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# The Sanctuary of Hebrews 8-10

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Southern Adventist University

School of Religion

The Sanctuary of Hebrews 8-10

Paper

Presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the course  
RELT 495-A Directed Studies

by

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## **Introduction**

When many approach study of the Bible, there is a tendency to avoid books and literary genres that are apparently difficult to comprehend or painful to endure. Many are often perplexed by books, such as Romans, that function as exposés of abstruse theological mysteries, because of complicated linguistic features or complex ideas. Other books, such as the Isaiah or Ecclesiastes, are often difficult to bare because of the perceived hollow repetition of the poetry or wisdom they contain. Still others encounter difficulty in understanding the value of the often violent stories contained within Old Testament (OT) narratives. Readers find the hundreds of dietary, ceremonial, and civil laws contained within Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy—outlining Hebrew society down to the minutest of points—to be tedious. Having encountered these types of biblical literature that may seem inapplicable, distasteful, or far-removed, many traumatized readers have found themselves quickly retreating to the “safety” of the Gospels wherein they find an answering chord in the life of the Savior. Within these Gospel narratives, which form the inspired historical account of the life of Jesus Christ, the reader enjoys learning about His birth, life, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. People find inspiration in the compassion Jesus poured upon the disease-laden; the supremacy He demonstrated over demons ripped from their captives; the self-sacrifice He revealed in His dying anguish; and the victory He demonstrated in His resurrection. We have a short but detailed account of but a few years of the life of this Man who changed the course of human history, and it is with this history that people are most acquainted.

Unfortunately, many, having focused upon the earthly life and ministry of Jesus Christ, have failed to educate themselves concerning the work in which Jesus has been engaged since His ascension from Earth. They have explored the work Jesus accomplished on Calvary but have

not considered His continued ministry in Heaven. Unfortunately, however, “[s]ome dangers do arise when we separate Jesus’ sacrificial death on earth from the presentation of that sacrifice in heaven.”<sup>1</sup> After Jesus had completed His excruciating work of the Cross, He had to present that blood before the Father, a presentation that was “the ultimate priestly act.”<sup>2</sup> Jesus “passed through the heavens” to begin His work as high priest; therefore, it is in Heaven that Jesus has engaged in the next phase of the plan of salvation (Heb 4:14). However, Jesus did not ascend into some ambiguous part of Heaven or to Heaven in a spiritual sense, but into a true heavenly Sanctuary,<sup>3</sup> “the true Tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (8:2).<sup>4</sup> It is to the heavenly Sanctuary that we must look to understand what Jesus has been doing in the plan of salvation since He closed His earthly work.

Though one can clearly see that Jesus ascended to Heaven to commence in His high priestly ministry, the problem arises concerning *where* and *when* in the Sanctuary He has been working: this is no trivial matter. Some scholars suggest that the mentioning the two apartments of the Sanctuary in Hebrews provides evidence that Jesus entered the Most Holy Place (MHP) upon His ascension. This presents a major conundrum for Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) theology, which maintains that Jesus entered into the Holy Place (HP) upon His ascension and shifted into the MHP in 1844. Through this paper, one will be able to see that the theological

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1. George C. Fuller, “The Life of Jesus, after the Ascension (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:9-11),” *The Westminster Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (1994): 393. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost* (accessed January 25, 2017).

2. *Ibid.*, 393.

3. In the interest of succinctness, henceforth, “Sanctuary” with a capital “S” will refer to the heavenly Sanctuary or to the theology of the Sanctuary, and “sanctuary” with a lowercase “s” will refer to the earthly sanctuary.

