

## ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS IN HEBREWS 9

1. The book of Hebrews is powerful because it underscores the superiority of the atoning work of Christ over the inadequacies of animal blood and human mediation to deal with the sin problem.
2. It was written originally to lift the attention of the Hebrew Christians from the Temple in Jerusalem and its rituals, and to focus it on Jesus Christ, His atoning death and priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.
3. Unfortunately, the very same book has been used by many to minimize and make of no effect the priestly ministrations of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary; an idea Paul never would have done in his book
4. **Many understand the book of Hebrews as teaching that Jesus completed the work of redemption on the cross in 31 A.D., including the day of atonement cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary!**
5. If this understanding is true, then it follows that Jesus is no longer ministering as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary and there is no need to focus the attention to whatever He is doing up there!
6. Moreover, if that supposition is true, then Ellen White lied about the cleansing of the sanctuary since 1844, our illustrious pioneers lied, Adventism is found to be a false religion and we are in the wrong church!!
7. If nothing else, the reason why serious-minded Adventists should study the book of Hebrews is so that they can defend that central message that defines them as a denomination—the sanctuary
8. This study focuses on the **Hebrews 9** and attempts to answer some of the objections being raised against Adventism's teaching of the sanctuary, based on that chapter:

### Heb 9:8 “The Holiest of All”

9. **OBJECTION: Heb 9:8 teaches that Jesus entered into His “holiest of all” (Most Holy Place) ministrations after He died in 31 A.D., and not in 1844**
10. **ANSWER:** this objection is based on three presuppositions:
  - a. the understanding that the expression “**holiest of all**” refers to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary; it seems to be supported by a cursory reading of **verse 3**: “*And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the “holiest of all”*”
  - b. the understanding that the “**first tabernacle**” is the first apartment of the sanctuary; it seems to be supported by a superficial reading of **verse 2**: “*For there was a tabernacle made, the first, wherein was the candlestick. . .*”
  - c. the understanding that Jesus fulfilled His first apartment ministrations in Old Testament times and entered into His second apartment ministrations (“holiest of all”) at the cross in 31 A.D.
11. To begin with, the Greek translated “**the holiest of all**” in **verse 8** are not the same words used in **Heb 9:3** for “**the holiest of all**”
12. The Greek translated “**the holiest of all**” in **verse 8** is “*ta hagia*,” while in **verse 3**, it “*hagia hagiōwn*” which literally means “holies of holies;” it identifies the second apartment of the sanctuary
13. We know that “*hagia hagiōwn*” refers to the second apartment of the sanctuary, but what can “*ta hagia*” possibly refer to?
14. **Verse 2** gives the answer: “*ta hagia*” is translated as “**the sanctuary**” or the first apartment of the

sanctuary, more specifically

“ta hagia” (*holies*) → the holy place

“ hagia hagiown” (*holies of holies*) → most holy place

15. The term “ta hagia”, functioning in the context of Hebrews as a noun, is derived from the adjective hagogos, meaning “holy.” The word occurs ten times in Hebrews 8–13 (8:2; 9:1–3, 8, 12, 24, 25; 10:19; 13:11), and can refer to the entire structure of the sanctuary (**Heb 8:2** for instance) or the first apartment exclusively (**Heb 9:2**), depending on the context.
16. **Heb 9:8** does not teach that Jesus began His ministration in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary based on a careful consideration of the original Greek language of the text
17. **Heb 9:8** teaches that Christ’s ministration in the “*hagia*” (or the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary) could not be made manifest, or could not begin as long as the “first tabernacle” was still standing, or still in operation
18. What is the “first tabernacle” referring to in **Heb 9:8**? Two possible interpretations”
19. **Interpretation 1**: In **Heb 9:1–7** each apartment in the earthly sanctuary is referred to as a “tabernacle” or “tent”
  - a. **verses 2, 6**—the first apartment of the sanctuary referred to as tabernacle
  - b. **verse 3, 7**—the second apartment also referred to as “tabernacle”
20. **Interpretation 2**: However, it is also true that the entire sanctuary is viewed as a “tabernacle” or “tent”
  - a. **Heb 8:1–2**—the entire heavenly sanctuary is called the “true tabernacle”
  - b. **Heb 9:11**—the entire heavenly sanctuary is called “the greater and more perfect tabernacle”
21. The context (which begins with Heb 8:1, 2) determines which interpretation resolves this question.
22. The context indicates that the author is comparing the entire sanctuary of the first covenant with the entire sanctuary of the second, or “new covenant” (Heb 8:1, 2, 6–13; 9:1, 11, 24); the immediate context suggests that Paul is simply comparing the two sanctuaries: the earthly and the heavenly.
23. Thus, the reference to “the first tabernacle” in **verse 8** must be understood as a reference to the tabernacle or sanctuary Moses built at Sinai.
24. The New English Bible (NEB) translates **Heb 9:8** as follows:

