

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 utilizes 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 πόλιν ἧς 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 Ἀγίων, 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 קִבְיָה), 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 superseding 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 ἐνιαυτοῦ – κατ' ἐνιαυτόν
οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος – τρώγων καὶ μόσξων
ὃ προσφέρει
ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἁγνοημάτων

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... ὄψεσιν..., 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 χροníσει, 37. Of special relevance, apart from the forceful imminence of μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, is the selection of the extremely rare verb χροníζειν. 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 σῶρος in Heb. 10:20, as witness W. G. Johnsson's preference ὀδός, "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.