4. All Scriptures are from the New King James Version (NKJV).

concerns of the two-apartment Sanctuary message of Hebrews 8- has wide-ranging theological implications, especially in soteriology. To address this issue of Jesus' location and work in the Sanctuary, one should turn to Hebrews, which, above all other New Testament writings, presents the clearest picture of Jesus functioning as High Priest.<sup>5</sup> Whereas other books that mention the Sanctuary provide "hints" or "allusive imagery" of Jesus' priesthood, Jesus functioning as High Priest in the heavenly Sanctuary is a "dominant idea" of Hebrews.<sup>6</sup> Mainly in chapters 8-10 will one find answers concerning Jesus' Sanctuary work. However, though these chapters would provide the answers to the question at hand, there is much debate and division concerning the correct translation of certain words and concepts in these chapters

The purpose of this paper is: 1) to analyze the theological issues of Hebrews 8-10 concerning the nature of Jesus' high priestly ministry in the Sanctuary; and 2) to determine the implications of these findings on present-day theology and praxis for Christians, generally, and Seventh-day Adventist (SDAs), specifically. To accomplish these two ends, this paper's objectives are: a) to present some basics of the history of Desmond Ford Crisis and his theology; b) to analyze the resurgence of Ford's theology; and c) to exegete Hebrews 8-10, providing an overview of the book's historical context, literary context, and themes.

The correct understanding of these texts has enormous implications especially for SDA theology, a major tenet of whose faith is the sanctuary message. "The one distinctive, separative, structural truth—the sole doctrinal teach that identifies Seventh-day Adventist apart from all

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5. William G. Johnsson, *Daniel and Revelation Committee Series*, vol. 4, *Issues in the book of Hebrews*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989), 21.

6. *Ibid.*

other Christian bodies past and present—is . . . the “sanctuary truth.”<sup>7</sup> Should the sanctuary doctrine become weakened in any way, it would become a “crucial matter” for SDAs, for such a weakening would “[strike] at the heart of Adventism.”<sup>8</sup>

### **The Ford Crisis**

The Ford Crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s caused a huge rift for many in the SDA Church. “In 1980, a theological controversy centering on the teachings of Dr. Desmond Ford came to the forefront with a major gathering of theologians and administrators at Glacier View Ranch in Colorado.”<sup>9</sup> The controversy that erupted in the SDA Church in the late 1970s and early 1980s, now infamous as the Ford Crisis, effectuated a schism in the church between many people concerning some of Adventism’s most essential, foundational, and distinctive doctrines, such as the Investigative Judgment (IJ), the events pertaining to 1844, and Jesus’ high priestly ministry in the heavenly Sanctuary. The content of Ford’s contentions with SDA Sanctuary theology is well-known. A few of his theological propositions are: 1) the IJ is unscriptural; 2) “Mark 13 [l]imits [a]ll [p]rophetic [i]nterpretation to the [f]irst [c]entury A.D.”; 3) the major fulfillment of the antitypical Day of Atonement began at the Cross; 4) the Book of Revelation supports a first-century fulfillment of the Day of Atonement; 5) the MHP IJ in the heavenly Sanctuary beginning in 1844 is a “[n]on-[e]vent”; and 6) the Book of Hebrews teaches that the

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7. LeRoy Edwin From, “The Sanctuary: Pivotal Teaching of Adventism,” *Ministry* 55, no. 8 (1982): 18. [http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/MIN/MIN19820801-V55-08\\_\\_B.pdf#page=18&view=fit](http://docs.adventistarchives.org/docs/MIN/MIN19820801-V55-08__B.pdf#page=18&view=fit).

8. Ibid.

9. Johns, W. H. and George W. Reid, “The ABCs of Dr. Desmond Ford’s Theology.” *Adventist Biblical Research Institute*, accessed April 30, 2017, [https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/desmondfordtheology\\_0.pdf](https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/desmondfordtheology_0.pdf).

antitypical Day of Atonement was fulfilled at the Cross. Many of Ford's arguments against traditional SDA Sanctuary doctrine, such as Christ's work in the heavenly Sanctuary, the 2,300-day prophecy beginning in 457 B.C. and terminating in B.C. 1844, and the antitypical Day of Atonement beginning on October 22, 1844 with Christ's movement into the MHP, etc. stemmed from his positions on the content of Hebrews. Because Ford's contentions are well-known, this paper will only briefly address and discuss his assertions from an exegetical analysis of Hebrews 8-10, primarily focusing on the traditional SDA interpretation of the two-apartment Sanctuary message that Ford challenged.