*“By this the Holy Spirit signifies that so long as the **earlier tent** still stands, the way into the sanctuary remains unrevealed.”*

25. The sense of the passage is simply that as long as “the earlier tent,” that is, the earthly sanctuary, was still active, our Lord’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary cannot operate
26. The New English Translation (NET) translates **Heb 9:8** as follows:

*“The Holy Spirit is making clear that the way into the holy place had not yet appeared as long as the **old tabernacle** was standing.”*

## Heb 9:12 “The Holy Places”

27. **OBJECTION: Heb 9:12 teaches that Jesus began His ministration in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary after He obtained eternal redemption at His death in 31 A.D., not 1844**

- 28. ANSWER:** This objection is based on the understanding that the expression “holy place” (KJV) is a reference to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary
- 29.** Again, the Greek word in **Heb 9:12** translated as “the Most Holy Place” in the NIV and other modern translations is “**ta hagia**” which, as we have already seen, is Paul’s terminology to identify the first apartment of the sanctuary (**Heb 9:2**)
- 30.** It makes perfect sense that if Paul wanted to say in **Heb 9:12** that Jesus entered the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary after He ascended to heaven, he would have used “*hagia hagiOwn*” (holies of holies)

## Heb 9:13 “Bulls and Goats”

- 31. OBJECTION:** Hebrews 9:11–14 with its reference to “*bulls*” and “*goats*” indicate that the Day of Atonement type was fulfilled at Calvary, not in 1844
- On the day of atonement, Aaron’s sin offering was a bull; likewise, the congregation sacrificed a goat (**Lev 16:3, 5**); therefore “*bulls and goats*” in **Heb 9:13** must be referring to the day of atonement cleansing of the sanctuary which was fulfilled at the cross
- 32. ANSWER:** For starters, in the book of Hebrews there are references to a number of sanctuary rituals and not to just one:
- the daily service (**Heb 7:26, 27; Heb 10:11, 12**)
  - the yearly service (Day of Atonement, **Heb 9:7**).
  - the sprinkling of the water of purification made from the ashes of a red heifer (**Heb 9:13**; cf. **Num 19**)
  - the sprinkling of animal blood at the ratification of the covenant at Sinai (**Heb 9:18–21**).
- 33.** While it is true that a bull and a goat were sacrificed on the Day of Atonement (**Lev 16**), they were offered on many other occasions as well
- sin offering of bulls and goats on the new moons (**Num 28:11-15**)
  - sin offerings of bulls and goats on the feast of trumpets (**Num 29:1-5**)
  - daily sin offerings of bulls and goats on the feast of tabernacles (**Num 29:12-39**)
- 34.** The phrase “*bulls and goats*” in **verse 13** means the same thing as “*goats and calves*” in **verse 12**, But it is evident that the similar expression (“*calves and ... goats*”) in **verse 19** is a reference to the sacrifices made at the ratification of the covenant and not to those made on the Day of Atonement.
- 35.** Hence, it is seen that “*bulls and goats*” is the usual expression denoting sacrifices in general (**Ps 50:7-10; 66:15**). Therefore, the expression “*bulls and goats*” in **Heb 9:13**, is not necessarily an allusion to the offering of sacrifices on the Day of Atonement.
- 36.** In **Heb 10:4**, the expression “*bulls and goats*” is used as a generic term to emphasize the repetitious but ineffectual nature of all animal sacrifices to save from sin, irrespective of whether they were offered daily or yearly; in contrast to all that, the blood of Christ is supremely better and only offered once.

