

the Bible after you grow up?). In the end-time the translated group are to be mature enough to stand on their own, although Matt 20:28; John 15:5; Heb 13:5 and Rev 3:10 suggest otherwise. When the word "truth" in Scripture is always interpreted as "the truth about God," this seems to violate the context at times. For example, the sealing (Rev 7:1-4), is said to be a settling into "the truth about God." But this is too confined a definition, for the larger view (SM) also includes *all biblical truths* (*Great Controversy*, pp. 593, 594). Could this confinement of the GCTHM view rob people of being sealed? "God says it, and I believe it" is jettisoned, along with biblical and Ellen G. White insights into the end-time crisis.

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## Salvation and the Sanctuary

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### Introduction

It is hardly a secret that some among us regard the two elements of our title as at the least limiting one another or at worst flatly in conflict. How could two teachings, so clearly presented in the Scriptures, be incompatible when set adjacent to one another? The answer to that question is, Are we truly looking at two incompatibles, or do we only think we are?

Before coming to several observations, we had best explore what we mean by salvation in the setting of the sanctuary. If as Adventists we find ourselves in the untenable position of promoting two beliefs at war with each other, we should be eager to discover it and set our house in order.

**The Critics' Challenge.** In brief, the problem posed by critics is this: If salvation is subsumed in the act of Christ at Calvary, what significance can rest in a functioning sanctuary, whether on earth or in heaven? Walter Martin's charge that disappointed Adventists of 1844 produced the sanctuary idea to cover their gross error in proclaiming the return of Christ seems to assume some credibility. Of course Martin is simply mouthing Dudley Canright's explanation. But Canright's obsessive intent to demolish the Adventist message renders any judgment he might advance as suspect.

### Heavenly Sanctuary: A Reality

When God told Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exod 25:8), He introduced the idea that

theirs was to be a work of replication, not creation. "And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain" (Exod 25:40, RSV). I am quite aware of the ranging discussions about just what was shown to Moses. Did he see an actual structure elsewhere in the universe or was he shown a model, something perhaps even lacking in physical form, what we today call a concept?

The Hebrew word *tabnit* means a plan or pattern; however the context suggests quite directly the existence of a cosmic reality—whether the word structure in human terms conveys the meaning accurately is not the fundamental question. The point is that repeatedly the Scriptures refer to a reality. While its substance quite probably does not consist of bricks and mortar, stones, wood timbers and paneling, its reality is not to be doubted if we are to take the Scriptures seriously.

Neither can we allow ourselves to fall in the trap of reducing the sanctuary to a relationalism that denies its reality, an allegory, a symbolic presentation in the abstract that instructs us in some etherial way of what occurs in that existential moment of encounter as man meets God.

Of course we recognize the all-too-present temptation to limit God, enclosing Him in a crystalline display case fabricated in human imagination. At the same time it is true that the God who transcends all structures still asks us to prepare a place where in this world His presence may be manifest and His name dwell. Listen to Deuteronomy 5:11 "then to the place which the Lord your God will choose, to make His name dwell there, thither you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices. . ." (RSV). The same God who dwells not in houses made with hands recognized the virtue to be found in a place of intimate contact. It was not the structure that consecrated God, but God who invested virtue in a place of communion and reconciliation with those who believed in Him.

Not only is this cosmic sanctuary mentioned when initiating the wilderness sanctuary, and once more as David begins plans for a permanent temple, but also time and again through the Scriptural record. Striking examples occur in the Psalms, Ezekiel 1, Isaiah 6, and of course Daniel 7. Nor are we finished there, for in the New

Testament we encounter Christ the high priest, ministering in the "greater and more perfect tent, (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)" (Heb 9:11, RSV). And Revelation is replete with sanctuary allusions, some of which become quite meaningless unless a heavenly sanctuary exists in verity. It seems wholly unlike our God to lead us to believe in the reality and function of something posited only for its utilitarian value as a catalyst for spiritual concerns.

### Does Christ's Priesthood Diminish His Death?

Now we come to a second question. Does recognition of a continuing role of the heavenly sanctuary diminish the significance of Christ's death at Calvary? Let me condense a very long discussion to a brief response. No, the continuing ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary enhances the cross rather than obscures it.

Indeed, it delivers us from narrow reductionism that limits Christ's work. Many of our friends in the evangelical community exalt the Christ of the cross, and rightly so, but to the point that the post-Calvary Christ becomes redundant. What does one do with a Christ after His purpose is completed? Is He, like some obsolete piece of machinery, then assigned a quiet pedestal in the museum of heroic salvation, or is He quietly relegated to a vanishing place? I speak reverently of our Lord and glory in His triumph that overthrows the reign of sin and brings to us the gift of His justifying grace as well as His transforming power in our lives.

