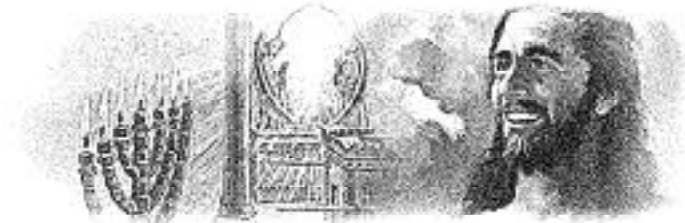


# Jesus and the Sanctuary



## Sabbath Afternoon

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Heb. 8:2; 9:1-3, 8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11.

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

**KEY THOUGHT:** In the book of Hebrews, the author puts Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary.

**THE SUBJECT OF THE SANCTUARY** was the key that unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and harmonious, showing that God's hand had directed the great advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to light the position and work of his people.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 423. The sanctuary in heaven plays a vital role in Adventist self-understanding. Various questions have arisen regarding our interpretation of Hebrews. This week we'll take a look at the heavenly sanctuary, focusing also on some issues that have confronted the church.

**THE WEEK AT A GLANCE:** What is typology? How do the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries correspond? Does the book of Hebrews teach that Christ entered “the Most Holy Place” after His ascension? Is the emphasis in Hebrews on which apartment Jesus entered or upon the fact that He is in the heavenly sanctuary ministering in our behalf?

\*Please study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 23.

## SANCTUARY ON EARTH, SANCTUARY IN HEAVEN.

As do other books of the Bible, Hebrews uses typology. In typology a so-called “type” is a real person, event, or institution, designed and preordained by God, to prefigure and predict a greater reality, the “antitype.” In other words, types are like symbols of things greater than the symbol itself (as a national flag is only a symbol for something greater than itself). The Hebrew Bible is filled with types, many finding their fulfillment in Jesus Himself, who is greater than all that prefigured Him.

**Which words are used in Hebrews 8:5 (last clause) and 9:24 to describe the correspondence between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries? How are the sanctuaries related to each other?**

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The translated words in these two verses *pattern* and *copy* come from the Greek words *typos* and *antitypos*. The earthly sanctuary is compared to the heavenly one. It is a copy of the heavenly. Unlike other biblical books, in Hebrews the original is called *typos* (the type, in this case, is the heavenly sanctuary) and the counterpart, *antitypos* (antitype, in this case, is the earthly). This reversal does not change the meaning of typology; one is a symbol of something greater—in this case, the earthly sanctuary is a shadow, a mere copy, of the real one in heaven.

**Hebrews 8:5 quotes Exodus 25:40. What pattern was Moses to follow in building the earthly sanctuary?**

In Hebrews 8:5, the earthly sanctuary is deemed a “shadow” (*skia* in the Greek) of the heavenly sanctuary. In Hebrews 9:9, the earthly sanctuary and its services were called a “figure” or a “symbol” (from the Greek word that also means “parable”) of the heavenly. In Hebrews 9:23, the earthly services were called a *hupodeigma* (pattern, copy) of the heavenly sanctuary. In each case, the point is the same: The earthly sanctuary is merely a symbol of something greater; that is, the heavenly sanctuary.

**Why do you think the author of Hebrews stressed the reality of the heavenly sanctuary? Why is the issue of the reality of the heavenly sanctuary important to us as Seventh-day Adventists?**

**“THE HOLIES” IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH: PART 1.**

Even the most cursory reading of Hebrews shows two points: the reality of the heavenly sanctuary and the importance of the heavenly sanctuary and the ministry there. Paul summed up the first seven chapters with these words: “Now of the things which we have spoken *this is the sum*: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:1, 2, emphasis supplied).

This is the sum: Jesus is our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

The most common phrase used in Hebrews for the sanctuary both in heaven and on earth comes from the Greek term, *ta hagia*, meaning “the holies,” “the holy places,” “the holy things.” Another form of the phrase is *hagia hagion* (“the holy of holies”), used exclusively for “the Most Holy Place” alone (Heb. 9:3).

***Ta hagia* (a plural sometimes appearing in the singular) appears in Hebrews 8:2; 9:1, 2, 3, 8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; and 13:11; where it’s translated as “sanctuary,” “holy place,” “most holy place,” “holy places,” and “holiest.” Because some different translations translate the same word in the same text differently (and sometimes in contradiction to each other), ask yourself this question as you read each verse: Judging from the context, is the verse talking about “the Holy Place,” “the Most Holy Place,” or the entire sanctuary?**

In some places, the meaning is very obvious. In Hebrews 8:2 and 9:1, for instance, the word *sanctuary* in both texts refers to the entire sanctuary.

In Hebrews 9:2, the author describes the contents of the first apartment, which he calls “the sanctuary.” The context shows that he is talking about the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary, what is known as “the Holy Place.”