### **Resurgence**

Ford's controversial theology culminated in the termination of his denominational employment and credentials both as a minister and a theology professor. However, the effects of his theology have had far-reaching, perpetuating impact within the denomination to even our present day almost 40 years later. Indeed, in the last few years, there has been a resurgence of Ford's ideas and other related ones, especially in theologically more liberal circles. There seem to be two dominant arguments against the traditional emphasis on the two-apartment work of Jesus in the Sanctuary: 1) From a more emotional, non-academic standpoint, the two-apartment Sanctuary message is irrelevant because it is too trivial a matter; therefore, the SDA Church should not encumber itself with it. 2) Jesus having the superior ministry in the heavenly Sanctuary than the ministry of the earthly sanctuary is the message that the author of Hebrews is seeking to convey; therefore, any discussion of the two-apartment Sanctuary is extraneous.

The first argument seems to arise more from emotional concerns, rather than theological and biblical grounds. In an issue of *Spectrum*, an independent periodical whose content often questions and challenges denominational positions, Luke Ford, Desmond Ford's son, displayed

such emotion when he stated, “Adventism's best and brightest wailed and gnashed their teeth for a week over the question of whether Jesus moved from the holy to the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844. But on that silly question rests everything for the Adventist.”

Furthermore, he seems to argue, it seems ridiculous that a church whose majority are unfamiliar with the “heavenly sanctuary doctrine” should require that “you must believe it or you’re not really an Adventist,” and those who come to be “too sophisticated to believe in a last judgment” have abandoned this faith for another. He concludes his article with “I think it’s all nonsense.”<sup>10</sup>

The statements above, though belonging to one individual, nonetheless verbalize the unspoken sentiments of many SDAs’ thinking today. However, in these statements, one should notice how they caricature and oversimplify this rather important theological concern. Indeed, an emotional argument concerning the events that transpired at Glacier View Ranch concerning the importance of the two-apartment Sanctuary message for SDAs that does not address the issue from a theological stance is a red herring argument: it dodges the problem altogether with an evasive response. Furthermore, especially in light of the history of the Sanctuary doctrine in SDA-ism, it would not be wise to discard this very crucial foundation on emotional, non-scholarly grounds. When presenting challenges with doctrine of the Sanctuary, it is best to respectfully address the issue as the rather weighty topic that it is.

*Spectrum* has also published several academic articles concerning the Ford Crisis that could be problematic for the traditional SDA understanding of two-apartment Sanctuary theology. For instance, Norman H. Young, in an article in which he seeks to explain “The Essence of Adventism,” begins by stating, “The sanctuary teaching is related to the atonement,

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10. Luke Ford, “From Heavenly Sanctuary to Earthly Synagogue,” *Spectrum* 22, no. 5 (1993): 59. [https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/1992-1993\\_Vol\\_22/5\\_January\\_1993.pdf#page=61](https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/1992-1993_Vol_22/5_January_1993.pdf#page=61).

but it is not the atonement proper. That honored status belongs exclusively to the single event of Calvary's cross in the first century. No heavenly process that commenced in the nineteenth century must usurp Calvary's supreme position within the Christian faith.”<sup>11</sup> He continues, stating that the “essence of the heavenly sanctuary” are neither that Jesus moved from the HP to the MHP, the veils, the OT types, or “precise dates.”<sup>12</sup> Rather, the “sanctuary teaching” serves to protect “us from misconstruing the gospel as merely a mechanism for removing our guilt or sin without in any way challenging, changing, or conditioning our lives.”<sup>13</sup>

Notice a few points the Young makes. 1) The Cross *is* the atonement, and the Sanctuary is only “related” to the atonement.<sup>14</sup> 2) Young places the “heavenly process that commenced in the nineteenth century” in contradistinction to Calvary.<sup>15</sup> 3) In seeking to exalt the Cross, he appears to downplay the function of Sanctuary architecture and furniture, OT types, and dates in Jesus’ atoning work.<sup>16</sup> While one could certainly agree with the Young that the Cross is of supreme importance, in that it *commenced* the atoning working of Christ, it seems the author may overstate his case. For instance, the *entire* earthly sanctuary, including the courtyard, HP, and MHP, typified Christ’s total atoning work, not just the sacrifice. In fact, the blood of

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11. Norman H. Young, “The Sanctuary: The Essence of Adventism,” *Spectrum* 33, no. 1 (2005): 61.  
[https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/2005\\_Vol\\_33/1\\_Winter\\_2005.pdf#page=63](https://www.andrews.edu/library/car/cardigital/Periodicals/Spectrum/2005_Vol_33/1_Winter_2005.pdf#page=63).

