

Sit Thou at My Right Hand. . .

Ballenger's Divergent View

1. In his book, *Cast Out for the Cross of Christ*, A. F. Ballenger expressed the view that Jesus began His ministration in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, contrary to Adventist belief:

BALLENGER: "My first difficulty with the doctrines taught by Seventh-Day Adventists is the teaching that Christ began his ministry at his ascension, in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. All my life I have believed that he did, but that belief was not the result of personal investigation of the Scriptures, but was the result of accepting as truth the deductions of others. As, in the quotations given above, I trusted to my religious teachers and did not investigate for myself. When I came to present these things to the general public and to defend them with the Word of God, I found myself in difficulty.

"The Scriptures of truth again and again declare in the most explicit terms that Christ, at his ascension, went directly to the Father's throne. And this he must do that the scriptures be not broken, for God himself, by the mouth of David, had long ago published to the world that he would invite his Son to share his throne when he returned from the earth after completing the work of redemption. Here is the invitation: The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Ps. 110:1" – **A. F. Ballenger, *Cast Out for the Cross of Christ*, p. 5.**¹

2. Ballenger then gives a string of verses from the New Testament to show how this prophecy in the Psalms was fulfilled when Jesus sat at the right hand of God in His throne after He ascended to heaven: **Acts 2:34,35; Heb. 1:2; Heb. 1:13; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 10:12,13; Heb. 12:2; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Acts 7:55, 58.**
3. Ballenger notes that "the fact that Christ at his ascension, sat down on his Father's throne, was a most important gospel truth" and is the "chief point" of the whole epistle to the Hebrews;
4. Ballenger insists that the throne where Christ sat with his Father was located in the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary within the veil (the Most Holy Place) at the time of Paul's writing of the Book of Hebrews; he based this on his observation that the shekinah glory above the ark of the covenant which was located in the second apartment of the sanctuary represented the presence and throne of God;

BALLENGER: "The next all important question is, Which apartment of the heavenly sanctuary contains the throne of God? which apartment is the "throne room" of Jehovah?"

¹ <https://archive.org/details/BallengerA.F.CastOutForTheCrossOfChrist1909>

“In the Mosaic sanctuary, the pattern of the true tabernacle, God's dwelling place in heaven, the throne of God abode in the second apartment.

"And thou shalt put the mercy seat ABOVE UPON THE ARK, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony which I shall give thee. And THERE will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are UPON THE ARK of the testament, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." Ex. 25:21, 23.

“Inasmuch as the Mosaic tabernacle was a shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, it follows that the "throne-room" of God in the heavenly sanctuary is in the second apartment. The following quotation is in harmony with this Scriptural truth: (8T 284 and GC 414, 415 quoted)

“Nowhere in the Scriptures are we taught that the throne of God dwelt in the first apartment, either of the earthly or heavenly sanctuary. The earthly sanctuary was a shadow of the heavenly; and the reason why the shadowy throne was in the second apartment in that sanctuary, is that the real throne was in the second apartment of the real sanctuary in heaven. It therefore follows that since Christ at his ascension, sat down as priest on his Father's throne in the heavenly sanctuary, he must have entered into the holy of holies, ‘within the veil’ at that time.”—A. F. Ballenger, **Cast Out for the Cross of Christ, p. 5-6.**

5. If Ballenger’s idea is correct, that the throne of God, at the right hand of which Jesus sat when he ascended to heaven in 31 A.D. was in the second apartment, then it creates a huge predicament for the Seventh-day Adventist Church because of their 1844 datum; Ballenger’s position is also problematic for SDAs because of Ellen White’s statement below which says that the door to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary was never opened before 1844!

Sabbath, March 24, 1849, we had a sweet and very interesting meeting with the brethren at Topsham, Maine. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us, and I was taken off in the Spirit to the city of the living God. Then I was shown that the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ relating to the shut door could not be separated, and that the time for the commandments of God to shine out with all their importance, and for God's people to be tried on the Sabbath truth, was when the door was opened in the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, where the ark is, in which are contained the ten commandments. **This door was not opened until the mediation of Jesus was finished in the holy place of the sanctuary in 1844.** Then Jesus rose up and shut the door of the holy place, and opened the door into the most holy, and passed within the second veil, where He now stands by the ark, and where the faith of Israel now reaches. **EW 42.**

6. Ballenger rejects the idea that the throne of God was located in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary before 1844:

BALLENGER: *“This teaching that God's throne was in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, raises some very serious questions.*

“If the throne of God was moved into the first apartment at the ascension of Christ, did that include the ark?”

“If this teaching of the denomination be true and the mercy seat of Exodus is a type of the throne of grace of Heb 4:16 then it must follow that if the throne of God was located in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary from the ascension of Christ to 1844; then the real ark was in the first apartment during all that time. But this does violence to the type which put the ark in the second apartment with a veil between it and the rest of the furniture of the sanctuary.

“It also does violence to the type by putting all the furniture of the heavenly sanctuary in one apartment and leaving the holy of holies empty and abandoned for eighteen centuries.

