

“WHERE JESUS HAS GONE AS A FORERUNNER ON OUR BEHALF” (HEBREWS 6:20)

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In a recent short article Roy Gane has argued convincingly that the LXX background to Heb 6:19-20 supports the interpretation that Christ entered “the inner part of the heavenly sanctuary”¹ at the time of Jesus’ ascension. In his brief note, Gane challenges the view of G. E. Rice that Heb 6:19-20 has an entirely different context to the LXX data. Rice argued in several places that Heb 6:19-20 was not specific as to which veil was meant.² Gane’s case to the contrary seems cogent to me. However, there are several elements in Rice’s argument that Gane’s short paper was not able to address. This article, which essentially agrees with Gane, is an addendum to and expansion of his brief note.

Hebrews 6:19-20 uses rich metaphors and OT allusions in asserting that both hope and Jesus have entered “within the veil.” The great majority of NT scholars conclude that the background to this declaration (Heb 6:19-20) is the Aaronic high priest’s entrance into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. For example, B. F. Westcott wrote, “Hope enters to the innermost Sanctuary, the true Holy of Holies, that presence of God, where Christ is.”³ More recent commentators, such as F. F. Bruce, Otto Michel, G. W. Buchanan, Otfried Hofius, P. E. Hughes, S. J. Kistemaker, H. W. Attridge, D. A. Hagner, W. L. Lane, H.-F. Weiss, Paul Ellingworth, and D. A. deSilva are equally certain that Heb 6:19-20 draws on Lev 16:2, 12, 15 (verses which describe the earthly high priest’s Day of Atonement entrance into the most holy place) to depict Jesus’ ascension to heaven.⁴ Indeed, so confident are modern commentators

¹R. E. Gane, “Re-Opening *Katapetasma* (“Veil”) in Hebrews 6:19,” *AUSS* 38 (2000): 5-8.

²G. E. Rice, “Within Which Veil?” *Ministry*, June 1987, 20-21; idem, “Hebrews 6:19: Analysis of Some Assumptions Concerning *Katapetasma*,” in *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, ed. F. B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 229-234 (reprinted with corrections by the author from *AUSS* 5 [1987]: 65-71); idem, *The Priesthood of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*[s] (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 1-56.

³B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays*, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan, 1892), 163.

⁴Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 12th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 253-254; G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 116;

about the allusion to the Day of Atonement in Heb 6:19-20 that it is rare for any other possibility to even gain a mention.

George Rice is thus boldly going against the scholarly consensus when he argues that *katapetasma* [veil] is introduced simply to locate where Jesus is ministering—the place where the hope of the covenant people is centered and from whence the covenant blessings are dispensed.⁵ Elsewhere he states “that the word *veil* is used metaphorically to point to the sanctuary as a whole, and that, unlike Hebrews 9:3, Hebrews 6 makes no attempt to identify to which veil it refers.”⁶

Rice appeals to three considerations in his argument that Heb 6:19-20 refers to Jesus’ entering the heavenly sanctuary as a whole without specific reference to the Day of Atonement or the most holy place. First, he notes that the word *καταπέτασμα* as used in the LXX is nonspecific and can refer to any one of several veils of the tabernacle. Second, he maintains that the comparative adjective *εσωτερου* simply means “within” and may “just as well be the first apartment of the sanctuary as the ‘inner shrine.’”⁷ Third, he contends that the context of Lev 16:2, 12, 15 is entirely different from Heb 6:19-20 and should not be appealed to in exegeting the latter passage. In my opinion these three contentions cannot be sustained by reference to the texts.

καταπέτασμα and the LXX Evidence

Rice argues that the LXX translators used *καταπέτασμα* quite indiscriminately for the curtain of the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance of the sanctuary, and the curtain before the most holy place. He notes that of the eleven references to the curtain at the entrance of the sanctuary, the LXX uses *καταπέτασμα* six times; and of the six references to the courtyard veil, the LXX uses *καταπέτασμα* five times. From this data

Otfried Hofius, *Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1972), 87-89; P. E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 236; S. J. Kistemaker, *Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary (Welwyn, Herts: Evangelical Press, 1984), 176; H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia, PA: Fortress, 1989), 184-185; F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 155; D. A. Hagner, *Hebrews*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 98; W. L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1991) 154; H.-F. Weiss, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*, 15th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), 367-368; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 347; D. A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle “to the Hebrews”* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 251, n. 98.