12. *Ibid.*, 62.

13. *Ibid.*, 63.

14. *Ibid.*, 61.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, 62.

sacrifices that cleared the guilty was without effect until the priest applied it in the HP and MHP at the appropriate times (Lv 4:6; 16:14-16). In the Day of Atonement, the typical shadow of the antitypical event in which we now live,<sup>17</sup> the high priest did not accomplish atonement until he had both sacrificed the animal *and* applied its blood in the MHP. In the same way, Jesus' atonement would include both His sacrifice *and* the application of His blood in the heavenly Sanctuary. However, it appears that Young makes a dichotomy the atonement between the Cross and that of the Sanctuary. Therefore, it seems reductionist to make the atonement *only* about the Cross, with the Sanctuary as its subservient counterpart. "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven. . . . [w]ithin the veil . . . the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected."<sup>18</sup> The Cross "opened the way to the Father's throne," and "through [Jesus'] mediation," the repentant sinners "may be presented before God."<sup>19</sup> Ford's theology on the two-apartment Sanctuary message of Hebrews 8-10 has had a resurgence in recent times, the two main arguments being either emotional concerns or theological concerns that undermine the Sanctuary in light of the Cross.

### **Exegesis of Hebrews 8-10**

#### Historical Context

In order to assess the theological issues surrounding the diverse and conflicting interpretations of the Sanctuary of Hebrews 8-10 and to explore the exegetical meaning, we will

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17. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 489-90.

18. *Ibid.*, 489.

19. *Ibid.*

take a panoptic view of the entirety of Hebrews, for indeed, understanding the theme of this epistle is crucial for shedding light on the quandary at hand. After Jesus' ascension, many joined the fledgling Christian Church. Among these who were converted to the Christian faith were "Jews, devout men" (Acts 2:5). However, because of their conversion, these brave, new believers came under the ire of their countrymen. It was difficult for many Jewish converts to comprehend that the sacrifice of Jesus had entirely abolished the need of the sacrificial system of the Temple theme of the epistle is fairly apparent, for type had met antitype in Christ. Though the Jerusalem Council "excused Gentiles" from the requirements of the Temple, it did not address the matter of "Hebrew-Christian observance,"<sup>20</sup> so many continued the observance of Temple practices until its destruction in A.D. 70. "As this terrible crisis in Jewish history approached," there was a noticeable deterioration of fervor of faith among Jewish Christians. In response to the vacillating faith of many Jewish Christians, Paul wrote an epistle "to revitalize their wavering experience . . . by focusing the faith and attention once again to their ascended Lord."<sup>21</sup>

#### Literary Context

The purpose of the Epistle to the Hebrews is quite clear. In light of the historical context of the penning of the epistle, in which Jewish Christians were tempted to retract their faith in Jesus and "turn back to Judaism,"<sup>22</sup> the author of the epistle wrote to encourage them to "hold the

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20. "Daniel and Revelation Committee Report," in *Daniel and Revelation Committee Series*, vol. 2, *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1989), 1.

21. *Ibid.*, 4:2.

22. *Ibid.*

beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end” (Heb 3:14). If these Jewish Christians were to abandon the Christian faith they had received, they would be “departing from the living God” (vs. 13). In order to encourage them to continue in the faith, the author presents Jesus Christ as the “better” in all things pertaining to salvation by contrasting Him to various aspects of the Jewish system and other entities that would have been of repute to the Jewish person. The notion that Jesus is the “better,” or superior—whether as the Divine Son of God superior to angels (2:5-9), the Priest-King whose priestly order is superior to that Levitical priesthood (4:14-5:11; 7:1-8:6), the Mediator whose new covenant is superior to the old covenant (8:7-13), the Priest whose heavenly Sanctuary is superior to the earthly sanctuary (9:1-22), or the Sacrifice whose substitution is superior to that of the earthly sanctuary’s sacrifices (9:23-10:25)—is the overarching theme of the epistle, and one must necessarily read all of the epistle in light of that theme.

