

Did God Come Out
to be with Christ?

OR

Did Christ Go In
to be with God?

An Inquiry into the Truth
about Christ's Entry into
the Heavenly Sanctuary at
the time of His Ascension

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DID GOD COME OUT TO BE WITH CHRIST?

OR

DID CHRIST GO IN TO BE WITH GOD?

The two questions set forth above, as the theme of inquiry for this treatise, imply two contradictory teachings. If one teaching is scriptural, the other must be unscriptural. Which of the two is correct can only be safely determined by carefully reading the scriptures, and accepting their testimony. Acceptance of the correct view is essential to a right understanding of the mediatorial work of Christ.

The questions under consideration simply mean, either that God vacated the most holy place in the heavenly sanctuary, to come out to be with Christ in the first apartment (if there be two apartments in heaven), or else that Christ went immediately into the holiest to sit on God's right hand.

The average Bible student will unhesitatingly accept the second proposition as the truth,—That Christ went in to be with God. It is being assiduously taught by some, however, that God came out to be with Christ. Which view shall we accept? And does it make any difference?

In addressing these lines to my Adventist friends, I appeal to the mind rather than to the emotions. Cherished

doctrines and long-standing beliefs are not easily relinquished, I know, and any argument submitted against old teachings is usually looked upon as heresy. I ask the reader, therefore, to regard this writing as both a challenge and an appeal to follow what reason guided by scripture tells him is right, no matter what his feelings may be. I now proceed to review the conflicting positions suggested in the title to this tract.

A WIDELY PROMULGATED THEORY

The following quotations are taken from leading Seventh-day Adventist writers:—

"When Christ commenced His ministry above, on the throne of His Father, that throne was in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary." Uriah Smith, in *"Looking Unto Jesus,"* p. 134.

"Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat." Mrs. E. G. White, in *"Early Writings,"* p. 55.

"This necessitates a removing of God's throne and the ministry of Christ from the first to the second apartment." *"Bible Text Book,"* by O. A. Johnson, p. 120.

These passages are clearly intended to teach that at the ascension God vacated the most holy part of His sanctuary, removed His throne, and came out to be with Christ in the first

apartment. It is then claimed that a further "removing of God's throne" back again to the most holy was necessary in the year 1844 A.D., and that it was there and then that Jesus entered into the holiest.

It calls for serious reflection, that these supposed movements of God's throne from one apartment to another, and then back again, are an accommodation intended to prove a theory. An appeal to scripture should put the issue beyond doubt. The theory necessitating these accommodating moves is that Christ at His ascension entered into only a first apartment of heaven.

As the scriptures abundantly show that Christ, after His sacrifice, "sat down on the right hand of God," it is necessary, in order to harmonise this fact with the Adventist sanctuary theory, to remove God's throne from the most holy place in heaven into the holy place, or first apartment, for a period of over 1810 years. The result is that we are asked to accept the following positions:—

1. That the most holy place was vacant for 1800 years;
2. That for that long period, the holy place accommodated God, and the throne of God, so that Christ might be sitting on the right hand of God while still in the first apartment; and
3. That in 1844, God and Christ, and

the throne, and the ministry, were all transferred to the most holy place.

Where, in the typical service, do we find this "removing of God's throne" from the most holy into the first apartment, and then its removal back to the most holy place? Everyone knows that such movements simply did not take place, in the earthly sanctuary. God dwelt in the holiest, and the high priest **went in to be with God**, "alone, once every year." Heb. 9:7.

So also Christ "entered in once into the holy place," to that very presence of God typified in the earthly service.

The question as to whether or not God's throne is moveable is quite beside the point. The important consideration is **DID God** thus move His throne at the time of the ascension, and again in 1844?

The earthly sanctuary was a place for God to dwell in. "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," was the divine commandment. But "the true" dwelling place of God is "heaven itself." Heb. 9:24. There is a difference between the heavenly and the earthly dwelling place. In the earthly it was necessary to veil off a certain portion, in order that the priests might draw near daily to the divine presence without fear of death. The immediate presence of God was therefore confined to a small portion, termed

the most holy. God's presence is not so confined in heaven. There is no need for that, in the ministry of such a priest as Jesus Christ.

From these facts we must recognise that in the earthly sanctuary there were degrees of holiness, indicated by an intervening veil; but it would not be correct to assume from this that in heaven it is necessary to so divide God's dwelling place into a holy and a most holy portion. In heaven, the approach to God is "through the veil, that is to say [Christ's] flesh." Heb. 10:20.

If we accept the position that Christ at His ascension entered only into a first apartment of heaven, it becomes necessary to bring God out of the most holy place into the first apartment "to be with Christ." And here, according to the teaching, God was with Christ for 1800 years, until in 1844 the Father returned to the most holy, whither Christ followed. This theory therefore indisputably attempts to prove that

God came out to be with Christ.