⁵Rice, “Hebrews 6:19,” 234.

⁶Rice, “Within Which Veil?” 21.

⁷Rice, “Hebrews 6:19,” 232.

he infers that "to declare that the veil in Hebrews 6:19 is the inner veil because the Septuagint uses *katapetasma* for this veil is erroneous."⁸ Early Adventist writers relied on the same data to draw the identical conclusion.⁹

In fact the data are not nearly as ambiguous as Rice claims (see n. 10 below). By my reckoning the LXX uses *καταπέτασμα* for the veil of the courtyard five times. These five references where *καταπέτασμα* is used for the veil of the courtyard are clarified by added genitival phrases. In addition, the LXX renders four of the ten references in the Masoretic text to the veil at the entrance of the sanctuary proper with *καταπέτασμα*. Again, the added genitival phrases preclude ambiguity. Lastly, the inner veil is mentioned unequivocally in the Hebrew Bible twenty-three times, and twenty-two of these are rendered in the LXX by *καταπέτασμα*.¹⁰

⁸Rice, "Within Which Veil?" 21.

⁹See W. G. Johnsson, "Day of Atonement Allusions," in *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, ed. F. B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 105-120; P. G. Damsteegt, "Among Sabbatarian Adventists, 1845-1850," in *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: A Historical Survey*, ed. F. B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989), 17-55, esp. 54.

¹⁰The Hebrew word *קַוֵּה* is used seven times for the courtyard curtain (Exod 27:16; 35:17; 38:18; 40:8, 33; Num 3:26; 4:26), and the LXX translates these with *καταπέτασμα* only twice (Exod 37:16 = 38:18; Num 3:26). The LXX also uses *καταπέτασμα* twice for the veil of the courtyard where there appears to be no equivalent in the Hebrew (Num 4:32; 1 Kings 6:36). It is also probable that the single use of *καταπέτασμα* in Exod 39:19 = 39:40 (*קַוֵּה*) refers both to the courtyard curtain and to the curtain at the entrance of the tabernacle. Thus there are five places in the LXX where *καταπέτασμα* refers to the courtyard veil, but only two of these are based directly on the seven references in the Hebrew. Furthermore, each of these examples is unequivocal because of the qualifying genitives, thus: τὸ καταπέτασμα τῆς πύλης τῆς αὐλῆς (Exod 37:16; Num 3:26; 4:32); καταπέτασμα τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ αἰλᾶμ τοῦ οἴκου (1 Kgs 6:36); τὸ καταπέτασμα τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τῆς πύλης τῆς αὐλῆς (Exod 39:19).

The Masoretic text also uses *קַוֵּה* nine times for the outer veil of the tabernacle (Exod 26:36, 37; 35:15; 36:37; 39:38, [40]; 40:5, 28; Num 3:25; 4:25). The LXX uses *καταπέτασμα* for four of these references (Exod 26:37; 37:5 = 36:37; 39:19 = 39:40; 40:5 [κάλυμμα καταπετάσματος]). Again ambiguity is precluded by the added genitives: τὸ καταπέτασμα τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου (Exod 37:5); καταπέτασμα τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς (Exod 39:19); κάλυμμα καταπετάσματος ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου (Exod 40:5). In Exod 26:37 τὸ καταπετάσματι is in parallel to ἐπίσπαστρον τῆ θύρα (v. 36), which clarifies the reference to the first veil of the tabernacle.