#### Themes of Hebrews 8-10

Many scholars, such as Desmond Ford, believe that “Christ entered the *Most Holy Place* of the heavenly sanctuary upon His ascension.”<sup>23</sup> They base their interpretation on passages in Hebrew 8-10 that seem to employ Day of Atonement language, which event took place in the MHP in the earthly sanctuary.<sup>24</sup> The mentioning of the two apartments of the Sanctuary only seem to encourage this understanding. However, if such an interpretation were true, it would undermine the veracity the 1844 interpretation of Jesus’ ministry in the heavenly Sanctuary,<sup>25</sup> a

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23. Kiesler, “An Exegesis of Selected Passages,” 4:54.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 4:53.

doctrine that is crucial to SDA theology. However, often, certain translations are biased in how they render certain Greek terms in the text, such as *tē skēnē*, *to hagion kosmikon*, *hagia hagiōn*, *(ta) hagia*, and *(ton) hagion*. Because of the apparent ambiguity of some terms that the author uses, translations are interpretive translations.

We will examine the themes of Hebrews 8-10, the “Sanctuary Chapters” of Hebrews, for these themes, beginning in chapter 8 and progressing through 9 and into chapter 10, demonstrate that the author is successively narrowing his focus toward a particular focus that will bear upon the Jesus’ heavenly Sanctuary work that chapters 8-10 describe. The successive themes of the Sanctuary Chapters are: 1) Jesus’ superior priesthood, 2) Jesus’ superior covenant, 3) Jesus superior Sanctuary, and 4) Jesus’ superior sacrifice. We will analyze these themes and the verses that form them in order to determine the purpose of the significance of the Sanctuary in Hebrews 8-10.

### ***Jesus’ Superior Priesthood in 8:1-6***

In 8:1, the author begins the Sanctuary Chapters of Hebrews by making a summary statement. The author’s main point concerns what follows in the succeeding verses. The main point, according to the author, is that Jesus is the High Priest seated at the right hand of God in Heaven and the Minister of the Holies, or Holy Places, (*tōn hagiōn*) and the *true* Tabernacle (*tēs skēnēs tēs alēthinēs*) of the heavens, “which the Lord erected, and not man” (vss. 1, 2). The earthly sanctuary, priesthood, and sacrificial offerings were merely a “copy and shadow” of heavenly realities, namely the Sanctuary and all it entailed (vss. 4, 5), but Jesus has the “more excellent ministry” in that He is the Mediator of a “better covenant” (vs. 6).

In this section, the author focuses primarily on the superiority of Jesus’ priesthood. However, while this is the case, it is crucial to notice also how, at the outset of the “Sanctuary

Chapters,” the author uses *tōn hagiōn* (plural) and *tēs skēnē* of Heaven to compare and contrast with the earthly tabernacle (*skēnē*). In this section, it is obvious that the author has the *entire* heavenly Sanctuary and the *entire* earthly sanctuary in mind, because he compares the priestly work of Christ in *tōn hagiōn* and *tēs skēnē* to the entire tabernacle that Moses constructed in the wilderness (vs. 5). *Tōn hagiōn* and *skēnē* wherein Jesus officiates as High Priest in Heaven is superior to that in which Moses constructed in that “the Lord erected” it (vs. 2).

### ***Jesus’ Superior Covenant in 8:7-13***

The author then narrows his focus to compare and contrast the old and new covenants. Though this section does not explicitly address the subject of the Sanctuary, since the author does mention the new and “better covenant” in the previous section (vs. 6), one may assume that the two sections complement each other. Furthermore, 9:1 associate “first covenant” and the “earthly sanctuary.” Under the old covenant, the Jews were to maintain the priesthood and rituals of the earthly sanctuary, but now that Jesus has installed a new covenant, the earthly sanctuary is now null and void, because the heavenly Sanctuary ministry replaces it.