Let us now look at the second proposition, that

Christ went in to be with God.

Mrs. E. G. White says, "What was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary, is done in reality in

the ministry of the heavenly sanctuary." **"Great Controversy,"** p. 420.

Nowhere in scripture are we taught that God's throne or His immediate presence dwelt in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary, or that He at any time vacated the most holy to be with the high priest in the first apartment. Therefore if **"in reality in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary"** God vacated the most holy in order to be with Christ in the first apartment, it was accomplished **CONTRARY TO TYPE.**

Is not the knowledge of this blunder alone sufficient to shake the faith of all in the accepted Seventh-day Adventist interpretation? Can the reader accept the teaching that "what was done in type in the ministration of the earthly sanctuary, is done in reality in the ministration of the heavenly sanctuary," and at the same time accept also that God vacated the most holy in heaven, and came out to be with Christ, a supposition directly contrary to the type?

Would it not be more harmonious for those who insist on type meeting antitype, to recognise that the heaven of God's immediate presence **IS itself the most holy place?**

To emphasise "what was done in type" calls for equal emphasis upon what was **NOT** done in type. In the type God **did not** come out to be with the

high priest in the first apartment, therefore "in reality" God **did not** come out to be with Christ in the first apartment in heaven.

"HEAVEN . . . IS GOD'S THRONE"

Christ Himself has spoken on this important subject. He identifies heaven itself with the throne of God. "Swear not at all," He commands, "neither by heaven, for it is **God's throne**...."

The epistle to the Hebrews harmonizes, as all scripture does, with the teaching of Christ. Where did Christ enter, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever?" The epistle to the Hebrews answers,—"Into heaven itself." Christ "**sat down on the right hand of God**," Heb. 10:12; 9:24. Is not this sufficient, dear reader? Is it not sufficient to know that Jesus entered into heaven itself, to be with God, as our Mediator? Is it necessary to remove God from one apartment to another, as is taught, just to prove that Christ only entered a first apartment at His ascension? The scriptures do not sanction such tamperings with God's throne; but instead make it definitely clear, that at the time of His ascension,

CHRIST WENT IN TO BE WITH GOD

"Who...when He had by Himself purged our sins, [Christ] sat down on

the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 1:3.

"Christ...through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place." Ch. 9:12 R.V.

Whether we call it the holy place, the most holy, or the holiest, it matters little. Christ entered into **the very presence of God—to His throne**.

The New Testament scriptures do not definitely designate one apartment in distinction from another. It is nevertheless quite clear that where it is stated that Christ went to "the holy place," the immediate presence of God is intended, which in the type corresponded to the most holy place. To this location, Christ went in to be with God. This fact is disputed by the Adventist teaching. The position is maintained that God came out of the most holy to be with Christ in the first apartment, and therefore the expression "holy place" in the epistle to the Hebrews must always signify the first apartment.

That the reference in Heb. 9:12 to THE holy place could mean the equivalent of the second apartment of the earthly sanctuary, or the most holy, is well illustrated by similar references by leading Adventist writers themselves. Of the two following quota-

tions, the first is from the pen of Mrs. E. G. White, and the second from the pen of her husband, James White, when he was editor of "**The Present Truth.**"

"The slumbering church must be aroused, awakened out of its spiritual lethargy, to a realisation of the important duties which have been left undone. The people have not entered into the holy place, where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for His children."

Mrs. E. G. White, in "**The Review & Herald,**" Feb. 25, 1890; quoted by A. G. Daniells, in "**Christ Our Righteousness,**" p. 144.

"But the sinner, to whom Jesus stretched out His arms all the day long, and who had rejected the offers of salvation, was left without an advocate, when Jesus passed into the Holy Place, and shut that door in 1844." Editorial on "The Sanctuary, 2300 days, and The Shut Door," in "**The Present Truth**" for May, 1850.

It cannot be denied that both these writers, while using the expression "holy place," refer specifically to what they would call the second apartment in heaven, or the most holy place. If, however, it is consistent for Adventist writers to thus call the second apartment the holy place, without having to use the superlative degree in order to avoid being misunderstood, it cannot consistently be denied that Paul might speak of "the holy place" and mean exactly the same location.

Turning again to the ninth chapter of Hebrews, a careful reading should be sufficient for any intelligent person

to see that Paul is referring to the most holy place in several instances where he speaks of it as the holy place. See this in verses 8 and 24 in the R.V. as well as in verses 12 and 25 in both versions. The reader is asked to note the following parallel, which constitutes an important feature of the apostle's argument.

In verse 7 it is clearly stated that the earthly high priest went into the second apartment **once every year**. Why was it necessary for him to go in every year? Verse 8 tells us that it was because "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." Notice now that while it was necessary for the Aaronic priests to enter **once every year**, Christ is said to have entered immediately, **once for all**. What the Aaronic priests did **often**, Christ did **once**.