“If God moved his throne from the holy of holies at the ascension of Christ, did he leave the mercy seat or throne of grace behind him in the holy of holies? And did he then minister the gospel for eighteen centuries from another seat than the mercy seat, from another throne than the throne of grace?

“If the throne was moved into the first apartment and not the ark containing the law, was the gospel ministered for eighteen centuries divorced from the law?

“At this point there arises to the thoughtful mind a number of serious questions:

“1st. If God moved his throne into the first apartment at the ascension of Christ, and left the sacred ark enshrining his law and covered by the mercy seat, did he move the center of salvation away from the law and mercy seat into another apartment?

“2nd. Did God minister pardon for eighteen centuries from a throne which was not the mercy seat but which was separated from that mercy seat by a separating veil?

“3rd. Did God minister the gospel for eighteen centuries from a seat whose foundation was not his eternal law, from a throne which was divorced from that law by a veil of separation?

“4th. Did God pardon sin from another seat than the one which is the habitation of justice and judgment?

“5th. If God could minister the gospel for eighteen centuries divorced from the law, why can he not continue to do it; as taught by the No-Law advocates?

“6th. Did Christ as High Priest plead his blood for eighteen centuries before a throne whose foundation was not the broken law which demanded the transgressor's blood?

“7th. Did Christ minister his blood before a throne where mercy and truth did not meet together, and where righteousness and peace did not kiss each other?

“Does the reader not see that this doctrine which moves the throne from the holy of holies into the first apartment, divorces God and his Son from the mercy seat and the law, and changes the center of God's government and gospel from the mercy-covered law in the holy of holies to the first apartment which according to the type never contained either law or mercy seat; and that for a period of eighteen hundred years?

“During the last four years I have laid this difficulty before the leading men of the denomination and no one has ventured an explanation. No one has dared to say that when the throne was moved out into the

*first apartment the ark and law went with it; and on the other hand no one has dared to affirm that the law and mercy seat were deserted - left behind in the holy of holies, while the gospel was ministered for eighteen hundred years from a seat which was not the mercy seat and from a throne divorced from the divine law by a separating veil. Reader, if you accept the plain, 'thus saith the Lord,' you need not tamper with the throne of the Infinite but leave it in the holy of holies above the law, 'the great center of the work for man's redemption,' where the whole testimony of Scripture places it." – A. F. Ballenger, **Cast Out for the Cross of Christ, p. 6-11.***

Objection to the Objection

7. The Bible does not teach that the throne of God is permanently attached to or bound to the ark of the covenant; just because in the Mosaic tabernacle, the shekinah glory appeared above the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant does not mean it is forever bound to it;
8. The Bible also does not teach that God has to be in the Most Holy place where the ark is, to be able to minister grace and justice; the mercy seat and the tables of the Law are merely objects that stand for something and God is not bound to these in the exercise of His character of love and justice;
 - a. Ezekiel's detailed description of the throne-chariot of God by the river Chebar, does not include a description of the ark of the covenant (**Ezek 1:1-28**)
 - b. John's detailed description of God's throne in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary from which grace and mercy have been ministered for eighteen centuries, does not contain any reference to the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat and the Law! (**Rev 4:1-10; Rev 5:1-13**)
 - c. It is therefore sheer human speculation to say that God is unable to dispense grace and justice from a throne that is not physically attached to the mercy seat and the tables of the Law!
9. The fact that John sees in vision the throne of God with the seven golden candlesticks at the time he wrote book of Revelation in 95 A.D. (**Rev 4:1-10**) and the fact that he also sees the same throne together with the altar of incense at the same time (**Rev 8:3-5**), is solid Biblical evidence that the throne of God or the throne of grace, at the right hand of which Jesus was invited to sit after He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, was located in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary in the time of John and Paul, not in the Most Holy Place!
10. Ballenger summarily dismisses the above argument with the following words:

BALLENGER: "A desperate effort is made to find scriptural proof that Christ sat upon the throne with his Father in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary until 1844. The Scriptures used are as follows:

"It is argued that inasmuch as the candlestick and the altar of incense were always in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary, therefore when these were seen by John in the heavenly sanctuary, he must have been looking into the first apartment; and as he saw the throne at the same time, the throne must have been in the first apartment.

"But the logic is faulty. One might just as consistently argue that inasmuch as the second apartment was always the abode of the ark or typical throne, therefore when John saw the altar and candlestick at the same time that he saw the throne, they must have been in the second apartment. But both conclusions

are wrong, for both contradict the type because in the type, the ark, or typical throne was never seen in the first apartment; and the altar and candlestick were never seen in the second apartment.—**A. F. Ballenger, Cast Out for the Cross of Christ, p. 12-13.**

11. In Ballenger's thinking, the reason why John saw the throne of God with the seven golden lamp stands and the altar of incense is not because throne of God was in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, but because the inner veil of the heavenly sanctuary was rent at the same time that the veil of the temple of Jerusalem was rent at the death of Christ!