### ***Jesus’ Superior Sanctuary in 9:1-15***

This third section specifically addresses the superiority of the Sanctuary in which Jesus’ officiates, which, heretofore in the biblical text, the author has referred to as *tōn hagiōn* (the Holies, or Holy Places) and *tē skēnē* (Tabernacle). To address this section’s content thoroughly, we will divide it into two parts.

#### ***9:1-5***

In part one, the author presents the superiority of the *entire* heavenly Sanctuary in comparison to the *entire* earthly sanctuary. In 9:1, the author employs another term, *to hagian kosmikon* (the earthly, or world, holy place [singular]), to refer to the *entire* earthly sanctuary.

“The first tabernacle” (*skēnē*) of verse 2 must be the same as *to hagion kosmikon*, as the author uses the conjunction “for” (*gar*) to form a parallelism that connects the two verses together. However, the author also uses *skēnē* to refer to the first and second compartments of the earthly sanctuary (vss. 1, 2). Therefore, it seems that one may safely conclude that the first *skēnē* and second *skēnē* comprise the entire *skēnē*, or the whole earthly sanctuary. The author is clearly not trying to devolve any information about the work of either *skēnē* individually, for he states, “Of these things we cannot now speak in detail” (vs. 5). (This reticence is crucial for interpreting 9:8, 12.) Therefore, we need not be perturbed when the author refers to the second *skēnē* as *hagia hagiōn*: they are one and the same.

To this point, one may see: 1) referents to the entire heavenly Sanctuary are *tōn hagiōn* (Holies, or Holy Places) and *tē skēnē* (the Tabernacle); 2) *skēnē* may also refer to the entire earthly sanctuary (8:5); 3) *to hagion kosmikon*, in this context, refers to the entire earthly sanctuary; 4) the second *skēnē* and *hagia hagiōn* are one and the same, referring to MHP; and 5) *skēnē* may refer to either of the two apartments of the sanctuary.

#### 9:6-10

In part two, the author describes some of the limitations of the earthly service that necessitated a new service in a different Sanctuary. When all the instruments and parts of the earthly sanctuary—which the author mentioned in the previous part—had been prepared, the normal priests would go only into “the first tabernacle” (*tē prōtē skēnē*), which is the Accusative form of the same linguistic construction the author used to describe the first tabernacle, or HP, in 9:2. Only the high priest could enter once per year into the “second” (*deuteros*), naturally the MHP, for only the high priest could enter the MHP and only once per year on the Day of Atonement.

Because of the clear reference to the Day of Atonement in verse 8, a problem arises in translating and interpreting verse 8, for many view it as saying that, upon ascension, Jesus went into the MHP (*ta hagia*), or “Holiest of All,”<sup>26</sup> and that while the HP was still standing, the way into the MHP could not be open. However, a few verses (8:2, 5, 13; 9:1, 3, 5, 9-11), which serve as interpretive controls for 9:8, are helpful in determining whether the author is comparing *ta hagia* to the first apartment only or to the entire earthly tabernacle. The interpretive controls indicate the author is not concerned with the comparing the HP and MHP but rather Jesus’ heavenly ministry with the earthly ministry. We know this because: 1) the author contrasts the new covenant and Christ functioning in the *entire* “true tabernacle” (8:2) with the old covenant and with its earthly sanctuary, which covenant the new covenant “made obsolete” (8:13; 9:1); 2) it was not just the HP that “was symbolic for the present time,” but the entire earthly sanctuary (8:9); 3) the author clearly states that it is not his intent to go into detail about the individual apartments (9:5); 4) the entire earthly sanctuary was to function until the “time of reformation (9:10); 5) the entire Mosaic sanctuary was a “copy and shadow of heavenly things” (8:5); and 6) the only term the author has used to refer to the MHP until this point has been *hagia hagiōn* (9:3). “[I]t is not only the first apartment of the earthly tabernacle which has lost its value . . . but the entire of the earthly sanctuary.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore, a careful assessment reveals that *ta hagia* is not the MHP, but the entirety of the heavenly Sanctuary.