In Hebrews 9:3, the phrase translated “Holiest of all” in the KJV (*hagia hagion*) means the second apartment, “the Most Holy Place” alone. Interestingly enough, this phrase, which clearly means “the Most Holy Place,” is never used again in Hebrews in any reference to Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Thus, one logical question arises: If Hebrews meant to teach that Christ at His ascension entered into “the Most Holy Place,” why does the book never again employ the phrase that without ambiguity refers exclusively to “the Most Holy Place”?

**“THE HOLIES” IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH: PART 2.**

Yesterday we looked at a few verses (Heb. 8:2; 9:1, 2, 3) in Hebrews, regarding the sanctuary. Today we’ll look at a few more, remembering this question: Does the context teach that the verse is talking about “the Holy Place,” “the Most Holy Place,” or, simply, the sanctuary as a whole?

In Hebrews 9:1-7, the author describes the earthly sanctuary and its services, both the daily and the yearly, which were only a type, a shadow, of the heavenly sanctuary and its services. Then, in verse 8, he says that the way into “the holiest” didn’t happen while the earthly sanctuary was still standing. The RSV translates the verse to mean that the way into “the sanctuary” didn’t happen while the earthly was still standing. When you look at what the author is contrasting—that is, the earthly service to the heavenly—he is showing us that although the earthly sanctuary had a function in a certain time frame, a way was made into the “holies”; that is, into the heavenly sanctuary, through the work of Jesus Christ. He’s not contrasting compartments of the sanctuary; he’s contrasting sanctuaries, the earthly to the heavenly.

**Read Hebrews 9:9, 10. What things does he list as part of the earthly sanctuary service?**

After talking about the earthly-sanctuary ritual, the author in verses 11 and 12 again shifts his gaze heavenward to a “greater and more perfect tabernacle” (*skene*, “tent” in the Greek), which is the entire heavenly sanctuary. Then, in verse 12, he says that “neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” It’s clear that tabernacle (*skene*) in verse 11 and “holies” or “holy place” in verse 12 are talking about the same thing; that is, the entire sanctuary (in Heb. 8:1, 2 these Greek words are used in the same parallel fashion). Again, the context shows that the issue here isn’t which room Jesus entered into but that He is our great High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

**Read Hebrews 9:24 and 10:19 in their respective contexts. What is the author telling us there? What hope does he give us regarding Jesus in heaven?**

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**“THE HOLIES” IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH: CONCLUSION.**

Read Hebrews 9:24-28. Keeping in mind the context of Hebrews, what is the author saying here? What is the main point? Is it the sanctuary itself, or the nature of His sacrificial death?

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There’s no question that verse 25 deals with the Day of Atonement, and there’s no question that the High Priest went into the “Most Holy Place” on that day (see Lev. 16:15). Some try to insist, however, that the use of *ta hagia* here (translated “holy place” in the KJV) proves that it means “the Most Holy Place.”

However, “sanctuary” is a better translation here, because, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest ministered in *both* apartments. His work was not restricted to the second apartment. “Because the whole sanctuary is involved in these services, ‘sanctuary’ is to be preferred as the translation.”—Alwyn P. Salom, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews* (Silver Spring, Md.: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), p. 227.

**Read Exodus 30:10, where “once in a year” (a clear reference to the Day of Atonement; see also Lev. 16:30) Aaron, the high priest, sprinkled blood on the horns of the altar in the Most Holy Place. Some scholars see Leviticus 16:16-19 as a reference to the priest’s work in the first apartment, as depicted in Exodus 30:10. (See the Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary, *Exodus* [Philadelphia, 1991], p. 195; see also *Leviticus*, p. 105. See also Word Biblical Commentary, *Exodus* [Waco, Tex., 1987], p. 399.) Study the texts until you can see, clearly, that even on the Day of Atonement, the high priest ministered blood in the entire sanctuary.**

The texts we looked at are important, because some people have challenged our interpretation of Christ’s two-apartment, two-phased ministry in heaven. By dogmatically asserting that some of the verses we looked at put Christ, after His ascension to heaven, in “the Most Holy Place” of the heavenly sanctuary, critics claim that these verses (among others) nullify our sanctuary doctrine, particularly 1844, the time when we believe Christ entered “the Most Holy Place” of the heavenly sanctuary. Hebrews, though, is simply not addressing the question of which apartment. Instead, the point is that He is there in heaven in our behalf.

**THE CHARACTER OF THE EARTHLY AND THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARIES.**

As we’ve seen, the great issue in the book of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ’s heavenly ministry as compared to the earthly-sanctuary service. With this context in mind, how is the character of the earthly sanctuary, even sometimes indirectly, described in the following texts?

Heb. 8:2; 9:24 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 9:1 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 9:11, 12 \_\_\_\_\_

The heavenly sanctuary is the true sanctuary. That does not mean the earthly was a false one; on the contrary, it had been instituted by God. Nevertheless, three times it is stressed that the earthly sanctuary was made with hands. Although its establishment was ordered by God, it was made by humans, sinners. The heavenly surpasses the earthly by far, because it was built by the Lord.

