as fatal for us as it was for those who lived in the days of Noah not to know when the flood was coming. And the parable in the same chapter [Mt. 24], contrasting the faithful and the unfaithful servant, and giving the doom of him who said in his heart, "My Lord delayeth His coming," shows in what light Christ will regard and reward those whom He finds watching... and those denying it. "Watch therefore," He says. "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing." Verses 42, 46. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee." Revelation 3:3.¹³⁵

It is well worth pausing to compare routine historicism. In effect, it **chides** Jesus, just like Peter, in such arrogant, ludicrous terms that it warrants his equally scathing rebuke: "Not so, Lord! Your Sardian Church depicts genuine Christianity during the Reformation. The *single* fulfilment that historicism allows¹³⁶ is far beyond John's own day! You *cannot* possibly intend to return even then, because the *entire* Philadelphian and Laodicean eras of Christian history are *scheduled* to follow that Sardian era."

Ellen White likewise follows her exegetical instincts, not historicism, in applying Jesus' pledge to the Philadelphians pastorally to our day, which historicism deems the subsequent Laodicean era:

Just before us is "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Revelation 3:10... Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience,... will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense. "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee" (verse 10), is the Saviour's promise.¹³⁷

Though God's people will be surrounded by enemies who are bent upon their destruction, yet the anguish which they suffer is not a dread of persecution for the truth's sake; they fear that every sin has not been repented of, and that through some fault in themselves they will fail to realize the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, I "will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." Revelation 3:10.¹³⁸

In a sense, then, Ellen White "sheds" the shackles of historicism over Jesus' letters to the seven churches. Refreshingly, this confirms that she can grasp the factual purport of Holy Writ, and lends credence to the thesis that, in historicism's regular rhetoric, she mindfully applies God's Word homiletically, not exegetically. However, this certainly exemplifies no *overall* principle unless pervasive, specific evidence so dictates. This appears to be very scarce, as a general summary readily confirms.

Summary and Conclusion

This brief study makes the bold attempt, in small compass, to assess the Seventh-day Adventist Church through two of its most distinctive doctrines, the prophetic ministry of Ellen White, and the pre-Advent judgment alone of those professing faith in God or Christ, one by one, starting with Adam in 1844. Some may object that Church scholars have recently fortified the latter, and that attitudes to the former have softened in light of new data demanding a thorough review of that ministry. However, it is quite legitimate to view the pre-Advent judgment through Ellen White's allegedly Spirit-inspired eyes.

For one thing, her Church claims that it has “responded in a reasonable, biblically defensible manner to the challenges it was asked to investigate.”¹³⁹ However, at times its fine tuning of dogma challenges Ellen White’s very authority directly in embracing fad theology endorsed by liberal scholars!¹⁴⁰

For another, Ellen White’s use, allegedly under the Spirit’s tuition, of the inspired Word, is a superb field to test her claim, as long as we assess expositions that she deems offer *the* intent of Scripture. Seventh-day Adventist distinctive dogma, especially in crucial detail, offers just such expositions.¹⁴¹

For yet another, Ellen White allows that, if the “great pillars of our faith” *as she grasped them*, especially “the sanctuary question,”¹⁴² fail the test of candid investigation, “it is time that we knew it.”¹⁴³

Here, then, are the consistent results of my brief, candid investigation. Simply stated, Seventh-day Adventism’s crucial dogma of a pre-Advent judgment casts grave doubt on both its *raison d’être* and its prophet’s inspiration. For she endorses it enthusiastically and unequivocally at every major point.

First, this doctrinal “building” lacks all foundation. Despite Ellen White’s claim that, day by day, in the sanctuary service’s paramount ritual, the tabernacle was polluted by the blood of the sacrifice of individual sinners, it never passed the altar of burnt offering before its Holy Place. So *the sanctuary was never polluted by such sins, and never required cleansing of them* on the great, annual Day of Atonement. What this day did provide was *corporate* cleansing for the Children of Israel. In fact, *the day did not even purge the altar of burnt offering* where every drop of this individual blood collected!

Nor does Ellen White salvage the dogma’s foundation by suggesting a pathway for the pollution through the priests’ consuming the individual’s sacrifice. For one thing, the blood on which atonement focused was *fully* drained at the altar. For another, this was a *dietary*, not *purgative*, provision.

Secondly, this doctrinal “building” is devoid of walls and partitions, too. Ellen White makes much of typology to support her theology of Christ’s High-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. On one hand, however, Moses was shown a scale model of the specific building he was to erect, not of the heavenly sanctuary. On the other, NT typology, especially in the Book of Hebrews, majors in *contrasts* between the earthly and the heavenly, not in *comparisons*. Above all, the NT is oblivious of any ethereal Holy Place, and most certainly about any ministry of Christ therein, outside the Most Holy Place. Rather, it is adamant that his once-for-all self-sacrifice at Calvary fulfilled both the *daily* and the *annual* aspects of the earthly priests’ temporary, imperfect ministry. That included the instant blotting out of sins so forgiven! He then returned to his Father’s side within the heavenly temple, which is *all* Most Holy Place, to perform a *single*-phase service until his Return. In fact, the inspired chronology labels that event so imminent, even in the first Christian century, that there is no time whatever for decades of investigative judgment, especially not from 1844. Likewise, the single reference to cleansing the sanctuary, both earthly and heavenly, connotes *inauguration*, not *atonement*.

Thirdly, this doctrinal “building” lacks a roof. In the Book of Daniel, Ellen White sees investigative judgment at the close of the 2,300 evenings-mornings, clarified by Lev. 16. Since the datable 490 years were cut off the 2,300 evenings-mornings, that terminus was 1844. However, this is riddled with crippling problems. For one thing, *the faithful are not subject to the judgment of Dan. 7*. This decides the fate of the fourth beast and its Little Horn, which Seventh-day Adventists exclude from their pre-Advent judgment. For another, *it is the Little Horn, not the saints, that desecrates the sanctuary in Dan. 8*. So no appeal to Lev. 16 is warranted. Indeed, the apposite model is detailed in 2 Chr. 29, where *it is a wheelbarrow, not blood, which purges!* For yet another, Dan. 9 does not require that the 490 years were cut from the 2,300 evenings-mornings. In fact, the latter are literal and eschatological.

In brief, one of the formative dogmas of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is completely specious. It has no foundation, walls, partitions or roof. Yet Ellen White supports it earnestly and consistently, claiming that she is *explaining* the relevant Scriptures. Rather, despite rare, refreshing flashes of exegetical lucidity, she hardly ever rises above her fellow pioneers, who were largely time- and culture-bound by a primitive system of Bible “study” consisting primarily in proof-texting with a concordance.

Were Ellen White a mere pioneer, her mistakes would be excusable. But not if she is inspired by the Holy Spirit! The Source of God’s Word is no author of confusion or heresy involving those Scriptures, as those who accept her as an inspired prophet most certainly imply! There is room to read Holy Writ non-literally, as in typology. But there is no place among genuine Christians for any professed prophet who repeatedly distorts the sacred Scriptures, while claiming to explain their literal meaning.

In stark contrast to the Seventh-day Adventist dogma of a pre-Advent judgment beginning when the record books were opened in 1844, the Word teaches clearly that sins confessed and regretted are forgiven and erased *instantly*. Moreover, God need not peruse any book. He *knows* our spiritual condition at every instant. *Judgment is a facet of omniscience!* It is no surprise, then, that, from cover to cover, the NT heralds the Parousia’s imminence. Above all, John of Patmos’ letter septet depicts Jesus the judge scrutinising his saints in the shadow of his Return, back in the first Christian century.