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26. Kiesler, “An Exegesis of Selected Passages,” 4:54.

27. Ibid., 4:64.

### *Jesus' Superior Sacrifice in 9:11-10:25*

In this section, the author presents Jesus as the superior Sacrifice. To better summarize and examine the authors arguments in 9:11-10:25, we will divide this section of the Sanctuary Chapters into three parts, as well.

#### *9:11-15*

The meaning of *ta hagia* we deduced in verse 8—the entire heavenly Sanctuary—indicates that the same meaning applies to *ta hagia* in verse 12. However, such a translation appears is problematic, for in part 3, there seems to be clear reference to the Day of Atonement. It appears that the author is saying Jesus, upon His ascension, went straight into the MHP “once for all.” However, this is not problematic, for verse 12 has its own interpretive controls (vss. 11, 13). Verse 11 indicates that, as was the case in the previous part, the author’s focus is to distinguish the *tabernacles*, not the *apartments*, for he clearly speaks of a “greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands.” This contrast over a *skēnē* made with hands images the same language the author employs in 8:2 to distinguish the entire sanctuary that man build and that which the Lord built. Furthermore, the author has already stated that it is not his intent to speak in detail about the individual apartments (9:5). Lastly, it would be peculiar if he were to mention the red heifer, if the author were truly referencing the Day of Atonement, for the red heifer was not a part of that ceremony, but for “ceremonial cleansings.”<sup>28</sup> Therefore, in this part, the author only shows the superiority of Jesus’ sacrifice to that of animals. The sense of this section, which the author summarizes in 9:14, is “If the blood of various animals was effective in its work in the salvation process, how much more effective shall the blood of Christ be?” An

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28. Ibid., 4:69.

analysis of the text shows that the author's concern is not Jesus entering into the MHP to initiate the Day of Atonement. Consequently, a question arises: "If the author does not intend to signify the Day of Atonement with *ta hagia*, what does it mean that Jesus entered the MHP?" The answer in the next part.

#### 9:16-22

This part controls the meaning of the event that occurred when Jesus entered into the *ta hagia* (the Holy Places) in Heaven. The author explains how a testament is not implemented until the testator has died (vss. 16, 17). In the same way, the "first covenant," with its earthly priesthood, rituals, and sacrifices, could not be "dedicated," or inaugurated, with Moses first shedding and sprinkling blood on the book of the covenant, the people, and the *skēnē* and its vessels (vss. 18-20). Moses dedicated the *entire* earthly sanctuary at its inauguration. Therefore, in similar fashion, when Jesus entered the *ta hagia* in Heaven, he was inaugurating it for its salvific function. The author shows how Jesus is superior to animals in that His blood alone could inaugurate the Holy Places of the heavenly Sanctuary.

#### 9:23-10:25

While the previously mentioned sacrifices could cleanse the earthly copies, the heavenly realities needed "better sacrifices," which came in Christ (vs. 24). Jesus did not enter *hagia* (Holy Places) "made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself" (vs. 24). In verse 25, the final concern about the Day of Atonement arises. The author now, for the first time, uses *ta hagia*, which previously referred to the *entire* sanctuary, to refer to just the MHP. The author demonstrates the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice by analyzing the *frequency* with which the earthly high priest had to enter the MHP for atonement. While the high priest, in the most

solemn—the “best”—of all the rituals of the Jewish cultic system, had to still do this ceremony *year after year*, Jesus’ work in the Sanctuary had to be done only *once*.

