

Major Objections to the Sanctuary Service Message Examined

The Foundation and Pillar of the Advent Faith

1. The sanctuary service doctrine is the foundation and central pillar of the Advent faith;

The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Daniel 8:14. **GC 409.**

The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith. **Ev 221.**

- a. The Seventh-day Adventist church depends, for its very existence, on the validity of its claims regarding the work of atonement going on right now in the heavenly sanctuary;
2. The teaching on the sanctuary service is the most unique of all the Adventist doctrines; it also happens to be the most misunderstood, the most controverted and the most questioned and the most challenged doctrine held by them; hence, the objections raised against the sanctuary message propounded by Adventists are many:

A Sampling of Objections to the Sanctuary Message

3. **Objections to the 1844 datum and the timing of Jesus' second apartment ministration**—objectors hold that Jesus began His second apartment ministration in the heavenly sanctuary after His ascension; in other words in 31 AD and not in 1844, as Seventh-day Adventists believe;
 - a. **Within the veil**--This objection is based on the understanding that Paul's expression "within the veil" found in **Heb 6:19** is the same expression used in the Old testament which invariably is a reference to the second apartment of the sanctuary (**Exo 26:33; Lev 16:2, 12, 15**);
 - i. it is further argued that in the Old testament, the first apartment of the sanctuary is identified by expressions like "**before the veil**" (**Exo 30: 1-6; Exo 40:26-27**) and "**without the veil**" (**Exo 26:35; Exo 40:26; Exo 27:20-21; Lev 24:1-3**), but never "within the veil"; therefore **Heb 6:19** teaches that Jesus began His ministration in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, "within the veil," at the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews and not in 1844;
 - b. **Entering into "the holiest by the blood of Jesus" ("Most Holy Place" in the NIV)**--Objectors hold that that **Heb 10:19** is proof that Jesus began His ministration in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary after His ascension and not in 1844;
4. **Objections to the 1844 timing of the Day of Atonement**—Objectors hold that the Day of Atonement began in 31 AD and not in 1844 as Seventh-day Adventists teach;

- a. **Heb 5:3; Heb 7:26-27**---these verses are said to be an allusion to the Day of Atonement because for on that day the high priest offered a sacrifice for himself and then for the people (**Lev 16:11, 14-15**);
- b. **Heb 9:13 and Heb 10:14**-- Moreover, critics say that the mention of “bulls and goats” in these verses clearly is a reference to the Day of Atonement; therefore Jesus must have entered upon His Day of Atonement ministrations in 31 AD and not 1844;
- 5. **Objections to Adventist use of the year-day principle**--to interpret the 2300 days time prophecy of Daniel 8;
- 6. **Objections to the Adventist teaching of a connection between the 2300 days prophecy of Daniel 8 and the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9**—it is claimed by some that there is no connection between these two prophecies;
- 7. **Objections against the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8**—Adventists teach that the announcement of the cleansing of the sanctuary in **Daniel 8:14** is a reference to the cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement in **Leviticus 16**; objectors say they are NOT connected because the word “cleansed” in **Dan 8:14** is not the same Hebrew word used for “cleanse” in **Leviticus 16**;
- 8. **Objections against the idea of transfer of sin through the manipulation of sacrificial blood**—it is claimed by some that this concept is not biblical;
 - a. **The blood never cleanses but defiles**—objectors claim that the blood never cleanses but defiles; therefore this puts to rest the Adventist claim of the cleansing of the sanctuary by the sprinkling of blood;
- 9. **Objections against Ellen White’s role as originator of the Adventist sanctuary message;**
 - a. Critics say that the Adventist teaching of the sanctuary is based on Ellen White’s writings and not based on the Bible;
- 10. **Objections to the Adventist teaching of a work of atonement presently going on in the heavenly sanctuary**—Objectors hold that the work of atonement was completed once and for all at the Calvary when Jesus became the sacrifice for the sins of the world;
 - a. **Complete and final atonement at the cross**---Jesus made a full and final atonement at the cross when He offered Himself up once at Calvary (**Heb 9:12, 26, 28; Heb 7:27**); this objection supposedly puts to rest the Adventist claim that Jesus went into the heavenly sanctuary in to make a final atonement;
- 11. **Objections on the investigative judgment**—that the bible does not teach a pre-advent judgment; that the judgment is only for the little horn of Daniel and not for the saints;