But in grasping the meaning of the heavenly sanctuary and Christ's ministry there in our behalf, whole new understandings of the Lord emerge. The value of His work assumes a linear sense, and the Jesus of Calvary becomes immediately relevant to me moment by moment, today and tomorrow as my High Priest in the presence of God. He is the sacrifice who by the continual ministry of His blood in my behalf stands in my stead before the watching eyes of the universe and the very throne of God. Far from diminishing the meaning of the cross, the Adventist understanding enhances the present relevance of that sacrifice for its virtues flow in a continuous ministry on my behalf.



### Final Judgment Ministration

But what of the idea of 1844 and the final judgment ministry beginning then? It is to this point the critics of our message finally come. Is not the merit of salvation at Calvary abridged in the idea of a final review of every person's commitment just prior to the return of Jesus? Do we not have here a form of double jeopardy? What was secured by Christ at Calvary and conferred in response to faith upon the needy sinner now risks being lost in a final review.

We must recognize that the Bible nowhere teaches the Calvinistic doctrine of infallible perseverance, that once one accepts Christ he cannot fall away. To the contrary, the Bible teaches explicitly that although nothing can displace the achieved victory of Christ on the cross, and therefore the certainty of salvation for the earnest believer, that standing is contingent on his/her remaining in Christ's service.

Numerous passages of Scripture teach this truth. For example, 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2. "Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, *if you hold it fast*" (RSV). Here is certainty and assurance in salvation, but recognition of the need to persist in trusting in Him. This is not new to Adventists, for we long have held to a modified Arminian theology, but to the degree our critics adopt Calvinist tendencies in theology, they will remain uncomfortable with our position.

The crucial point is this; nothing that occurs in the heavenly sanctuary—including the pre-advent judgment that finds Christ standing in the place of each trusting believer—*nothing* can in any way jeopardize or in the least weaken the significance of the cross. That sacrifice stands as the sole means of salvation to every one that believeth and is sufficient to save to the uttermost every one that cometh to Him, to borrow explicit biblical language.

The pre-advent judgment presents no threat to those whose trust is in Jesus. Indeed, Daniel sees the tribunal rendering judgment in favor of the saints (7:22). And it is Christ's merits which stand in place of the believer, crediting once more the virtue of the cross. To set the achievements of the cross in conflict with the pre-advent judgment is to distort shamefully the concerted harmony that exists between Christ's accomplishments at the cross

and the application of those accomplishments before the throne of God. May God have mercy on those who in false zeal would pry them apart.

### Why a Sanctuary?

Now let us address the question, Why a sanctuary? Critical scholars pose numerous answers to this question. Because of structural and even slight conceptual similarities between the Hebrew sanctuary and holy places dedicated to the gods of pagan neighbors, they presume a dependence upon other religions.

It is not inconceivable that in designating the form of structure God allowed the use of existing technology in carrying it out, as with the use of workmen from Hiram of Tyre. But the overriding goal of Hebrew worship was not appeasement, as with other religions, but reconciliation, restoration to the holiness that marks the character of God, in stark contrast to the worship of pagan deities. The biblical narrative clearly tells us that God conveyed the messages about what His sanctuary should be like, and as Adventists we accept the report of the Scriptures.

Several quite clear reasons stand out in our understanding today why the establishment of a sanctuary was so valuable. To what degree these were apparent to worshipers in ancient times we cannot say, but the wealth of potential existed. Unquestionably we are today advantaged by understanding how New Testament writers, as well as the Spirit of Prophecy, enhance the meanings resident in the Old Testament sanctuary system.

**Medium for Teaching Divine Truth.** In the sanctuary on earth we see dimly the significance of God's magnificent center at the heart of the universe. Wrapped in earthly instruction and ceremony are profound truths about God's righteousness, His purposes and His means of restoring rebellious humans to full fellowship with Him. In the gore and grisly rawness of sacrifice was a penetrating witness to the seriousness of sin as well as the extraordinary means required to solve the problem.

Even if in time the priests reduced it to commercialized trivialism, devoid of the heartrending sense of responsibility and release it was intended to convey, the hearts of some remained sensitive.

And surely the youth, when first confronted with witnessing a sacrifice, must have been touched.

**Provision for Experiencing Personal Salvation.** But more significant than its work as a teaching device was its foreshadowing the greater reality in God's purpose. The Hebrew worshiper was not playing religion or building a symbolic sand castle faith. By faith in the promised Redeemer, he walked away from his worship a forgiven person, one restored in fact to harmony with God. His act was meritorious as God reached out in acceptance of his act of faith. It was not the deed that restored, but God's conferral that achieved it. To reduce the earthly sanctuary to a mere teaching device is to be unfaithful to the word of God. It represented an objective reality.