The author is seeking to address the superiority of Christ’s sacrifice from the standpoint of the frequency of sacrifice and application. This seems evident in how many times the author mentions the frequency with which even the Day of Atonement ritual, the most sacred of all feast day rituals, had to be repeated (9:26-28; 10:1-4, 11-14). The reason for which this frequency was necessary is because no animal can take away sin and make anyone perfect (10:1-4). This is why God prepared Christ a body—to be the ultimate sacrifice for sin, which would only need to occur once (vs. 5). By “one offering,” Jesus has been able to perfect who are being sanctified. Because *hagia* and *ta hagia* have not referred to the antitypical Day of Atonement beginning after Jesus’ ascension, and given that these terms have most often referred to the *entire* Sanctuary, it may be assumed that *hagia* in verse 19 is the *entire* Sanctuary and therefore not the Day of Atonement. In this last part, the author argues for Jesus’ superiority to animals in at least two ways: 1) earthly sacrifices were repetitious (even the “best”); and 2) animal sacrifices could not clean conscience as they were only shadows (vs. 1).

### **Summary**

This paper has briefly analyzed some of the history surrounding the Ford Crisis and some of the theological contentions Ford had with the SDA Sanctuary doctrine, especially those regarding the two-apartment nature of the Sanctuary. This paper has also analyzed the rise of Ford’s theology in recent times. We have assessed that there are two main arguments against the importance SDAs place on being solid on the exegetical analysis of the two-apartment Sanctuary message in Hebrews 8-10. One argument tends to relegate the two-apartment controversy to the irrelevant on emotional grounds, arguing that the matter is much too specific to be of any real

importance. The other more academic argument maintains from biblical study that the overarching concern the author of the epistle is the superiority of Christ and, therefore, the small, seemingly trivial points in the Sanctuary Chapters are irrelevant. However, as this paper has addressed above, these arguments are neither thorough nor satisfactory. When studying the two-apartment Sanctuary message of Hebrews 8-10, it is wise to keep in mind the importance this theology has played in our church's history and theology. Also, it seems dangerous to dichotomize the Cross and the Sanctuary in regards to the atonement.

In the exegesis section, the historical context, literary context, and themes of Hebrews 8-10 were analyzed. The historical context explained the issues surrounding the provocation for the penning of this epistle (i.e. to encourage Jewish Christians to not return to Judaism). The literary context shows that the author presented Jesus as superior other various elements of the Jewish cultic system. Lastly, this paper analyzed the various themes of Hebrews 8-10 in order to assess what things the author compared (e.g. the apartments of sanctuaries). The author's main goal, as it is throughout the entire epistle, was to demonstrate that Jesus is better. However, in chapters 8-10, he demonstrates that Jesus' priestly work in the heavenly Sanctuary is superior to and usurps the function of the earthly sanctuary. He does so by comparing the priestly ministries, covenants, sanctuaries buildings, and sacrifices (and frequency with which they were offered). His goal does *not* address the antitypical Day of Atonement beginning upon Christ's ascension.

### **Conclusion**

Although this paper is not an exhaustive study, we recommend further research into the uses of *hagia* and *ta hagia* in the Septuagint, as those terms produce confusion in translation and interpretation. Also, one might study the inauguration of the Sanctuary in Hebrews with the

throne room scene of Revelation 5. Finally, one could study in what sense the Cross was the atonement, while harmonizing the Sanctuary as being part of the atonement.

This study concludes that not only is the matter of the two-apartment Sanctuary message of Hebrews 8-10 vital, but it also affirms the traditional SDA Sanctuary doctrine. An exegetical analysis of the text appears to affirm that Jesus Christ went into the Holy Places in Heaven and inaugurated the use of that Sanctuary, forever abolishing the earthly sanctuary. Therefore, the SDA Sanctuary doctrine, including the 1844 message, remains intact: there is theological grounds for 1844.

In the OT, God ordered Moses to build a copy of the heavenly Sanctuary so that He might dwell among His people (Ex 25:8). To restore a close relationship with His last-day people, Jesus Christ Himself founded the Advent movement on the Sanctuary doctrine. Though the Sanctuary and its particulars are of utmost importance, Young is correct in his concern that attention remain focused on the Person of Jesus Christ and the Cross. If one does not remain focused on Jesus Christ, indeed, the Sanctuary, and even the Cross, loses its significance. As the believer studies the subtleties of this important system of salvation, it is wise for him or her to keep in the forefront of one's mind that Jesus Christ is the High Priest, the One who has faithfully promised, the Mediator of a better covenant, the better Sacrifice, and the Minister of the better Sanctuary.

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