The function of the earthly was limited in efficiency, as well as in time. Its service was not able to solve the sin problem. The shedding of blood was without lasting effect. The human conscience was not really cleansed. Although real, it was just a copy of the genuine sanctuary and its service. Only the blood of Jesus and His ministry as High Priest make a real and lasting difference.

However, the apostle does not ridicule the old sanctuary, although he points out its serious limitations, even if it served its purpose at the time it was used.

**What is the basic intention of the earthly sanctuary in the Old Testament? Exod. 25:22; 29:43-46.**

The wilderness tabernacle was built so that God might dwell among His people. Yet, even then, sin blocked access to God. The good news of Hebrews is that Jesus has opened the way back to our Father. Through Him we have access to the very presence of God, because we are covered in His perfect righteousness. Boldly and yet reverently, we approach Him because Jesus, through His death and ministry, has paved the way.

**If the Old Testament service really couldn’t solve the sin problem, why was it instituted to begin with?**

## FURTHER STUDY:

Though a lot of debate exists regarding *ta hagia*, it seems clear that in Hebrews it means “the sanctuary” as a whole. 1. Look at Hebrews 8:2, the first time that *ta hagia* appears in Hebrews. Notice how it is used. “A minister of the sanctuary [*ta hagia*], and of the true tabernacle [*skene*], which the Lord pitched, and not man.” The text clearly and unambiguously parallels *ta hagia* with *skene*, and *skene* means the “tabernacle,” the entire sanctuary. Thus, right from the start, we are given a definition of *ta hagia*.

2. Again, Hebrews is contrasting the earthly to the heavenly sanctuary, not which apartment Christ entered in heaven. Therefore, *ta hagia*, understood as “sanctuary,” makes the most sense.

3. Recent studies on *ta hagia* in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible have shown that when *ta hagia* is used in the context of the sanctuary it consistently designates the entire sanctuary.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. William Johnsson, a Hebrews scholar, has this to say about some of the modern translations of Hebrews: “This calls for a word about the New International Version. I think it is, in general, an excellent translation, but I disagree with its approach in Hebrews. The translators . . . render *ta hagia* as ‘Most Holy Place. . .’ In my judgment they would have been fairer with the reader by translating the uncertain references by the more neutral ‘sanctuary.’ The upshot is that all students of Hebrews, and especially Adventists, need to be discriminating and ready to challenge the New International Version wherever they find ‘Most Holy Place.’”—William Johnsson, *Hebrews* (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 1994), pp. 149, 150. Discuss the implications of what Dr. Johnsson has written.
2. The sanctuary is mentioned also in Hebrews 10:19 and 13:10, 11. What is the message for us in these verses, including their respective contexts?

**SUMMARY:** The book of Hebrews, in numerous places, contrasts the earthly-sanctuary service with its better counterpart, that of Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. The issue in Hebrews is not which apartment Jesus entered; the issue, instead, is that He is our great High Priest, through whom we have direct access to the Lord of the universe.



## Wrestling With God

J. H. Zachary

One of Gabriela’s earliest memories was of her grandfather sitting beside a wood stove reading his Bible. Although he was a lay leader of the national church, some things he read in the Bible led him and Grandmother to join a charismatic church.

Gabriela’s grandmother urged Gabriela to join their church and avoid eternal torture in hell. Gabriela was greatly troubled by mental pictures of hell. She wondered how a loving God could permit sinners to suffer forever. Gabriela began to pray for guidance to find the true church.

In time Gabriela married, but she continued searching for truth. She read literature from many churches regarding what happens after death. One day an Adventist friend invited her to attend religious meetings. To her surprise, Gabriela learned that her mother was attending the meetings. Excitedly, she told Gabriela, “This pastor is teaching the truth about the Bible.” Gabriela and her husband attended the entire series.

When the meetings ended Gabriela and her husband joined a Bible study group and soon began attending the Adventist church. Months later they joined the church.

But two years later tragedy struck when their baby died. Relatives told them, “You lost your child because God is angry with you.” Confused, Gabriela and her husband stopped attending any church.

For five years the couple wandered spiritually. Then one day a new Adventist pastor visited them. Gabriela refused his invitation to return to the Lord. But her strong rejection was met by kindness, patience, and love. Gabriela still felt the emptiness and hopelessness she had endured for the last five years, but still she refused the pastor’s invitations.

Then she fell seriously ill and spent many weeks in the hospital in great pain. After a difficult surgery, she returned home. Still in great pain, Gabriela poured out her heart to God. “Dear Lord, You can let me go to sleep now if You wish, but if You allow me to live, I want to serve You the rest of my life.” God gave her a complete recovery.

Today Gabriela thanks God for the sorrow that has come into her life. She is determined that nothing will come between herself and God again. Recently Gabriela, her husband, and her mother were rebaptized. “As long as we live we will be faithful to God and help others to come to know God,” she said. Gabriela and her husband are busy giving Bible studies to people in preparation for evangelistic meetings in their Romanian town.

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