

## THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

---

*Seventh Day Adventism* arose out of a misunderstanding of this subject as we shall presently see. In the year 1844 AD, thousands of people of many denominations expected the Lord Jesus Christ to return to this earth for his second Advent. Their expectation was built on a mistaken calculation of prophetic time.

The particular prophecy concerned was that of Dan 8 where we read of a certain power, called *the "little horn"* which was to arise out of one of the four divisions of Alexander the Great's kingdom, after his demise in 321 BC. This power was to grow 'exceeding great' and vv 9-14 say that 'by him the daily sacrifice was taken away and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.' When the question was asked (13) 'How long shall be the vision ... to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?' the answer came: 'Unto 2300 days: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.'

Without going into a lengthy discussion of this prophecy, let me just say that the termination of the 2300 days could not possibly have been 1844. Alexander, as we have already noted, died in 321 AD and after his death, the Grecian kingdom was divided into four sections, each headed by one of Alexander's generals. In v. 9 we read 'Out of one of them came forth a little horn' and again (23-4) 'In the latter time of their kingdom ... a king of

fierce countenance shall stand up ... and in astonishing ways he shall bring ruin to ... the mighty and also to the holy people.' This was the power which was to 'give' both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot for 2300 days.

When 1844 AD passed by with no expected second Advent of our Lord, most of the people concerned acknowledged their mistake. A certain few however, who afterwards organised themselves as Seventh Day Adventists, continued to believe that the date 1844 was correct, but the expected event was misapprehended. They finally came to believe that the sanctuary mentioned in the prophecy was the heavenly sanctuary indicated in Heb 8.1-2 and Heb 9.11.

By an extreme literalism of interpretation, they concluded that in heaven there was a sanctuary exactly like its type on earth and that its services were the same. They then believed Jesus, at his ascension, went into the first apartment where He remained until 1844, at which time He passed through the veil into the second apartment — the holiest of all — into the immediate presence of God. Had they read more carefully in the book of Hebrews, they would have seen that the earthly sanctuary was designed to teach spiritual truths. (10.19-22) *'Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the HOLIEST by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil (his flesh,) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of*

faith.' Here plainly is shown that *the 'vail'* represented the incarnate Christ Jesus — so we must conclude that the whole earthly sanctuary also represented some part of his work of salvation for sinful man.

On this mistaken idea of the heavenly sanctuary SDAs built their peculiar beliefs. The notion that Jesus did not immediately enter into the very presence of God at his ascension has brought confusion by the fact that it contradicts plain statements elsewhere in the scriptures. For instance, Heb 1.1-3 states unequivocally that God's son 'when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.' Again, (in Heb 6.18-20) 'We have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the vail: whither the forerunner IS for us entered, even Jesus made a high priest forever, after the order of *Melchizedek.*' *So when the book of Hebrews was first written, Jesus had already entered the 'holiest' within the vail unto the throne of God.* So the writer continues 'Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.' (4.16)

What Seventh Day Adventists deny — ie the entrance of our Lord at his ascension, into the most Holy place in the heavenly sanctuary — and

on which denial they built their 'special message', is the very heart of the gospel.

It is that goal our Saviour's human life, death, resurrection and ascension were to accomplish, by means of which redeemed mankind was reunited to God. Sin had separated man from God but *Jesus by his sacrificial and substitutionary death reconciled man to God and led the way back into the divine presence at the throne of grace.*

SDAs teach rightly that the Holy Shekinah above the mercy seat in the second apartment of the earthly sanctuary represented the throne and presence of God. This earthly representation was but a shadow of the reality in heaven. Earthly material things were 'types' of spiritual realities, 'shadows' of the true (Heb 8.4-5). 'Priests ... offer gifts according to the law; who serve the example and shadow of heavenly things'; again in Heb 10.1 'For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices ... make their worshippers *perfect.*' So christians in apostolic days could enter by faith that most holy place where God is! No one had to wait till 1844 for their mediator and Advocate to enter that sacred presence as their forerunner. So the SDA theory must perforce be discredited.

As Christ is our High Priest, (Heb 8.1) He is the 'Antitype' of Aaron, High Priest in the earthly sanctuary. What Aaron did once a year on the

great day of Atonement, Jesus did once for all when He shed his blood on the sacrificial altar at Calvary, *then entering 'into the holiest' in heaven itself 'having obtained eternal redemption for us.'*

Cf Heb 9.11, 24 'Christ having arrived as High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, (not of this building,) ... by his own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having 'obtained eternal redemption for us ... for Christ is not entered into 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!'

The 'now' is *the NOW of the Apostles' days*, long before 1844. So the gulf between the sinner and God had been bridged then. In Christ we may come back to the Father for 'He (Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.'

1 Jo 2.2 'Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new; and all things are of God who has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ.'

This was the gospel preached by the apostles – the **everlasting gospel** – the only one this world will ever know (Gal 1.8). Our Saviour, 'when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' (Heb 1.3) Our

forerunner entered upon his mediatorial work at his ascension, *sharing the throne of the universe with his Father as King of kings and Lord of lords* ... henceforth expecting his enemies to be made his footstool (Heb 10.12-3). No change of status occurred to his position on the throne in 1844, nor will there be at any other time until all his enemies are subdued.

What then can we say of the SDA theory which denies this truth? The decision is yours! Do you seek truth above all else or will you turn from it to retain an unscriptural theory? 'In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' (Ma 15.9 – also 1 Tim 4.1).

Sad to say, there are other groups of people in this our day who similarly cling to mistaken doctrines rather than break away from the majority. Only by gathering together all the information the Bible contains on a particular subject and comparing it with the whole tenor of the scriptures, may we be sure that we are not being misled for there are many theories extant in the church today which will not stand up to such a thorough test. Ps 77.13 says '*Thy way, oh God, is in the Sanctuary.*' Let us then learn all we can from the clear exposition of this subject in the book of Hebrews, for therein is revealed our Christian Hope.

---

WEGWEISER RESEARCH LIBRARY  
and  
INFORMATION SERVICE,  
Bo-Bo Valley, via Ulong,  
N.S.W. 2450. AUSTRALIA