The Hebrew word *כַּוֵּשֶׁת* is used for the inner veil that divided the sanctuary into its two chambers. The word occurs twenty-five times in the Masoretic text (Exod 26:31, 33 [thrice], 35; 27:21; 30:6; 35:12; 36:35; 38:27; 39:34; 40:3, 21, 22, 26; Lev 4:6, 17; 16:2, 12, 15; 21:33; 24:3; Num 4:5; 18:7; 2 Chr 3:14). The LXX translates *כַּוֵּשֶׁת* with *καταπέτασμα* on twenty-four occasions; the only exception is 39:20 = 39:34, which uses τὰ ἐγκαλύμματα to translate *קַוֵּה כַּוֵּשֶׁת* ('the screening curtain'). The expanded phrase *קַוֵּה כַּוֵּשֶׁת* occurs in three other verses (Exod 35:12; 40:21; Num 4:5), and the LXX reflects this on two occasions: τὸ κατακάλυμμα τοῦ καταπετάσματος (Exod 40:21); τὸ καταπέτασμα τὸ συσκιάζον (Num 4:5).

There are three references that could refer to either the inner or outer veils of the tabernacle, namely, Lev 21:23 (פִּרְכָּה); Num 18:7 (פִּרְכָּה); and Num 3:10 (no Hebrew equivalent). Rice classifies these three as references "to the first veil of the sanctuary," but the texts are not so clear as to allow this without qualification.¹¹ Thus, whenever καταπέτασμα is used absolutely and/or with a prepositional phrase to translate the Hebrew word פִּרְכָּה, with two possible exceptions (Lev 21:23; Num 18:7), it refers to the inner veil.¹² It is important, therefore, to note that καταπέτασμα in Heb 6:19 is used absolutely (that is, it is not qualified by any genitival phrase), and furthermore, it is used with a prepositional phrase. Thus, although Rice correctly infers that the mere presence of καταπέτασμα of itself in Heb 6:19 does not indicate indisputably that the inner veil is meant, the evidence of the LXX (and the underlying Hebrew text) certainly points strongly in that direction.

The Significance of τὸ ἐσώτερον

Rice maintains that in Lev 16:2 and Heb 6:19 ἐσώτερον "should be taken as a positive adjective and not a comparative adjective"—that is, ἐσώτερον is equivalent to ἔσω and should be translated simply as "within."¹³ This conclusion is used to support Rice's view "that Jesus' position at God's right hand is thought of by the author as an aspect of Jesus' heavenly ministry which parallels the activities in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary."¹⁴ An examination of the usage of ἐσώτερον in the Greek Bible demonstrates that it cannot support the weight Rice puts on it.

It is quite impossible to restrict the meaning of ἐσώτερον to "within." In 1 Sam (= 1 Kgdms) 24:4, David and his men sit in the innermost part of the cave (ἐσώτερον τοῦ σπηλαίου). Ἐσώτερον in 2 Chr 4:22 refers to the inner door of the most holy place (ἡ θύρα τοῦ οἴκου ἡ ἐσωτέρα εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων). Frequently, ἐσώτερον is used to convey the idea of an inner court or gate beyond an outer one (2 Chr 23:20; Esth 4:11; Ezek 44:27; 45:19; 46:1; 1 Macc 9:54).¹⁵ The NRSV quite correctly translates

¹¹Rice, "Hebrews 6:19," 231.

¹²Gane has presented a good case for taking even Lev 21:23 and Num 18:7 as references to the inner veil (see 6, n. 5).

¹³Rice, *The Priesthood of Jesus*, 31; "Hebrews 6:19," 232-233. In a private letter to me, Rice confirms his basic position concerning ἐσώτερον, but hesitates to say outright that the comparative is used for the positive (25 October 1988).

¹⁴Ibid., 17.

¹⁵For a plan of the Ezekiel court, see S. H. Horn, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Bible*

Acts 16:24 as “in the innermost cell” (εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν). There really is no reason on the basis of the term ἐσώτερον alone for excluding the meaning “innermost” from its semantic range. This is especially so since in Hellenistic Greek the comparative with the article (as is the case in Heb 6:19) generally has superlative force.¹⁶ Therefore, the LXX of Lev 16:2 could just as readily mean the “innermost part from the curtain” as Rice’s more generalized “within the veil.”