## Heb 9:23 The Cleansing the Sanctuary

- 37. OBJECTION:** Heb 9:23 with its reference to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary indicates that Christ’s atoning death cleansed or “*purged*” the heavenly sanctuary in 31 A.D., not 1844;
- 38. ANSWER:** if this is true, then the high priestly work of Jesus in sanctuary is not only irrelevant and also unnecessary; also, Adventism’s central theology of the sanctuary goes out the window, with all its

ugly ramifications

39. It is important to note that the death of a sacrifice alone (the shedding of blood) accomplishes nothing unless the blood of the sacrifice is mediated by a priest in the sanctuary; it is the work of the priest to mediate or apply the merits of the atoning sacrifice
40. In other words, **SHED BLOOD + SPRINKLED BLOOD = ATONEMENT/MEDIATION**
- 41. Whether explicitly mentioned or not, the ministration of the blood in the sanctuary through the priest was always an integral part of the sacrificial act.**
- a. **Lev 4:27:31**—atonement which resulted in the forgiveness of sin required both the death of a sacrifice and the priestly ministration of the blood of the sacrifice
  - b. In **Rom 8:31-34**, justification by faith is possible because of the death of Christ and His ministration as High Priest at the right hand of God (**Heb 8:1**)
  - c. In **Hebrews 2**, the “so great salvation” Paul describes (**verse 3**) is predicated on two things:
    - i. The death of Jesus (**Heb 2:9, 14**)
    - ii. His High Priestly ministration (**Heb 2:17**)
42. Although, not explicitly mentioned, it is therefore understood that the priestly mediation of the blood of the sacrifice accomplished the following in **Hebrews 9**:

	Death of atoning sacrifice	Application through priestly mediation
<b>Verses 12, 13</b>	Blood of goats/calves/bulls	Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh
<b>Verse 14</b>	Blood of Christ	Purge your conscience from dead works
<b>Verses 18–21</b>	Blood of calves/goats	Sprinkled the book and the people (to dedicate; to purify)
<b>Verse 22</b>	Shedding of blood	Remission of sin
<b>Verse 23</b>	Animal sacrifices	Purified the earthly sanctuary
<b>Verse 23</b>	But the blood of Christ	Purifies the heavenly sanctuary

43. If the cross event had in itself “purified” the heavenly sanctuary, there would be no reason for the Savior to function as High Priest according to the order of Melchisedek, and Paul’s calls in the book of Hebrews to follow Jesus by faith in His ministration there is vain and meaningless (**Heb 4:16; Heb 6:19; Heb 10:19**).
44. The fact is, the cross event did not cleanse the heavenly sanctuary at the moment of the Savior’s death, but it did provide the foundation upon which Christ, as man’s High Priest, could mediate His merits and bring about pardon, justification, sanctification and the purification of the sanctuary in heaven from sin.

## Heb 9:25 Every Year

45. **OBJECTION:** the expression the priest entered into the holy place every year with the blood of others” refers to the cleansing of the sanctuary ritual on the day of atonement in 31 A.D., not 1844.
46. **ANSWER:** this objection is based on the understanding that the expression “every year” (*kat’ eniauton*) is understood to refer to the once a year ritual of cleansing the sanctuary on the day of atonement

47. First of all, the expression “**the holy place**” is again “*ta hagia*” in the Greek which is the first apartment of the sanctuary
48. Secondly, “**every year**” in the verse is better translated as “**throughout the year**” or “**all year long**” which fits better with the idea of the daily service setting Paul is conveying in the verse
49. In **Heb 9:7**, when speaking of the service in the second apartment on the day of atonement, Paul used an entirely different phrase: “*hapax tou eniautou*”
  - a. hapax = once
  - b. tou eniautou = every year
50. When speaking of the work of the priest in the first apartment throughout the year, Paul did not use that phraseology in **Heb 9:7**; instead he used “*kat’ eniauton*” (**Heb 9:25; Heb 10:1, 3**)

## Conclusion

51. Despite the objections being leveled against Adventism’s understanding of the dual ministration of Jesus in the heavenly based on **Hebrews 9** and other places, it still stands, and the effort to hide the truth about the powerful ministration of the Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary through these objections, fail.
52. During the time of Paul, the way to the “**holiest of all**” (*hagia*) was made manifest after the first tabernacle (the temple in Jerusalem) no longer stood
53. Today, the way to the “**Holiest of All**” (*hagia hagiOwn*) is made manifest after the work of Jesus in the first tabernacle (the first apartment) ended in 1844
54. It is now our privilege and obligation to understand the work going forward in that apartment and cooperate with Jesus in His work of bringing the gospel work and the great controversy to an end
55. Part of understanding that work is found in being able to defend it against the multitudinous attempts to muffle and detail that message
56. As long as we cannot hold that message up against those who are trying to tear it down, we have not truly understood it, and our faith in that truth is on shaky ground