BALLENGER: "But it may be asked, How could John see the throne at the same time he saw the altar unless the throne were moved out into the first apartment, or the altar moved into the second? For the simple gospel reason that when Christ died on Calvary as the antitype of the Lord's goat, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom; symbolizing the rending of the heavenly veil that our great High Priest might enter within the veil and offer his blood at the mercy seat or throne of grace. — **Cast Out for the Cross of Christ, p. 13.**

12. Ballenger quotes **EW 259-260** to give the impression that Ellen White is in agreement with his teaching that the reason why the inner veil of the heavenly sanctuary was rent was so that Jesus could enter into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary, and offer His blood at the mercy seat

BALLENGER (quoting EGW): "The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement." —**Cast Out for the Cross of Christ, p. 13.**"

13. This line of reasoning creates a problem for Ballenger because he had promoted the idea that the veil in Heb 6:19 is the one which separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place; if this veil had been rent and is no longer in place, then his entire argument in Heb 6:19 falls apart! In other words, Ballenger's argument in Heb 6:19 need a veil of separation in place!
14. In reality, the rending of the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was a dreadful object lesson that God designed should have more of a negative impact on the Jews and their economy and less on what is going on in the heavenly sanctuary: the Bible does not teach that just as the veil of the temple in Jerusalem was literally rent from top to bottom during the crucifixion, does not mean that the inner veil of the heavenly sanctuary was also literally rent at the same time!

The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly

The rending of the veil of the temple showed that the Jewish sacrifices and ordinances would no longer be received. The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement. But the Jews were left in total darkness. They lost all the light which they might have had upon the plan of salvation, and still trusted in their useless sacrifices and offerings. **The heavenly sanctuary had taken the place of the earthly, yet they had no knowledge of the change. EW 259-260.**

The system of sacrificial offering forever at an end

When Christ was crucified, the inner veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, signifying that the great final sacrifice had been made, and that the system of sacrificial offering was forever at an end. **DA 165**. See also **EW 253**.

The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary no longer sacred

With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah had dwelt. Here God had manifested His glory above the mercy seat. No one but the high priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the temple. He entered in once a year to make an atonement for the sins of the people. But lo, this veil is rent in twain. The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary is no longer sacred. **DA 757**.

The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary no longer recognized by the Lord

Hitherto the most holy place had been sacredly guarded from intrusion. But now it was open to all eyes. The heavy veil of tapestry, made of pure linen, and beautifully wrought with gold, scarlet, and purple, was rent from top to bottom. The place where Jehovah had met with the high priest, to communicate His glory, the place that had been God's sacred audience chamber, lay open to every eye,--a place no longer recognized by the Lord. **DA 774**.

Wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles broken down

As Jesus hung upon the cross and cried, "*It is finished*", the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, to signify that God would no longer meet with the priests in the temple, to accept their sacrifices and ordinances, and also to show that the partition wall between the Jews and the Gentiles was broken down. Jesus had made an offering of Himself for both, and if saved at all, both must believe in Him as the only offering for sin, the Saviour of the world. **EW 209**. See also **5BC 1108-1109**.

15. Ballenger also states that relocating the throne of God to the first apartment would mean moving the center of the plan of redemption away from the Most Holy Place!
 - a. Ballenger quotes Ellen White to show that the second apartment ministrations is the great center of the plan of redemption

BALLENGER: *Beyond the inner veil was the holy of holies, where centered the symbolic service of atonement and intercession, and which formed the connecting link between heaven and earth. PP 348. -Quoted in Cast Out for the Cross of Christ, p. 9.*

16. In other EGW statements however, the sanctuary as a whole, and not the Most Holy Place exclusively, is the center of God's redemptive work for man; hence Ballenger is not warranted to teach that the Most Holy Place alone is the center of the work of redemption for men.

"Beyond the second veil, the sacred ark with its mystic cherubim, and above it the holy shekinah, the visible manifestation of Jehovah's presence, all but a dim reflection of **the glorious temple of God in heaven**, the great center of the work for man's redemption." **PP 349**.

The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. **GC 488**.

Conclusion

17. The Bible teaches that God's throne is movable; it is often referred to as a chariot (Heb. "merkabah", Hab 3:8)
 - a. **1 Chron 28:18**—the ark of the covenant in the most holy place of the sanctuary is interestingly called by David the chariot of the cherubims;
18. This is the chariot-throne Ezekiel saw in vision by the river Chebar and in the temple in Jerusalem (**Eze 1, Eze 10-12**)
 - a. This is same throne John described as being in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary when he wrote the book of Revelation in 95 A.D. (**Rev 4, 5, 8**)
19. Notice the parallel description of this moving throne by both Ezekiel and John the Revelator:
 - a. Rainbow round the throne
 - b. Sea of glass
 - c. Four cherubims (living creatures) with faces of ox, lion, man, eagle
 - d. The wheels with eyes are mentioned in Ezekiel because it is in motion, bound for the temple of Jerusalem when Ezekiel saw it; not mentioned in John's account because it is stationary in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary
20. This is the throne that Jesus sat with His Father when He ascended to heaven after His resurrection;
21. According to the prophet Daniel, this chariot-throne conveyed the Father (the Ancient of Days) to the second apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (**Dan 7:9-14**); notice the mention and graphic description of the wheels again, because the throne is in motion;
22. Ballenger would not have been adopted his strange position about the throne of God, if he had understood more fully its nature and workings.