- ¹ For a convenient summary, including historical developments of the teaching, see D. F. Neufeld, ed., "INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT", *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1976²), 669b-673b.
- ² E.g., I. T. Blazen, "Justification and Judgment", *DARCOM 3*, 339-388, seeks to rid the judgment doctrine of all suspicion of salvation by works. Cf. n. 5. Many Seventh-day Adventist leaders and scholars attended a Colloquium in Glacier View, Colorado, August, 1980, to assess Dr. Ford's 1,000-page Position Paper when witless fears that he is a heretic ran rampant. See *Spectrum*, 11/2 (November, 1980).
- ³ E.g., Neufeld, *art. cit.*, 673a.
- ⁴ Fundamental Belief 17 claims that "her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth", stress supplied. This involves a striking elevation of her authority at Scripture's expense! Before 1980, her life and ministry simply displayed "the gift of the Spirit of prophecy", while God's Word was Seventh-day Adventism's "all-sufficient revelation of His will and... the only unerring rule of faith and practice." Ever since, it has been merely "the infallible revelation of His will... the authoritative revealer of doctrines".
- ⁵ A. M. Rodríguez, "Daniel 8, 9: The Sanctuary and its Cleansing" (supplement, *RECORD*, February 15, 1997), 2. He also endeavours to paint the investigative judgment in lofty, positive terms, 14f.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 14a, stress supplied.
- ⁷ PP 354f. The asterisk is a pointer to a note in the Appendix, to be considered shortly. All stress is supplied here and in the following group of quotations. Cf. GC 418-422. At this point GC 419 adds: "The blood was also to be sprinkled upon the altar of incense that was before the veil."
- ⁸ PP 355f. ⁹ *Ibid.*, 357f.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 76f, referring to the text at 354.
- ¹¹ Desperate since recent Seventh-day Adventist apologists have virtually abandoned earlier efforts to have sacrificial blood *per se* pollute the Holy Place! E.g., their definitive, official response to the Ford fiasco is R. Dederen *et al.*, eds., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown: Review & Herald, 2000). A. M. Rodríguez, "The Sanctuary", 384bf., relies therein almost entirely on the priest eating sacrificial flesh. Unofficially, at www.sdadefend.com, "How Firm Our Foundation" is a lengthy "rebuttal" of Dr. Ford's purported heresies. Its # 20 argues that the blood of a priest's *personal* sacrifice covered a common individual's sin.
- ¹² Not even in the flesh's sanctity, as in Ex. 29:33; Lev. 10:12, or that the priest, at least, ate it in a sacred place, as in Ex. 29:31f.; Lev. 6:16.
- ¹³ Lev. 6:30 summarises the cultus of 4:11f., 21. But it does not assist Seventh-day Adventism's resistance to reality. On one hand, it would have been inappropriate for a priest to eat the flesh of his own sacrifice. On the other, above all, Heb. 13:11f. implies that there was Messianic import in the entire community's sacrifice. Nor does it deny that blood *alone* was the vehicle of atonement.
- ¹⁴ As in A. M. Rodríguez, "Transfer of Sin in Leviticus", *DARCOM 3*, 173-178, modern Seventh-day Adventist apologists have seeming support in references like Lev. 15:31; 20:3; Nu. 19:13, 20 for their crucial claim that even the sins of individuals polluted the sanctuary. However, the problem is that such offenders were *unrepentant*, in contrast to the *contrition* clearly implicit in Lev. 4:27-35. Some grasp of Moses' perspective may also be gained from the fact that the very land could likewise be polluted, as in Lev. 18:24-28; Nu. 35:33f. In the absence of any cleansing ritual for the land, if polluted, it surely cannot be argued that the Day of Atonement ritual cleansed the sanctuary of such pollution as mentioned in Nu. 19:30 and the like, especially in light of the tone of Lev. 16:29-31.
- ¹⁵ E.g., Eze. 43:13-27 describes the altar of burnt offering and its dedication ritual in considerable detail. The material is not specified, and it is far larger than Moses' bronze altar. Within the Holy Place was to be a wooden altar, 41:22, far larger than his incense altar. But no ritual is described. Even the key word *incense* is absent.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Am. 5:21-24. ¹⁷ Cf. Hos. 6:6.
- ¹⁸ E.g., F. D. Nichol, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary 1* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1953), 776bf. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 658b.
- ²⁰ Cf. his extensive professional writings outside his confession, seemingly completely devoid of such emphases.
- ²¹ "Studies in Biblical Atonement II: the Day of Atonement", *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, ed. A. V. Wallenkampf (Washington, 1981), 127f.
- ²² Common in a relatively broad spectrum of comparative constructions, especially the conjunction in apodoses, as in Isa. 31:4.
- ²³ "Literary Form and Theological Function in Leviticus", *DARCOM 3*, 158, all stress supplied. However, accepting this insight by *no* means implies my approving his entire polemic.
- ²⁴ Note the ambiguity, 9, 15, over the slaughter site. ²⁵ Cf. Ex. 30:10, as above.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, and PP 357. ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 356f. Cf. GC 414f.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 252f. ²⁶ GC 414.
- ³¹ GC 417f. Her query sources in the KJV reading of Dan. 8:14: "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." So it reaches back to Lev. 16, treated *supra*, and forward to the Book of Hebrews, largely its typological interpretation, next in line. Yet Dan. 8:14 is awkward in my ordered critique. I treat it as the next section's preface since she has quite misconstrued the scope of the purging cited in Heb. 9:23. ²⁹ EW 32. Cf. 251f.
- ³² PP 343.
- ³³ S. Wagner, "כִּבְיָהוּ", *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament II*, eds. G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren, trans. J. T. Willis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977²), 179-181, establishes that its meaning is "much more difficult to ascertain" than the verb's other derivatives.
- ³⁴ E.g., Josh. 22:28 approaches this nuance.
- ³⁵ Cf. *λυχνία* (*lychnia*) again, 1:12f., 20; 2:1, 5. Yet, quite apart from the unaccommodating multiplicity, this detail does not negate the forceful evidence, *infra*, 22, that Christ is neither High Priest nor even in heaven in John's initial vision.
- ³⁶ Closer still is Solomon's huge "Sea" [ים] (*yām*), 1 Ki. 7:23-26; 2 Chr. 4:2-5. However, John's symbolism is complex. On one hand it evokes the crystalline expanse enthroning Yahweh, Eze. 1:22-28. On the other, in Rev. 15:2-4 it has manifest reference to the exodus.
- ³⁷ K. A. Strand, "'Victorious-Introduction' Scenes", *DARCOM 6*, 55f., sees the point clearly, yet defends Seventh-day Adventist dogma. His ensuing struggle evinces that John is sketching no two-roomed temple.
- ³⁸ PP 357f. Cf. GC 420-422. ³⁹ EW 55.
- ⁴⁰ *Review & Herald*, October 16, 1888, cited in *SDABC 4* (1955), 1139bf. ⁴¹ E.g., GW 21f.; PK 307f.; 5T 750.
- ⁴² GC 480. ⁴³ Lu. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Dan. 12:1; Rev. 21:27.
- ⁴⁴ Mal. 3:16; Neh. 13:14; Ps. 56:8. ⁴⁵ Eccl. 12:14; Mt. 12:36f.; 1 Cor. 4:5; Isa. 65:6f.
- ⁴⁶ GC 483. ⁴⁷ E.g., Latter Rain, sealing, Time of Trouble.
- ⁴⁸ GC 485.
- ⁴⁹ The vision of Yahweh's mobile throne in Eze. 1 does not imply that he ever moved from one room to another of his temple. This is utterly unique because it involves his calling a major prophet to office for the first and only time in exile in a foreign country.
- ⁵⁰ Ps. 80:1; 99:1. Cf. 2 Ki. 19:15 (= Isa. 37:16).
- ⁵¹ 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2 (= 1 Chr. 13:6).
- ⁵² Heb. 1:3. Cf. 13; 12:2; Acts 2:33f.; 5:31; 7:55f.; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 3:21.
- ⁵³ This endorses no day. It merely rejects a naïve polemic with focused diction. Like all Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should practise the very *principles* by which they judge other professing converts.
- ⁵⁴ It is doubtful, in fact, that it ever appeals directly to the Semitic text. ⁵⁵ Ex. 26:33; Lev. 16:2, 12, 15; 1 Sam. 24:4; Isa. 22:11.
- ⁵⁶ In the first four references in n. 55. ⁵⁷ Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lu. 23:45.
- ⁵⁸ Cf. 10; 6:20; 7:11, 17. ⁵⁹ 10:1-4, 11. Cf. 7:27.
- ⁶¹ To n. 58 add 5:9; 7:22, 25; 8:12; 9:14-16; 10:16f.; 12:2, 24. ⁶⁰ 7:27; 9:26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14. Cf. 9:12; 13:12.
- ⁶⁴ My translation. ⁶³ Cf. 11.
- ⁶⁵ "Eighty Wrongs Don't Make a Right!" is a superb feature of *Good News for Adventists* (Auburn: GNU, 1985), 52f. But one Seventh-day Adventist surmise rejected in error is # 41: that *ta hagia* "ever means anything other than the Most Holy Place in type or antitype."
- ⁶⁶ In fact, such transitions typify our author. E.g., *κατάπαυσις* (*katapausis*) is his consistent *spatial* noun for God's resting place all through his pastoral appeal, 3f. But he defines its *temporal* content via the noun *σαββατισμός* (*sabbatismos*), in 4:9. In 9:11f. he even glides from the spatial nuance *through* of the preposition *διὰ* (*dia*) to its instrumental sense *by means of*.
- ⁶⁷ Cf. 9:11.