The argument is not that the priests of the Aaronic order entered once every year into the first apartment, but into **the second**. The parallel is that Christ entered **once for all**; and it would be absurd to turn the apostle's reasoning to refer to Christ's entrance into a first apartment, as is attempted.

The Aaronic Order
"But into the **second** went the high priest alone **once every year.**" Heb. 9:7.

The Melchisedec Order
"Through His own blood (Christ) entered in **once for all into the holy place.**" Verse 12, R.V.

As with the Aaronic order, so with the order of Melchisedec; except that whereas the Aaronic priests entered the second apartment continually, or once a year, Christ entered the second **once** only.

Furthermore, Paul shows clearly that it was necessary that the yearly entry of the Aaronic priests should continue until Christ had made open the way into the holiest in heaven. Had Christ not entered the most holy in heaven at the time of His ascension, then it would be necessary for the earthly high-priests to have continued their yearly entry until "the way into the holiest of all" (i.e. "heaven itself") was "made manifest"; which, according to theory would be in 1844 A.D. But Paul assures us that Christ had already entered that "holy place" in his day; so that the yearly or continual entry of the typical service was no longer necessary; and that doubtless was the reason why in the providence of God the earthly temple itself was destroyed not many years afterwards.

"WITHIN THE VEIL"

In Hebrews 6:19, 20, we have a sure guide as to what Paul understood in this matter. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that

within the veil; whither the fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Our hope is **WITHIN THE VEIL**. According to Ex. 26:33, "within the veil" was the portion where the ark of the testimony rested. "The veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy."

Jesus, according to Paul, had not entered the **first** apartment only, as our fore-runner, but "within the veil," "into the holiest," into "heaven itself." The word "fore-runner" is very significant, and proves beyond doubt that Paul understood Christ had already reached the presence of the Father, or the equivalent of the second apartment of the typical sanctuary. If we refer to Heb. 9:7 we find that the Aaronic high priest entered the most holy **alone**. He entered as a **representative only** of those who were outside. No one could follow him: he went **ALONE**.

Christ entered the corresponding holy place in heaven (call it what you may) as our **FORE-RUNNER**. The significance of this, says a recent commentator is the suggestion that the way was open for others to follow Him. So the apostle continues this thought in ch. 10:19. "Having there-

fore boldness, brethren, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near." As Christ has already entered there as our fore-runner, it is now possible for us also to enter, with confidence or boldness, through His blood.

Paul knew this entrance of Christ "within the veil" to be an accomplished fact in his day. There was no possible conception of 1800 years waiting for the event; because Christ had already entered heaven itself, to be with God. Reader, there is nothing confusing in this issue. The scriptures are clear that Christ, after He had purged our sins upon the cross, entered heaven itself, to the very presence of God, as our fore-runner. God did not vacate a most holy place, and come from behind a veil, to be with Christ in a first apartment for 1800 years, and then all,—the Father and the Son, with the throne, retire "within the veil" after 1844 A.D. No indeed! Christ went in to be with God at His ascension, and has been sitting there on God's right hand ever since.

The following paragraph from the American "**Signs of the Times**" for October 4, 1938, written by the editor, shows where our confidence should be during these changing times.

"Though we cannot remove ourselves physically from the scene, though we must

needs feel, as it were, the wash of the waves upon us, and behold the desolation all around, yet we may have our souls' anchor embedded deep 'within the veil' of the temple of God above. Heb. 6:9."

No-one will dispute the fact that the editor of the "**Signs**", in quoting Heb. 6:19 refers to the most holy place. It is indeed a blessed truth, that "our souls' anchor must be embedded deep 'within the veil'" of the most holy of the temple of God, as the editor above-quoted has written; but this was already true in the days of the apostle Paul, when the epistle to the Hebrews was written.

"Within the veil" means "the most holy" to present-day writers, including even a Seventh-day Adventist editor. "Within the veil" meant "the most holy" to all Old Testament writers without exception. How inconsistent then, to interpret Paul's use of the expression "within the veil" to mean a supposed **first** apartment in heaven, when present-day usage, the most ancient usage from the time of Moses, and the unvaried usage of Paul's own day indisputably refers it to the holiest of all!

"How readest thou?" Is the reader willing to follow the scriptures entirely, even though this means relinquishing some views held in the past? and perhaps involves some suffering for

Christ's sake? And have you, reader, also entered into that holiest of all "within the veil" through the blood of Christ? We need now the full light of the Gospel, of which the immediate entry of Christ at the ascension to the most holy place of the Father's unveiled presence is an important part. "Search the scriptures," and "prove all things," for it is only by so doing we can be assured of knowing the truth so essential for these times.

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Further supplies of this tract may be obtained from the author, Mr. A. P. Ward, Natuvu, Fiji, who invites correspondence. Tracts free on request to the author or the publishers.

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