#### Practical Insights

**A Place of Forgiveness.** Let us review briefly several principles residual in the sanctuary. It was a place of refuge. In a manner quite distinct from the cities of refuge, the sanctuary offered a place where one could enter the presence of God to be freed from guilt. Once purged of that guilt, he went from the altar to cope with the consequences of his wrong act or decision, but with the knowledge all had been made right with God. Not incidentally, the heavenly sanctuary is the place where today our High Priest cleanses us from iniquity, enabling us to face the consequences of our choices with cleared consciences.

**Portrayal of Divine Grace and Justice.** Just as the earthly sanctuary offered lessons in God's character and justness, so in the sacrifice of Christ we trace these same qualities. How could one understand how God could be fair and yet pass over the sins of those who called upon Him in humble repentance? Paul speaks of Jesus Christ, "whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness [justice], because in His divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous, and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3:25-26, RSV).

**How to Cope.** And the sanctuary was the place to learn how to cope with the apparent triumph of evil in the world. After a review of multiple temptations of the world and the apparent

success of the wicked, the distressed psalmist reports, "But when I thought of how to understand this, it seemed to me a wearisome task until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I perceived their end" (Ps 73:16-17, RSV).

**Focus on God.** Another merit of the sanctuary, today the heavenly one, is in lifting our experience with God above the everyday concerns of life. While Christ assures us of His intimate concern with our practical needs, and we rest secure in His promises, our natures call for something that lifts us above individualistic self-concerns. Even excessive concern over inner spiritual progress needs subordination to the sweep of the grand purposes of God. A glimpse of God's throne room brings this catharsis from self.

**Reconciliation and Restoration.** Inescapably, the Scriptures tie together salvation and the sanctuary, perhaps nowhere more profoundly than in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. "Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (RSV). Ties with the passover are obvious, with Christ the atoning reconciliation, all of which centers in the sanctuary. The result: a changed, transformed life of joy.

**Divine Command Center.** From our study of the Word there arises a kind of insight unrecognized by those who bypass the significance of the sanctuary. Although we tend to think of the sanctuary in terms of a place of contact with God, a place of reconciliation and forgiveness, which is natural as it stems from a human point of view, the heavenly sanctuary emerges as far more, the command center of the universe, the post from which God governs eternally.

Away and above the fixed form in which our minds try to reconstruct it, here is the grandest of all: where thousand thousands minister before Him, where angels innumerable come and go, where flows a continual cascade of choirs in praise, where creatures formed in His life-giving acts best behold the majesty and the holiness of His character. Truly the hub of the vast universe, its reality is undeniable and its benefits extend to all creatures. In-



vested with His person, it glows with glory immeasurable, a touch of which earthlings beheld at times in His *shekinah* presence.

With the entrance of revolt into the universe, God adapted the functions in His command center to make it a place of reconciliation where fallen creatures, half-blind but repentant under the plying ministry of His Spirit, could approach Him for healing all transgressions. From that grand center our Lord left for this dark, rebellious world. Paul's glorious passage in the *kenosis* of Philippians 2:7, describes this in its stark contrast. Emptying Himself, He becomes obedient, even to the death of the cross. Wherefore God has highly exalted Him, that at His name every knee should bow and tongue confess—Jesus Christ is Lord. Received back into the presence of the Father, He ever lives to make intercession, and soon will return to receive us in power and glory.

#### Conclusion

One may ask, does the sanctuary message diminish the worth of the cross? God forbid, it enhances the cross, for here its cosmic glory at last is clear. Adventists need to hold fast to the message of Christ in His sanctuary. As with no other message, it opens to us the remnant the reality of full salvation. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in" (Ps 24:7). Soon ours will be the unspeakable joy of stepping into the throne room. Nothing must rob us of that experience!

## PROGRESSIVE CREATIONISM AND BIBLICAL REVELATION: SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

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#### Introduction/Background

The purpose of this essay is to examine the intellectual roots and the current status of the discussion concerning progressive creationism and to identify and evaluate eight theological implications of affirming the presence of death for millions of years prior to the appearance of *homo sapiens* in the geologic column as required by progressive creationism. This piece can be methodologically likened, in the language of a fine arts painter, to a limited palette endeavor. This means that the article is an academic account informed, in this instance, by the presuppositions of a high view of Scripture, *sola scriptura*, and Christ's death understood in a forensic substitutionary sense.<sup>1</sup> However, as an objective theological, reflective exercise, the author hopes that the work will reach a wide academic audience, including readers holding alternative theological presuppositions.<sup>2</sup>

**Progressive Creationism Defined.** Progressive creationism, popularized in 1954 by Bernard Ramm in his book *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, is a form of broad concordism between the biblical creation texts and science which invokes God's intervention to effect vertical radiation of species, that is, to obtain