- ⁶⁸ The routine reply that we need to know springs from references like Mt. 19:28 (cf. Lu. 22:30); 1 Cor. 6:2f., though Rev. 20:4 has no place among them since it cites Dan. 7:22. But nowhere here is there even a hint of opening any records before Christ returns.
- ⁶⁹ Mt. 24:48; 25:5; Lu. 12:45. Lu. 1:21 shows that the verb has no inherent sense: *millennia* of delay.
- ⁷⁰ *Supra* @ n. 48. ⁷¹ GC 481.
- ⁷² Cf. the Little Horn, 8:9-14, 23-25, whether or not the same fiend is in view. See briefly my n. 102.
- ⁷³ This is no place to plumb the Aramaic grammar/syntax. Suffice it to say that most versions and commentaries recognise the relevant idiom. Cf. Rev. 20:4, which quotes Dan. 7:22.
- ⁷⁴ Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27. Cf. Ex. 32:32; Lu. 10:20. ⁷⁵ Ex. 32:33; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5.
- ⁷⁶ 2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 51:1, 9; Isa. 43:25; 44:22. Cf. Ps. 32:1-5; Zech. 3:4, 9.
- ⁷⁷ Ps. 103:12; Mic. 7:19.
- ⁷⁸ The comparison is limited. But here she somewhat resembles Joseph Smith who implies - even in his purportedly God-motivated revision of the KJV!! - that some of its manifest errors were inspired. I hope to publish my brief critique here reasonably shortly.
- ⁷⁹ Ev 223.
- ⁸⁰ *Supra* @ nn. 5, 6.
- ⁸¹ Well documented and analysed in D. Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* (Sedona: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996), 43-49, 63, 83-93, 105-115.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 96. ⁸³ GC 479f. ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 417.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.* ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 421. ⁸⁷ *Supra* @ n. 31.
- ⁸⁸ GC 426-428. Cf. 398, 400. ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 402. ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 326.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 327f. Cf. 410. ⁹² *Ibid.*, 328.
- ⁹³ E.g., *SDABC 4*, 771-776.
- ⁹⁴ History actually records *four* kings from Nebuchadnezzar to Belshazzar: Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar, Labashi-Marduk and Nabonidus.
- ⁹⁵ Jer. 18:7-10 records Yahweh's own definition of prophecy - *conditionally salvific, not deterministically predictive*. Hence Daniel's anguish, Dan. 9:1-9, and Jonah's rebellion, Jon. 4:1f. The biblical data readily supports my conclusion repeatedly, in both Testaments.
- ⁹⁶ The better Greek version of Daniel is Theodotion's. But here it employs the synonym συνιέναι (*synienai*).
- ⁹⁷ Such is the sectarian mind that even renowned Seventh-day Adventist historian L. E. Froom evades Jesus' lucid testimony with the folly that Daniel was only *partially* open in his day, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers I* (Washington: Review & Herald, 1950), 146.
- ⁹⁸ See n. 73.
- ⁹⁹ Cf. 26f. ¹⁰⁰ Cf. Ex. 32:32f.; Lu. 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27.
- ¹⁰¹ *Supra*, 13.
- ¹⁰² Is this the same Little Horn as in 7? Here it must suffice to mention just one exegetical detail inviting a confident, affirmative response. There is little room for *separate* persecutions of the saints by two *distinct* fiends till the End, 7:21f., 25-27; 8:24; 11:33-12:1. See briefly my Appendix A.
- ¹⁰³ E.g., N. -E. Andreason, "Translation of *Nisdaq/Katharisthēsetai* in Daniel 8:14", *DARCOM 2*, 481-486; G. F. Hasel, "The 'Little Horn,' the Heavenly Sanctuary, and the Time of the End: a Study of Daniel 8:9-14", *DARCOM 2*, 450-454; A. M. Rodríguez, "Significance of the Cultic Language in Daniel 8:9-14", *DARCOM 2*, 537-543.
- ¹⁰⁴ Cf. Ex. 29:36; 30:26; Lev. 8:10f.; Nu. 7:1, 10, 84, 88.
- ¹⁰⁵ J. G. Baldwin, *Daniel* (Leicester: IVP, 1978), 172-178 briefly surveys the interpretive spectrum.
- ¹⁰⁶ Especially in 25. Does the anointed ruler appear after just seven "sevens", as in GNB, NEB, (N)RSV, or 69, as in NASB, NIV, NLT?
- ¹⁰⁷ *Supra*, @ n. 86.
- ¹⁰⁸ W. H. Shea, "The Relationship Between the Prophecies of Daniel 8 and Daniel 9", *Sanctuary & Atonement*, 241-246, sees this quite crucial point very clearly. Yet in struggling effete to neutralise if not dodge it, he sometimes wallows ludicrously in sheer sciolism.
- ¹⁰⁹ E.g., PK 554-556.
- ¹¹⁰ I correct Ellen White's claim, which has broad support among Seventh-day Adventists, including some scholars, in my internet essay, "The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: Just how Biblical is Ellen White's Major Integrating Theme?", January, 2001.
- ¹¹¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 5:10.
- ¹¹² Cf. dual concepts of salvation, Eph. 2:8; Mt. 10:22; redemption, 1 Pet. 1:18f.; Lu. 21:28; justification, Ro. 5:9; 2:13, 16; death, 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:54; resurrection, Col. 3:1; 1 Thess. 4:16; eternal life, Jn. 3:36; Ro. 2:6f.; heaven, Eph. 2:6; Jn. 14:3; kingdom, Col. 1:13; Rev. 11:15-17.
- ¹¹³ Cf. Mt. 12:36; Lu. 16:2; Heb. 4:13; 13:13; 1 Pet. 4:5.
- ¹¹⁴ A common Jewish rhetorical technique, as in 7:3-5. ¹¹⁵ Cf. Mt. 24:13; 1 Cor. 10:12; Col. 1:23; 4:12; James 5:8.
- ¹¹⁵ Cf. 4:1, 11; 6:4-12; 10:26-39; 12:25-29.
- ¹¹⁶ E.g., 1 Cor. 6:9f.; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5.
- ¹¹⁷ John's seeming call at times for perfection in Christian conduct is only his expectation of exemplary lifestyle - as gospel *fruitage*.
- ¹¹⁸ Cf. Heb. 4:13.
- ¹¹⁹ Impersonal ἔδει (*edei*), formally 3rd person imperfect indicative active.
- ¹²⁰ E.g., this is the Great Tribulation from which believers enter heaven, 7:14-17.
- ¹²¹ The saints are sheltered in the heavenly temple, as it were, with the altar echoing 6:9-11.
- ¹²² This complex symbol cannot be analysed here. But it reveals God's view, as it were, of the persecution about to engulf the faithful, 13. Even if they lose their lives, their eternal triumph is assured, as in 6:9-11; 20:4, 6.
- ¹²³ 2:7a, 11a, 17a, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.
- ¹²⁴ Most modern exegetes list Ezekiel as John's prominent if not dominant source. But the details are yet to become lay accessible.
- ¹²⁵ In airing M. Veloso's eisegesis, "The Doctrine of the Sanctuary and the Atonement as Reflected in the Book of Revelation", *Sanctuary & Atonement*, 401f., its so-called Biblical Research Institute counters the efforts of its enlightened authors who rightly view Jesus *on earth* in this passage. Cf. my n. 37.
- ¹²⁶ AA 585. ¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 584.
- ¹²⁷ 8T 99, stress supplied.
- ¹²⁸ E.g., GC 334f., endorsing Josiah Litch's Ottoman Empire view of John's "hour and day and month and year", Rev. 9:15, as 391 years, 15 days. She calls it a "*remarkable* fulfillment"; 334, she speaks of "the *very time* specified" and insists that "[t]he event *exactly* fulfilled the prediction", 335, stress supplied. I.e., she believes she is applauding *the* fulfilment God intended in inspiring John. Indeed, she implies that this is proof of the validity of historicism's year-day principle.
- ¹²⁹ AA 588. ¹³⁰ DA 635.
- ¹³⁰ GC 309f. ¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 371.
- ¹³¹ E.g., G. F. Hasel, "Fulfillments of Prophecy", *DARCOM 3*, 312-322. This point is quite *fundamental!*
- ¹³² GC 560. ¹³³ *Ibid.*, 619.
- ¹³³ W. R. Leshar & F. B. Holbrook, "Daniel and Revelation Committee: Final Report", *DARCOM 7*, 460.
- ¹³⁴ See my "Seventh-day Adventism's Upstart Doctrine of Determinism in the Books of Daniel and Revelation - a Selective Appraisal", November, 2000, *passim*.
- ¹³⁵ Cf. her account of receiving the pillars of the faith, 1SM 206-208. The pioneers studied long and earnestly, but without her input, they exhausted their resources. Then in vision, "a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me". So "the foundation... was laid at the beginning of our work by prayerful study of the Word and by revelation". Despite pressure to "remove some of the pillars of the faith," they "will be preserved". Would she so defend mere *applications* of the Word?!
- ¹³⁶ Ev 224. Cf. 1SM 208. However, as CWE 30f. makes clear, the short list goes beyond distinctive SDA dogma.
- ¹³⁷ CWE 44. Her broad openness to truth, 33-51, repeatedly warning against Pharisaism, rises above her constant cautions against attacks on the immovable landmarks/pillars of the faith, even ascribing such attacks to Satan, as in Ev 359f.! Cf. n. 141.

Appendix A

Sampling DARCOM's Chronology of Daniel's 2,300 Evenings-mornings

There is little room in a review of Ellen White's theology for any assessment of the support she enjoys from modern Seventh-day Adventists, even professional theologians. However, the vigour of the delusion, especially among those with little or no formal training in theology, that the DARCOM series, above all, has fully answered their critics demands at least my passing attention even here.

It will suffice to focus upon Daniel's 2,300 evenings-mornings as the typical centre of supreme interest for most unskilled Seventh-day Adventists. Within that narrow field, I can scarcely be more fair than to sample the apologia of two of DARCOM's leading champions of such OT theology.