How the sanctuary service truth came about

- 12. Before the objections above are taken up, it is important that one understands how the foundational teaching of the sanctuary truth was laid;
- 13. The solidity and firmness of the foundation of the Adventist faith as it was laid out during the Sabbath and Sanctuary Conference of 1848, not understood by many Adventists:

Many of our people do not realize how firmly **the foundation of our faith** has been laid. My husband, Elder Joseph Bates, Father Pierce¹, Elder [Hiram] Edson, and others who were keen, noble, and true, were among those who, after the passing of the time in 1844, searched for the truth as for hidden treasure. I met with them, and we studied and prayed earnestly. Often we remained together until late at night, and sometimes through the entire night, praying for light and studying the Word. Again and again these brethren came together to study the Bible, in order that they might know its meaning, and be prepared to teach it with power. When they came to the point in their study where they said, "We can do nothing more," the Spirit of the Lord would come upon me, I would be taken off in vision, and a clear explanation of the passages we had been studying would be given me, with instruction as to how we were to labor and teach effectively. Thus light was given that helped us to understand the scriptures in regard to Christ, His mission, and His priesthood. A line of truth extending from that time to the time when we shall enter the city of God, was made plain to me, and I gave to others the instruction that the Lord had given me.

During this whole time I could not understand the reasoning of the brethren. My mind was locked, as it were, and I could not comprehend the meaning of the scriptures we were studying. This was one of the greatest sorrows of my life. I was in this condition of mind until all the principal points of our faith were made clear to our minds, in harmony with the Word of God. The brethren knew that when not in vision, I could not understand these matters, and they accepted as light direct from heaven the revelations given. **1SM 206-208.**

14. The Sanctuary message as one of 8 pillars of faith established during the Sabbath and Sanctuary Conferences of 1848;

- a. A series of meetings held by the few scattered Adventists including James White, Ellen White, Joseph Bates, Edward Andrews, Chamberlain, Otis Nichols, Gurney, and others during which time 8 doctrinal points were established as a result of carefully studying the Bible: **1)** the dual phased ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, **2)** spiritual gifts in the ministry of Ellen White, **3)** the Sabbath **4)** conditional immortality and soul sleep, **5)** the duty to proclaim the three angels messages of Revelation 14, **6)** The outpouring of the plagues when the work of ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is done, **7)** the literal, visible coming of Christ and **8)** the final destruction of the wicked after the Millennium. Although a lot work still needed to be done to develop and evaluate the ramifications of these doctrines, it was evident that the solid groundwork had been laid for the belief system of the fledgling Seventh-day Adventist Church.

15. Efforts to derail the Adventist message of the sanctuary illustrated by a vision by Ellen White below:

I saw a company who stood well guarded and firm, giving no countenance to those who would unsettle the established faith of the body. God looked upon them with approbation. I was shown three steps-- the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, "Woe to him who shall move

¹ [OLDER BRETHREN AMONG THE PIONEERS ARE HERE THUS REMINISCENTLY REFERRED TO. "FATHER PIERCE" WAS STEPHEN PIERCE, WHO SERVED IN MINISTERIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK IN THE EARLY DAYS. "FATHER ANDREWS" WAS EDWARD ANDREWS, THE FATHER OF J. N. ANDREWS.--COMPILERS.]

a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received." I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine **the foundation**. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with **the foundation**. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master Builder, and they were fighting against Him. They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union raised their eyes to heaven and with a loud voice glorified God. This affected some of those who had complained and left the platform, and they with humble look again stepped upon it. **EW 258-259.**

Conclusion

16. The fact that many objectors and objections to the sanctuary message should not surprise anyone; those who love the truth will triumph with it
17. It goes without saying that unless we are understanding the truth and advancing in that knowledge there is no way we can "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." - **Jude 1:3.**
18. Finally, it goes without saying that the truth we profess must sanctify the character if our arguments in favor of it is to be powerful and convincing; notice how sanctification and standing for the truth are connected in the following verse:

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: **1 Pet 3:15.**
19. In other words, what is the sanctuary message doing to us? Is it deepening our self-awareness and giving us a humble opinion of ourselves? Is it deepening our work of repentance and producing fruits meet for it? Is it making us meek and lowly and more tolerating of those who do not think like us? The more this happens, the more powerful and convincing our arguments for the truth will be. . .