First, Dr. W. H. Shea, easily DARCOM's most prolific apologist, and the first on whom his Church called after Glacier View, highlights the question-answer format of Dan. 8:13f., inviting us to deduce

what vision is referred to in the initial clause of this question, since it is the length of that vision that is measured off by the time period given in answer to this question in... 8:14. There are two alternatives here: Either the vision in question is the whole vision that the prophet has seen up to that point (vss. 3-12), or it is only that portion of the vision that has to do with the little horn (vss. 9-12).¹

Shea is perfectly correct. However, despite his protracted apologia, he does not establish that his first option is the valid one. Rather, context makes it quite clear that here in the interpretation of the forecast, the time period relates to the Little Horn's activities. Compare the limited scope of the same *How long?* query in 12:6, where a time period obviously applies to a mere portion, not the whole, of a vision. In 11:14 a heavenly courier likewise predicts: "The violent men among your own people will rebel in fulfilment of the vision." In a long list of details, does this single minuscule incident fulfil the whole vision? Of course not! 8:13 has a narrow focus as well – the one expressly detailed.

Secondly, Dr. G. F. Hasel was one of Seventh-day Adventism's most respected theologians among his peers at large. He added his line of evidence.² Though translations like the RSV speak in 13 of "the vision concerning the continual burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled under foot", the Hebrew lacks the construct chain by which the noun *vision* would be confined to the items which follow it in its sentence. Therefore,

it is clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the year-day principle is functioning in chapter 8. The 2,300 evenings (and) mornings must cover the whole period of the events symbolized, beginning at some point during the ram period. An understanding of the 2,300 evenings-mornings as literal days does not fit the context of the question... The prophet himself provides the key to the year-day principle...³

Hasel is quite correct about his point of syntax, which I do not intend to treat here.⁴ However, he fails to clarify that relationship can be very well expressed otherwise. For example, the common Hebrew preposition לְ (*le*) simulates an English dative with the sense *to* or *for*. Even *the day of the LORD*, as in Eze. 30:3, illustrates this, though this key expression usually has the construct chain, as in Isa. 13:6.

In Dan. 8 the preposition לְ twice applies to the key noun *vision*, and both times, 17, 26 (second), *reference* is the most obvious nuance of its inherently possessive meaning. So Daniel's most natural sense is this: "The vision will be fulfilled, by and large, in the time of the end." This is also clear in 19, even though the noun *vision* does not appear in the Hebrew. For Gabriel's promise, "I am going to tell you what will happen", is precisely equivalent to his exposition, "the vision concerns...", 17.

This means that Daniel's 2,300 evenings-mornings are **eschatological** and therefore **literal**, whatever the precise import of the sacrilege and restitution of the sanctuary upon which they focus as the specific answer to the detailed question of 13. This finds additional, strong support in heaven's interpretation of the tyrant of 9-12 as a *single* individual, 23-25, whose supernatural demise, 25b, is detailed in terms which, despite their many challenges, are transparently *eschatological*, 11:36-12:3.

Likewise, this vision was sealed, leaving Daniel to ponder its meaning, 8:26f., though its forecast begins in his day.⁵ The clear inference is that, as in 12:4-10, its focus is largely on the time of the End.

¹ "Year-Day Principle—Part 1", *DARCOM 1*, 96.

² "Study of Daniel 8:9-14", 434-436.

³ *Ibid.*, 436.

⁴ Basically, this involves a distinct state of the initial, defined noun, often utilising a modified form. How, then, should the question of 13 be translated? NEB reads its temporality skilfully: "For how long will the period of this vision last? How long will the regular offering be suppressed, how long will impiety cause desolation, and both the Holy Place and the fairest of all lands be given over to be trodden down?" Hasel's subjectivity is nowhere more evident than in that, if the answer to the first sub-question is, 2,300 actual years, so also must each of the others be answered. Yet even Seventh-day Adventism's historicism places no such demand on the history books. My conclusion has support in the sharp focus of heaven's reply: "then the Holy Place shall emerge victorious."

⁵ Shea makes much in the DARCOM apologia of the fact that there are two Hebrew nouns for *vision* in 8. Yet it is the הַזֶּן (hāzōn), 1, 2, 13, 15, 17, which is sealed, 26b; the מַרְעָה (mar'eh), 15, 16, 26, which is enigmatic, 27. They may easily be shown to be synonyms.

Appendix B

Daniel's Lack of Comprehension - a Crucial Link Between Dan. 8 and 9?

Seventh-day Adventists insist that what Daniel did not grasp, Dan. 8:27, and what Gabriel clarified, 9:22, was the significance of those 2,300 evenings-mornings, 8:13f., especially when, they contend, *he specifically referred Daniel back to an earlier vision*, 9:23! However, despite first appearances, this notion faces several huge hurdles, quite apart from the full decade of delay since the vision of 8.²

First, they appear quite oblivious to the decisive fact that Daniel did not understand the latter vision because it was *sealed*, 8:26. The very point, 12:4-13, was to *prevent* comprehension until much later – perhaps well after even the mediating prophet's death! If he is denied cognition of virtually his *entire* book, embargo is by no means foreign to the *portion* bounding 8:26, even though this virtually aborts the angelic missions. This enigma is less unpalatable than the sheer folly of the 1844 heresy.

Secondly, observe Gabriel's precise diction: ““Consider (בִּין) (bîn) the message (דָּבָר) (dābār) and understand (בִּין) (bîn) the vision (מַרְעָה) (mar'eh)”, 9:23. It is no coincidence that the verb *bîn* is applied to both modes of revelation in the one verse. This suggests that the answer (*dābār*) just given by God, 23, is revealed in the vision (*mar'eh*) of Gabriel, whom he had likewise just despatched, 21. That is, *the noun mar'eh includes both Gabriel's appearance and his message* in this particular case.

Confirmation is close by. But first, one major query remains: Does Gabriel's message treat Daniel's deep concern in his prayer, 17:19? Certainly! Here *alone* in his entire book is mention of “the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”, 25. He has no cause at all to look back to the sealed vision of 8.

After 9:25 (שָׂכַל) (*sākal*)), the *understand* motif next appears in 10:1 – “a revelation (*dābār*) was given to Daniel... The understanding (*bîn*) of the message (*dābār*) came to him in a vision (*mar'eh*).” With every key word present, *the parallel with 9:23 is striking!* It surely follows that, if *mar'eh*, the medium for revealing the *dābār*, is current in 10, it is most likely so in 9, too, not a decade in time back in 8.

Gabriel's prefatory words to Daniel agree: “Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding (*bîn*) and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them... to explain... what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision (*hāzôn*) concerns a time yet to come”, 10:12-14. Notice the *close parallel with 9:21-23*. Clearly, Daniel had been seeking an answer for three weeks, 10:2f. But Gabriel had been delayed, 13. So *the prophet's vision in 9 is fully self-contained*, just like that of 10-12. It springs from no lack of understanding back in 8.

Again, for Seventh-day Adventists, the 490 years usually peter out very faintly in A.D. 34, as Paul turned to the gentiles, presumably. Yet *end* looks just like the Eschaton both times in 9:26, especially when it stems from the same Hebrew noun applied eight times in 8, 11, 12 to the latter.³ But here is a weightier reason. Even if the 490 years are Messianic after all, the very finality of 9:24 alerts careful readers that the End, not just Calvary, is in view. The time is allotted, not only “to atone for wickedness”, but also “to finish transgression, to put an end to sin,... to bring in everlasting righteousness”.

Before summing up, a rapid glance at the *understand* motif in Daniel's entire book is helpful. First, he has natural ability, 1:4,⁴ but prophetic insight (*bîn*) derives from Yahweh alone, 17b.⁵ This limitation is especially prominent in his own visions, for which he must seek enlightenment, as in 7:16.⁶ However, the clear inference is that, despite heaven's detailed instruction, 17:27, Daniel does not comprehend completely. For his deep distress, which motivated his quest, 15,⁷ has not been resolved, 28.⁸

Secondly and most importantly, even when tuition is initiated by heaven, Daniel never fully understands.⁹ This is clearest in his final vision, consisting in Gabriel's specific instruction, 10:4-14. For our seer must be satisfied with no more than broad understanding, 1; 12:8-10. Seventh-day Adventism is grossly errant, then, to insist that he *must* plumb the depth of 8. Indeed, there are remarkable parallels with his last vision, including the celestial query,¹⁰ the sealing¹¹ and his admission of ignorance.¹²

In brief, Seventh-day Adventism fails to discern that, beyond the decade of silence after Daniel's second vision, *heaven returns with audition alone. Symbol is passé.* There is no nexus between 8 and 9. Its 490-year forecast is as self-contained as its final vision. It owes *no* interpretive debt beyond its bounds. So the 2,300 evenings-mornings and the 490 years *close together* at the End.^{13, 14}

¹ E.g., Hasel, “Study of Daniel 8:9-14”, 437.

³ קָעַס (qēs), 8:17, 19; 11:27, 35, 40; 12:4, 9, 13.

⁵ Cf. Aramaic שֹׁכְלָתָנִי (śokletānū), 5:11, 12, 14.

⁷ Cf. 4:5 (Aram., 2), 19 (Aram., 16); 5:6, 9, 10.

⁹ Except, perhaps, the 490 years. The record is silent here.

¹¹ 8:26; 12:6, 9.

¹³ For the 2,300 evenings-mornings as End-time, see my Appendix A.

¹⁴ As both periods involve *literal* time, it equally follows that the 490 years contain the 2,300 evenings-mornings, not vice versa.

² For typical chronology see e.g. Baldwin, *op. cit.*, 155, 163f.

⁴ שָׂכַל (sākal) behind *aptitude*. Cf. 17a.

⁶ Aram. יַאֲשִׁיב (yaššîb). Cf. 2:45, בִּינָה (bînâ), 8:15, *bîn*, 10:12.

⁸ So e.g. J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (Dallas: Word, 1989), 172, 193.

¹⁰ 8:13; 12:6.

¹² 8:27; 12:8.

Technical Excursus

I have no wish to frighten any lay readers away with a cryptic, learned analysis. However, as one extremely significant detail which has occupied one Seventh-day Adventist scholar in a recent apologetic series generally designed for its laity may not receive its due technical scrutiny elsewhere, I oblige briefly here. Lay readers may ignore it with very little loss of appreciation of my more basic, accessible critique *supra*, especially when it includes a selective survey of this scholarly appendage.

G. W. Rice's Thesis

G. W. Rice tries to dismiss some common scholarly assumptions about the meaning of the noun *καταπέτασμα* in Heb. 6:19! Although he analyses the initial two alone, these assumptions² are that:

- the noun refers to the second curtain of the sanctuary setting off the Most Holy Place;
- *ἑσώτερον* in the same verse refers to the Most Holy Place itself;
- the Father's presence in the OT sanctuary was exclusively in the Most Holy Place;
- in Heb. 9 the expression *τὰ ἅγια* refers to the Most Holy Place.

In other words, among most commentators, it is merely "assumed that the sanctuary language and imagery of the book of Hebrews reflects (*sic*) the second-apartment and day-of-atonement ritual."³

Καταπέτασμα

Rice's first major point of interest emerges as he carefully ponders the detail of Heb. 9:3, where the inner veil of the earthly sanctuary is called the *δεύτερον καταπέτασμα*, "second veil." If the numerical adjective... is required to identify this veil, is it possible that the word *καταπέτασμα* was not reserved for the inner veil...?⁴

As for scholarship's common appeal to Lev. 16:2 as the source of the author's phrase in Heb. 6:19:

With regard to the LXX of Leviticus 16:2, its wording, *εἰς τὸ ἅγιον ἑσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος*, and that of Hebrews 6:19, *εἰς τὸ ἑσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος*, are indeed close...

However, the contexts of the two passages are entirely different. Leviticus 16 presents the Day of Atonement - a day of reckoning and judgment. Hebrews 6:13-20 deals with the Abrahamic covenant and the dispensing of its promises to Abraham's heirs. Are we to impose the context of... Leviticus 16 upon Hebrews 6 in an attempt to identify the veil of Hebrews 6:19? Is the fact that the earthly high priest passed within the inner veil during the ritual of the Day of Atonement sufficient reason to understand *καταπέτασμα* at Hebrews 6:19 as being the inner veil? Or should we allow *εἰς τὸ ἑσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος* to stand within its own context, free from the baggage of Leviticus 16?⁵

Rice now surveys the LXX's application of the relevant nouns to the sanctuary's three curtains:⁶

Certainly, *καταπέτασμα* is used almost exclusively for the inner veil (23 out of 25 times). But the same can be said for the courtyard veil (five out of six times)! *Καταπέτασμα* is also the majority choice for the first veil of the sanctuary as well (six out of eleven times).

In other words, out of the 42 references in the LXX to the three veils of the wilderness sanctuary, *καταπέτασμα* is used 34 times. Or put another way: In only eight instances among these 42 references to the sanctuary veils is *καταπέτασμα* not used by itself. Furthermore, in two additional instances *καταπέτασμα* is combined with *κάλυμμα*, thus leaving only six instances out of 42 where the word does not appear.⁷

Rice's conclusion to this section of his thesis is therefore extremely confident. Beyond all doubt, *καταπέτασμα* is the hands-down favorite, not only for the inner veil, but for the first veil and the courtyard veil as well... Certainly, Hebrew readers of the LXX were aware that *καταπέτασμα* was thus used overwhelmingly for all three veils, and it is undoubtedly for this reason that Hebrews 9:3 identifies which *καταπέτασμα* is being addressed by using the numerical adjective *δεύτερον*.⁸

Τὸ Ἑσώτερον

Rice has two key points here. First, he compares Lev. 16:2 and Heb. 6:19. To omit *τὸ ἅγιον* in the latter creates a different syntax from what is found in Leviticus 16:2. In *εἰς τὸ ἅγιον ἑσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος* in Leviticus 16:2, *τὸ ἅγιον* is a substantive adjective and object of the preposition *εἰς*. The word *ἑσώτερον* appears to be an improper preposition followed by the genitive of place, as is also true in Leviticus 16:12, 15. In *εἰς τὸ ἑσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος* at Hebrews 6:19, however, *τὸ ἑσώτερον* becomes a substantive and thus the object of the preposition *εἰς*; and the phrase *τοῦ καταπετάσματος* is, again, a genitive of place.⁹

Secondly, Rice argues that "(n)either should the comparative form of *ἑσώτερον* in Hebrews 6:19 be understood as identifying the 'inner shrine.'"¹⁰ And I have no problem whatever with that assertion.

Context

Rice's closing, more significant argument is that "Hebrews 6:19 has its own context, and we must allow the term 'veil' to stand on its own merits within that specific context."¹¹ Heb. 6:13-20 discusses dispensing the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant...: (1) God swore by Himself to fulfill His promises (vss. 13-16). (2) In order to convince the heirs of the covenant that He would fulfill His word, God interposed with an oath (vs. 17) (3) So by two unchangeable things we have strong encouragement to seize the hope... set before us (vs. 18). The hope enters "within the veil," where Jesus has gone on our behalf as priest after the order of Melchizedek (vss. 19-20). This context does not deal with the sanctuary per se... nor does it contain any reference to the Day of Atonement, as do the contexts of Leviticus 16:2 and Hebrews 9:3. At 6:19, καταπέτασμα is simply dropped into the discussion... simply to locate where Jesus is ministering - the place where the hope of the covenant people is centered and from whence the covenant blessings are dispensed. Within the broader context of the discussion in the entire book of Hebrews, it would seem that καταπέτασμα is here used metaphorically for the sanctuary from which the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are dispensed.¹²

Assessment

Rice's critique is probably the best possible against a major weakness in his Church's crucial dogma of a two-phase ministry of Christ our High Priest in the celestial temple. In most areas, however, it is far from persuasive. That wise old adage, the total is more than the sum of its parts, is just as precise in the key expression εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος in Heb. 6:19 as it is anywhere else.

Καταπέτασμα

Rice is correct that the LXX employs the noun καταπέτασμα for all three curtains of the OT sanctuary. However, the fact that the curtain of the Most Holy Place has the numerical adjective δεύτερον in Heb. 9:3 scarcely excludes it from consideration when the same noun occurs unqualified in 6:9.

For one thing, the former applies to the *earthly* sanctuary, the latter to the *heavenly*. It is begging the very question of this analysis to *surmise* that the latter has two distinct apartments. If heaven's temple comprises no more than a virtual Most Holy Place, no numeral whatever is required in 6:9.

This is well illustrated in 10:20, which Rice completely avoids, even though our author utilises the unqualified noun καταπέτασμα there as well. Here is an extremely striking metaphorical reference to Jesus' sacrificial body as a curtain at the entrance to τὰ ἅγια, which is interpreted elsewhere.¹³ What counts here is that this appears to be an interpretation of the deeper purport of the tearing in two of the καταπέτασμα of the earthly temple at the very moment he died on Calvary. Significantly, *every* other time this noun occurs outside the Book of Hebrews, it is one of the synoptists reporting this detail!¹⁴ It would be interesting to ask Rice if he is even slightly hesitant to endorse this even more detailed construal of this destruction of the temple's inner curtain: it is torn apart by an unseen hand,

throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah had dwelt. Here God had manifested His glory above the mercy seat. No one but the high priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the temple. He entered in once a year to make an atonement for the sins of the people. But lo, this veil is rent in twain. The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred.

All is terror and confusion. The priest is about to slay the victim; but the knife drops from his nerveless hand, and the lamb escapes. Type has met antitype in the death of God's Son. The great sacrifice has been made. The way into the holiest is laid open. A new and living way is prepared for all. No longer need sinful, sorrowing humanity await the coming of the high priest. Henceforth the Saviour was to officiate as priest and advocate in the heaven of heavens.¹⁵

Here, then, in Heb. 10:20, is the very climax even of a rather protracted Day-of-Atonement context in which this very noun καταπέτασμα is unqualified by any numeral, *precisely* as in Lev. 16:2, 12, 15.

For another, the cultic impact of the final curtain of the earthly tabernacle so far eclipsed that of all others that, if no numeral is employed, the former, not the latter, is *certainly* in mind unless the evidence points *decisively* elsewhere. The synoptists' unqualified reference to the temple curtain is one splendid case in point. So, equally, is the unnumbered reference to the curtain in Lev. 4:6, 17.

Therefore, even if God's celestial temple really does have two apartments, Rice's case is quite effete.

Ἐσώτερον

Rice is quite correct that in Lev. 16:2, as in 12, 15, ἐσώτερον is an improper preposition. To be precise, it is strictly an adjective, as in Acts 16:24, meaning *inner*. But Rice is greatly remiss not to have asked the question which is absolutely crucial to cogent exegesis: *Why does our brilliant author employ it?*¹⁶

It is striking that this word is *extremely* rare even in the LXX – just six occurrences, always as an improper preposition,¹⁷ normally with *καταπέτασμα*.¹⁸ In contrast, that ubiquitous proper preposition *ἐν*, which readily expresses the identical sense *within*, appears here the best part of 2,000 times!

Beyond all quibble, then, those extremely OT-literate Christians who first heard this sequence of spatial Greek words *ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπέτασματος* in Heb. 6:19 would have recalled that *unique* sequence which accounts for fully two-thirds of the meagre occurrences of *ἐσώτερον* in the *entire* OT.

Rice's thesis is shakier still in that the genitive of place is remarkably rare in the NT. It would have been as foreign to our author's flock as this sequence was familiar, even if they did comprehend the noun implied in any substantive usage of *ἐσώτερον*, with place defined by *τοῦ καταπέτασματος*.

We who read his epistle from afar must have overwhelming evidence, then, before we conclude that he employed *ἐσώτερον* with *any* other intent, especially when the more common, cognate adverb *ἔσω* may be used both prepositionally, as in Mk. 15:16, and adjectively, as in Ro. 7:22; Eph. 3:16.

Far and away the very strongest point of Rice's entire thesis is that the substantive *ἅγιον* is employed in Lev. 16:2 but not in Heb. 6:19. However, even this is effete in that *τό* need not be a neuter article. It can serve as well as a pronoun.¹⁹ The relevant portion of Heb. 6:19 may therefore be translated: "It enters that (which is) within the curtain", as A. T. Robertson does.²⁰ So also, very saliently, does H. Kiesler, Rice's own colleague as an apologist for Seventh-day Adventist sectarian dogma.²¹

In light of this option, Rice's greater problem is to explain why a strikingly rare *improper* preposition was selected when the very common, *proper* preposition *ἐν* would have sufficed absolutely.

It may be objected that our author is equally selective in 9:3, where he writes *μετά... τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα*. For this is the *single* instance in the entire NT where the preposition *μετά* is employed in a locative sense. However, this protest cannot stand. For one thing, this is a proper preposition utilised classically in the NT book which, more than any other, mimics classical Greek usage. For another, this construction bypasses the LXX, unlike that with *ἐσώτερον* in Heb. 6:19. If anything, then, this preposition in 9:3 renders the one in 6:19 even more remarkable than it would otherwise be.

Context

Rice invites vigorous criticism here, mainly for not allowing our author to teach him how to read his own book. One of its literary features is that it often makes a preliminary allusion to an important subject which it will expand later.²² For example, the theme of purgation from sin, 1:3, dominates the book from 8 onwards. And the theme of High Priest, first mentioned in 2:17, dominates it from 4:14.

Nor is our author's almost fleeting, somewhat implicit, reference to Christ's entering God's celestial sanctuary, 6:19f., anywhere nearly as restricted in import as Rice so confidently insists. For one thing, although Abraham *ἐπέτυχεν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας*, 6:15, the total fulfilment is still future: *ἐξεδέχετο... τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσιν πάλιν ἢς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ θεός*, 11:10, in heaven, 16. For another, the primary word in 6:18f. is *ἐλπίς*, which follows Christ through the curtain. As defined in 10f., it involves the believers' promised, eternal inheritance, 9:15, with a distinct end-time stress, 28. So it is unfulfilled, 10:36.

Christian hope is indeed future, 23, as implicit in the word itself. Strikingly, too, the verb *ἐλπίζειν*, cognate with *ἐλπίς*, prefaces all of 11 in 1. However, God's pledge has a present, pastoral perspective, too, as in 4:11.²³ This *better* promise, 8:6, centres in the new covenant, 8-13, guaranteeing a relational solution to the hoary problem of human sinfulness. This *better* covenant, 7:22, the object of this *better* hope, 19, is in our author's mind in 6:20 as he speaks of Jesus entering the curtain on our behalf as our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. For he mediates the new covenant so that converts may receive the promised inheritance, 9:15, from the very moment he enters *τὰ ἅγια*, 11f., 23-26.

As the following section will confirm, there can be no reasonable doubt whatever where Jesus entered upon his Ascension, or which portion of the earthly priestly ritual he fulfilled. What counts here is the crucial connexion between the present and future aspects of God's promise. Today the believer draws near to God, 7:19, 25, since he or she has a sympathetic, experienced High Priest in heaven, 4:14-16, who has cleansed our consciences, 10:19-22. And that relationship is crucial if one is to conquer the temptation to backslide, forfeiting the long-awaited, promised inheritance, 23-25, 35-39.

In brief, our author most definitely prepares his readers in 6:19f. for his eventual, painstaking elaboration of Christ's singular entry into God's heavenly tabernacle for his sustained, specific ministry.

Τὰ ἅγια

Although Rice ignores the popular option that in Heb. 9 this expression applies to the Most Holy Place, some attention is helpful. It first appears in 8:2 as a genitive defining Jesus our High Priest's sphere of service. By means of an exegetical *καί*, this equates with *τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς*, in con-

trast to the earthly tabernacle, just as in 9:24. This makes much more sense if τὰ ἅγια denotes the **entire** heavenly temple, not its Holy Place or Most Holy Place, if in fact this temple has more than a single “apartment”. Indeed, because it was heaven itself which Christ entered for us, 24f., there is **no** hint of **any** geographical specificity such as a Holy-Place or Most-Holy-Place ministry in 8:1f. Rather, the direction of the exegetical pressure is patent in the following conclusion, despite its slight excess:

If 8:2 stood alone, with its immediate context, the σκηνή could scarcely be understood as other than the heavenly sanctuary in which... Christ ministers in the immediate presence of God. Nor would anything in this passage encourage the reader to distinguish between the sanctuary and heaven itself.²⁴

Moreover, because this service follows Jesus’ session at his Father’s right hand, 8:1, the notion of his moving from one room to another, or beginning another phase of ministry, at *any* subsequent time is foreign to this whole book. On one hand, the ἕως ἄν of 1:13, the ἐκδεχόμενος of 10:13 and the dynamics of 9:23-28 all patently imply that, in heaven, he never leaves his Father’s side. Compare ἐφάπαξ in 9:12, with precisely the same singular, forceful nuance as in 7:27 and 10:10. Indeed, he entered heaven **specifically** ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 9:24 (emphasis supplied).

On the other, once the way into τὰ ἅγια is revealed, 9:8, it is not simply Jesus whom we approach freely and confidently, but God himself, 7:19, 25; 10:22, seated upon his supreme throne of grace, 4:16.

Seventh-day Adventism’s apologia must therefore parade its *unequivocal exegetical evidence* either that God reigned from the Holy Place of his celestial temple, then moved to its Most Holy Place just before Christ’s Return, or that our Lord added to his specifically “first-apartment” service a “second-apartment” ministry of pre-Advent judgment, whatever the architecture of God’s ethereal sanctuary. It is by no means good enough repetitiously to claim, for example, that, if our author employs Day of Atonement imagery in 6:19f., he “neither exhausts the meaning of the... ritual nor negates a two-apartment ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary”,²⁵ or that he “assumes... a bipartite sanctuary in the original as well as in the copy”,²⁶ or even lamely that “Hebrews does not directly address the question of the two-phased heavenly ministry of Christ.”²⁷ Seventh-day Adventists rightly seek an explicit “Thus says the Lord” from Sunday advocates, not mere inferences. Where is their dogma to be found if not in that very NT document which, above all others, details the High-Priestly ministry of Christ, in specifically typological terms at that? This sincere question is both wholly fair and testing.

The expression τὰ ἅγια in various forms occurs above all in 9, with patent typological overtones. In its only singular appearance in the entire book, τὸ... ἅγιον κοσμικόν, 1, it denotes the complete OT sanctuary detailed throughout the remainder of the passage. Uniquely, this is viewed as σκηνή... ἡ πρώτη... ἥτις λέγεται Ἅγια, 2, and μετὰ... τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα σκηνή ἡ λεγομένη Ἅγια Ἁγίων, 3.

Manifestly, these labels source in the LXX. For example, σκηνή repeatedly denotes the total sanctuary in the Pentateuch, especially Ex, Lev and Nu, although it is overwhelmingly qualified by τοῦ μαρτυρίου,²⁸ which is lacking in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Conversely, σκηνή parades no numeral in the LXX. Indeed, Ex. 26:6 asserts that ἔσται ἡ σκηνή μία. Compare this identical sentiment in 11.

Our author appears to be more faithful to his sources with the substantive, ἅγιον. For in Ex. 26:33 the sanctuary’s inner curtain is the partition ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἁγίου τῶν ἁγίων. Yet not till rather distantly in 3 Ki. 8:8 is the Holy Place labelled τὰ ἅγια, the room εἰς πρόσωπον τοῦ δαβιρ (transliterating כִּבְרִית), the inner sanctum of Solomon’s temple. Likewise, we notice no certain designation of this Most Holy Place as τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων until 3 Ki. 8:6, where it equates with τὸ δαβιρ.

With the OT σκηνή in view, like the Book of Hebrews, the LXX applies the bare, singular, substantive neuter adjective ἅγιον quite randomly to both the sanctuary’s Holy Place, as in Ex. 26:33, and its Most Holy Place, as in Lev. 16:2. However, some 30 relevant times, it refers transparently to the entire σκηνή, as in Ex. 30:13; 36:3; Lev. 4:6; Nu. 3:31. Indeed, in Nu. 4:16 ὅλη ἡ σκηνή and τὸ ἅγιον equate.

In its bare form, ἅγια likewise denotes the total sanctuary some 15 relevant times, as in Ex. 36:1, 8; Lev. 10:4; 19:30; Nu. 3:28; 8:19. Never does it designate either the Holy or Most Holy Place unequivocally.

So a careful exegete will not appeal to the LXX to claim that τὰ ἅγια denotes some Most Holy Place in heaven. If the LXX moves him most, he will opt for the total temple. If our author’s voice in Heb. 9:2 speaks loudest to him, his vote will favour what passes there for some mere Holy Place.

However, a careful exegete will suspend *all* judgment until our author is through. Having sketched the OT Holy and Most Holy Places, he surveys their specific services. The first, utilised every day, is still called the first tent, 8, while the second, entered just once a year, is still called the second (tent), 7.

Jesus’ High-priestly ministry clarifies, then, in the spiritual purport of the earthly cultus surveyed in 8-10. The major question is, What does our author mean by τὰ ἅγια and πρώτη σκηνή in 8? Obviously, τὰ ἅγια is heaven’s temple, but in what form? Setting the crucial, broad context of the rest of this chapter aside here, this depends upon whether he means by πρώτη σκηνή in 8 what he certainly means in 2 and 6. If close context is decisive, we gather that the Holy Place of the OT sanctuary signified

the temporary, deficient cultus of the first covenant, the subject opening this entire chapter, 1, while its Most Holy Place imaged heaven's τὰ ἅγια services under the new covenant, 15. Hence Seventh-day Adventist apologist A. P. Salom rightly views τὰ ἅγια in 8 as the complete heavenly sanctuary, albeit the heavenly temple "of which the inner compartment of the earthly sanctuary is symbolic."²⁹

However, the subject of covenant controlling the entire discussion of this chapter is introduced in 7:22, discussed from 8:6 to 10:18, and referred to in 10:29, 12:24 and 13:20. Therefore, our author's intent in this entire discussion with *both* ἡ σκηνή and τὰ ἅγια bears heavily upon his meaning in 9:8.

Simply stated, the noun σκηνή is applied with no numeral to the *whole* earthly sanctuary in 8:5; 9:21; 13:10. It is equally applied with no numeral to the heavenly sanctuary in 8:2 and 9:11. Quite possibly, then, our author glides from an atypical *spatial* nuance of πρώτη in 9:2, 6 to a *temporal* sense in 8. If so, he returns here equally to the intent that τὰ ἅγια has when he first introduces it in 8:2. As we have seen, he there applies it to the *whole* heavenly tabernacle. In light of his choice of the adjective ἀληθινή/ά in both 8:2 and 9:24, as well as repeating the sentiment in the former of οὐκ ἄνθρωπος in χειροποίητα in the latter (compare 9:11), it is equally obvious that ἅγια in 9:24 applies to the *entire* wilderness sanctuary. So ὀρίων, implicit in ἀληθινῶν, equates with the *entire* heavenly temple.

The inference is clear enough, then, that at 9:8-10 our author is about to expand on his covenant theme that the supersedure of the old, with its total sanctuary ritual, opened the way into the real ἅγια, the complete complex of the heavenly sanctuary. In 11:28 he describes the place where Jesus has entered to serve since his exaltation as ἡ μείζων καὶ τελειότερα σκηνή, 11, τὰ ἅγια, 12, and αὐτὸς ὁ οὐρανός, 24. In this company, the confident inference again is that τὰ ἅγια equates with the *entire* heavenly sanctuary, not merely some Holy Place or even Most Holy Place of that enigmatic entity.

Christ our Heavenly High Priest

However, our decisive author also clarifies his meaning with a very forceful contrast between the earthly high priest, 7, and our celestial High Priest, 11f., 14, significantly revisited and amplified in 24-27:

Earthly High Priest

ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς
[εἴσεστιν, cf. 6] – εἰσέρχεται
δευτέραν [σκηνήν] – τὰ ἅγια
ἅπαξ τοῦ ἑνιαυτοῦ – κατ' ἑνιαυτόν
οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος – τρώγων καὶ μόσξων
ὃ προσφέρει
ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων

Heavenly High Priest

Χριστὸς... ἀρχιερεὺς
εἰσηλθεν
τὰ ἅγια
ἐφάπαξ
διὰ... τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος
ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν
ἁμῶμον

It is extremely tempting, then, to draw from this pointed contrast that Christ entered the Most Holy Place of heaven's sanctuary at his ascension. This is entirely consistent with the transparent import of both 6:19f. and 10:19f., as above. However, our author equally intimates that he entered this temple merely as a unit. We therefore appear to have an interpretive dilemma upon our hapless hands, as witness the serious, unresolved conflict between Seventh-day Adventism and its persistent critics.

The strikingly simple solution to this "dilemma" is to realize that *the Book of Hebrews says nothing whatever about either distinct apartments in the celestial temple or separate ministries of Christ because there are neither two rooms in it nor two phases of his service.* For one thing, Seventh-day Adventism's entire typological apology swings by the perilously slender thread of its pure surmise that in Ex. 25:40 the Hebrew noun מִנְיַן denotes *a scale model or plan* of God's heavenly temple. In fact, it implies merely that Moses studied a "blueprint" of the *specific* structure he was to erect in the wilderness.

Indeed, the Book of Hebrews repeatedly warns that its typology involves striking *contrasts* more than facile *comparisons*. On one hand, compared with the earthly tabernacle, the man-made copy/shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, 8:5; 9:24, the latter is greater and more perfect, 9:11, since it was erected by God, not man, 8:1. So the covenant of the OT tabernacle was inferior to the new, 8:6-13, and neither its daily nor yearly sacrifices ever perfected its worshipers, 10:1-4, 11. For they rendered them merely outwardly clean, 9:9f., 13. In fact, they prevented the people's very access to God, 8.

On the other, Christ guarantees the better covenant, 7:22, with God's law written on our hearts, 8:8-12; 10:16-18. For his better, sinless, once-for-all self-sacrifice, 10:23; 9:14; 7:27; 9:25-27; 10:10, 12-14, gives us all direct access to God, 10:19-22, and cleanses our consciences, 9:14; 10:22. A survey of his High-priestly ministry fortifies this deduction, too, even in broad terms beyond this crucial core of sacrificial duty.

There is no point-by-point analogy between Christ our High Priest and the earthly priests, not even the high priest. The latter, like Aaron, 5:4, were Levites, 7:5; the former is in the order of Melchizedek, 5:6, from the tribe of Judah, 7:13f. The latter were both sinful, 5:2f., and mortal, 7:23; the former is both

sinless, 26:28, and immortal, 3, 16f., 21, 24f. True, it is tempting to infer what Seventh-day Adventists call Jesus' first phase of celestial service in the affirmation, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, 7:25. However, following the lead of Moses' Pentateuch, in which its author finds most of his typology,³⁰ any second-phase ministry of Christ in heaven's temple must entail *atonement*. The notion of judgment, to be considered in due course, is one which their denomination finds explicit elsewhere in the OT.

The single explicit reference to atonement in this entire epistle is this statement of one reason that Jesus became our High Priest: εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ, 2:17. Therefore, the pressing, geminate question is, *When* does he become our High Priest, and *when* does he effect atonement?

All that 2:17 reveals about Christ becoming our High Priest is that it was one goal of his incarnation. More instructive is 5:9f.: τελειωθείς ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου, προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ. Certainly, this evinces a nexus between his initiation and his sacrifice. He entered heaven, then, as our High Priest, 9:11. Yet it was also *in this rôle* that he offered himself once for all for our sins, 7:27; 9:14, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14. This permits the possibility that Jesus' atonement mentioned in 2:17 was *replete* in his all-sufficient sacrifice at Calvary.

The trouble is, *its infinitive verb ἰλάσκεσθαι is present not aorist tense*. To Ellingworth this is *process*, not *fruition*: "he 'became' high priest in order that he might *continuously* deal (ἰλάσκεσθαι present) with the people's sins."³¹ However, to most grammarians, "time is irrelevant or nonexistent" in the NT infinitive mood.³² So finality depends upon the three weightiest words ἁμαρτία, ἀναφέρειν and προσφέρειν.

The noun ἁμαρτία first occurs in the participial expression καθαρισμόν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος, 1:3, subject to its finite verb ἐκάθισεν. This clearly hints that objective purging of human sin was achieved *before* Jesus returned to his Father. Compare μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, 10:12. In 7:27 we see that he offered himself ἐφάπαξ ἑαυτὸν ἀνενέγκας. Likewise, in 9:26, ἅπαξ... εἰς ἀθέτησιν [τῆς] ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ πεφανέρωται. And in 28, ὁ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας. Manifestly again, Jesus' once-for-all self-sacrifice was the supreme solution to human sinfulness, with no delay or novel ministry at all, even in heaven.

Such consistent conclusions fortify in three assertions of God's definitive response to the Christ-event. In 8:12 the climactic promise of the new covenant, quoting Jer. 31:34, is this: ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι. Compare Heb. 10:17, with this definitive conclusion in 18: ὅπου... ὄφεις..., οὐκέτι προσφορά περὶ ἁμαρτίας. This hardly engenders any confidence whatever in Ellen White's assertion that the celestial records of human sins are not really wiped out till an investigative judgment starting in 1844!³³ The sole exception is the solemn caveat of 6:4-6 and 10:26:31 that, if deliberate sin becomes habitual again, οὐκέτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία, 10:26, ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας, 6:6. Yet even this says nothing explicit about ancient sins, long regretted, forsaken and forgiven, rolling back on the apostate. It reads quite adequately as applying to this *fresh* state of sinfulness. But even if ancient sins do roll back, this exception definitely does not verify the general principle of Seventh-day Adventism's cardinal dogma.

The verb ἀναφέρειν appears in 7:27 and 9:28, as quoted *supra*, and requires no further comment here. Likewise, the verb προσφέρειν is quoted *supra* in these two references, together with 10:12. With these should certainly be included this assurance of 9:14: Χριστὸς ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἁμωμον τῷ θεῷ.

In sum, the consistent message of the epistle to the Hebrews is that the death of Christ provided the *once-for-all, all-sufficient* solution to the problem of human sinfulness, permitting him to return in utter triumph to his Father's side. There is no hint whatever that any extra work was required of him in heaven to effect our forensic salvation. Therefore, when 2:17 speaks about making atonement, consistency demands that this atonement was effected *fully* and *finally* via Jesus' earthly self-sacrifice.

What, though, about the signal statement of 9:23: Ἀνάγκη οὖν τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις καθαρῖζεσθαι, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια κρείττοσιν θυσίαις παρὰ ταύτας? Is this verification, at long last, of Seventh-day Adventism's crucial dogma of cleansing heaven's sanctuary? By no means! The context confirms beyond reasonable doubt that God's earthly and heavenly tabernacles are being compared, but *specifically in terms of their dedication prior to employment*. There is no hint in either the antitype or its type that his sanctuary, long in use, is rid here of the aggregate sins of his people.

Judgment

For another, the epistle to the Hebrews treats future judgment, beginning with this solemn caution: πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας, 2:3. But nowhere does it offer the slightest suggestion of any pre-Advent review of heaven's record of the lives of all who have professed faith in God and/or Christ, as Seventh-day Adventists insist. Rather, on one hand its actual theology of divine scrutiny is this stern caveat: οὐκ ἔστιν κρίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ τετραχλισμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος, 4:13. That is, *God always knows our complete characters*.

On the other, *the promised judgment is repeatedly associated with Christ's Return*, not with any prior period. For example, the mindful balance of καθ' ὅσον... οὗτος καί, 9:27f., is a transparent invitation to equate κρίσις in 27 and ὀφθήσεται in 28. The κρίσις of 10:27 in context can refer to nothing except the Parousia, specifically mentioned in 37. Compare κριτὴ θεῶ πάντων, 12:23b, in its context of fiery retribution, 25-29. And with λόγον ἀποδώσοντες, 13:17, we are returned to our precise point of departure.

Indeed, the epistle's initial recipients were certainly warned to expect Christ's Return in *their* day, not beyond 1844. For beyond all bicker, they would have identified instantly with its *personal pastoral appeal* of 10:32-34. It follows that the conclusive οὖν of 35 builds a bridge to the pledge, ἔτι... μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἴξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει, 37. Of special relevance, apart from the forceful imminence of μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, is the selection of the extremely rare verb χρονίζειν. It was not employed simply because it was utilised in Hab. 2:3f., from which our author quoted freely. For it chimes with all but one of its only other occurrences, all four on Christ's lips, and always with reference to the delay in his Return.³⁴ Compare his recourse to the cognate noun χρόνος in an identical context in Mt. 25:19.

In brief, the author of the Book of Hebrews gives an *inspired* explication of the delay in the Parousia forecast by Christ. That delay was *all but over in his very day!* There is no room for any future period of scouring heaven's records, let alone almost two millennia of extremely protracted delay until 1844!

Conclusion

Rice has consistently failed to disprove that Heb. 6:19f. confirms that Jesus Christ our great High Priest entered the heavenly analogy of the Most Holy Place in returning to his Father. It is beyond all quibble that the epistle's pristine recipients would immediately have recognised εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, its crucial locative expression, as a citation from the LXX with completely *exclusive* reference to the sanctuary's Most Holy Place. Nor can Rice fruitfully appeal to either the immediate context or the primary expression τὰ ἅγια, which proffer no hint whatever of any mere Holy Place.

Likewise, this is the consistent gist of the rest of the epistle. Not even its caveat of judgment allows 1844 any foothold, for Jesus' Return was looming in its author's day. That is, *the only NT book treating the High-priestly service of the ascended Jesus at any length gives Seventh-day Adventism no support whatever for its key dogma*, crucial to its very existence, of a pre-Advent judgment launched in 1844.

Rather, he began his permanent, *singular* ministry in whatever counts as God's *Most* Holy Place.

¹ "Hebrews 6:19: Analysis of some Assumptions Concerning *Katapetasma*", *DARCOM 4*, 229-234.

² *Ibid.*, 229.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 230. I have taken the liberty of converting his transliteration back to the Greek and do so throughout. This merely removes a lay convenience, somewhat to facilitate scholarly perusal.

⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. 233.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 231f.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.* His argument occupies 230f. and fn. Yet Rice fails to mention that A. T. Robertson does not specifically include ἐσώτερος in discussing comparative adjectives. Nor does he mention that he reads the relevant clause in Heb. 6:19 as "[t]hat which is within the veil... The Holy of Holies," *Word Pictures in the New Testament V* (Grand Rapids, 1960), 379.

¹¹ *Art. cit.*, 233.

¹² *Ibid.*, 233f.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Mt. 27:51; Mk. 15:38; Lu. 23:45.

¹⁵ Ellen White, DA 757. I am well aware of the debate over the referent of σῶρις in Heb. 10:20, as witness W. G. Johnsson's preference ὁδός, "The Heavenly Sanctuary - Figurative or Real?", *DARCOM 4*, 48f., while his colleague H. Kiesler favours καταπέτασμα, "An Exegesis of Selected Passages", *DARCOM 4*, 71. However, this in no way affects recognising καταπέτασμα as the innermost curtain.

¹⁶ In many ways he is Paul's intellectual equal. But if anything, he is the apostle's verbal master, deserving respect in his *every* word.

¹⁷ Ex. 26:33; Lev. 16:2, 12, 15; 1 Sam. 24:4; Isa. 22:11.

¹⁸ In all four pentateuchal references above.

¹⁹ Cf. ὁ δὲ (οὐκ) ἀπεκρίθη, Mt. 15:23; Jn. 5:11 and οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐπορεύοντο, Acts 5:41.

²⁰ See n. 10.

²¹ *Art. cit.*, 75.

²² Our author's complex structure is very adequately surveyed by W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8* (Dallas: Word Books, 1991), lxxxiv-xcviii.

²³ Our author's now-but-not-yet theology is frequent, but cannot be covered here, even in summary.

²⁴ P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: a Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, 1993), 403.

²⁵ "Daniel and Revelation Committee Report", *DARCOM 4*, 7. In the same volume, cf. A. P. Salom, "Sanctuary Theology", 210.

²⁶ R. M. Davidson, "Typology in the Book of Hebrews", *DARCOM 4*, 182.

²⁷ Salom, *art. cit.*, 217, cf. 215.

²⁸ Almost 60% of a total of more than 250, peaking at all but 90% in Lev's count of 50.

²⁹ "Ta Hagia in the Epistle to the Hebrews", *DARCOM 4*, 226. Cf. his logic: ἡ πρώτη σκηνή "has just been used twice (vss. 2, 6) to describe the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. It is only reasonable that it should be used in the same way in verse 8", "Sanctuary Theology", 216. However, he immediately asserts that the "outer apartment of the earthly sanctuary is representative of the whole earthly sanctuary as the system of limited access."

³⁰ This should be viewed against the broader backdrop of his overall employment of the OT, surveyed adequately by Lane, *op. cit.*, cxii-cxxiv. E.g., he draws his Christology mostly from the Psalter, as in 1:5, 8-13; 2:12; 5:5f.; 7:17, 21; 10:5-7.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, 186. Cf. 188.

³² D. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1996), 498. I am well aware of the important debate over tense and aspect, but this is well beyond the bounds of this brief study.

³³ See my main essay, 8f.

³⁴ Mt. 24:48; 25:5; Lu. 12:45. Moreover, Lu. 1:21 proves that this verb harbours no inherent nuance whatever of millennia of delay.