However, the real problem with Rice’s approach is his insistence on examining the “key parts” of the phrase εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος independently of one another instead of researching the phrase as a whole.¹⁷ This approach is methodologically unsound. Rice emphasizes that in Heb 9:3 the author adds the numeral δεύτερον to clarify which veil is meant, but it is just as important to note that in Heb 6:19 he adds εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον, for the total phrase indicates just as clearly as δεύτερον which veil is meant. The phrase occurs only five times in the Greek Bible, four times in the LXX and once in the NT.¹⁸ They are as follows:

Exod 26:33	εἰσοίσεις . . . ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος
Lev 16:2	εἰσπορευέσθω . . . εἰς τὸ ἅγιον ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος
Lev 16:12	εἰσοίσει ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος
Lev 16:15	εἰσοίσει . . . ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος
Heb 6:19	εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος . . . εἰσῆλθεν

The four references from the LXX all refer to the most holy place. The Hebrew behind these four references is מִבֵּית לַפְּרֹכֶת. This phrase occurs

Dictionary, rev. ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1979), s.v. “Temple,” 1098.

¹⁶A. T. Robinson states: “Indeed one may broadly say with Blass, that in the κοινή vernacular the comparative with the article takes over the peculiar functions of the superlative” (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3d ed. [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919], 667-668); cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 32-33.

¹⁷Rice, “Within the Veil,” 20.

¹⁸The phrase is not found in Philo or Josephus. The nearest configurations are πρὸς τοῖς ἀδύτοις καταπετάσματος ἐσωτέρω τοῦ προτέρου (Philo, *Spec. Leg.* 1.231—“to sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times over against the veil at the inner shrine, beyond the first veil” [Loeb translation]); ἐν ἀδύτοις εἶσω τοῦ προτέρου καταπετάσματος (*Spec. Leg.* 1.274—referring presumably to the outer veil); ἐν ἀδύτῳ . . . τῶν καταπετάσμάτων εἶσω (Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 2.95); τὸ ἐσωτάτω καταπέτασμα (Philo, *Gig.* 53); and πρὸ τοῦ καταπετάσματος τοῦ ἀδύτου (Josephus, *AJ* 8.90). Philo carefully distinguishes between the two veils, using κάλυμμα for the outer, and καταπέτασμα for the inner (*Vit. Mos.* 2.87, 101), though it may be going too far to say that Philo uses καταπέτασμα “exclusively for the inner veil” (Gane, 8, and n. 13, but see *Spec. Leg.* 1.274).

in one other place, Num 18:7. Numbers 18:7 is one of the three LXX texts where it is unclear whether the first or second veil of the tabernacle is meant.¹⁹ The LXX reflects this uncertainty by using language for these three texts that is quite different from the four verses listed above: ἔσω τοῦ καταπέτασματος (Num 3:10, no equivalent in the Hebrew); τὸ ἔνδοθεν τοῦ καταπέτασματος (Num 18:7 מִבְּיַח לַפָּרֹכֶת); πρὸς τὸ καταπέτασμα οὐ προσελεύσεται (Lev 21:23 אֶל-הַפָּרֹכֶת). The Greek of these passages is quite different from that found in Heb 6:19, so these three verses cannot provide a linguistic background for Heb 6:19. Accordingly, there are only four verses in the LXX that reflect the language of Heb 6:19, namely, Exod 26:33; Lev 16:2, 12, 15—all of which refer unequivocally to the most holy place. Does the context of Heb 6:19 differ so radically from these four LXX passages that we are obliged, as Rice argues, to ignore the linguistic similarity between Heb 6:19 and Lev 16:2, 12, 15?

The Context of Hebrews 6:19-20

Because Heb 6:19 does not use ἄγιον with ἑσώτερον, as is the case in Lev 16:2, Rice argues that this distances Heb 6:19 from Lev 16:2.²⁰ The fact that Exod 26:33 and Lev 16:12, 15 also lack the additional ἄγιον militates against the force of this opinion. The common pattern between Exod 26:33; Lev 16:2, 12, 15; and Heb 6:19 is obvious and cannot easily be ignored. Rice's attempt to shift the background of Heb 6:19-20 from the Day of Atonement to the Abrahamic covenant is also quite unconvincing.

Rice argues that the term καταπέτασμα is simply dropped into a discussion of the Abrahamic covenant and the dispensing of that covenant.²¹ There is nothing, he maintains, in the context to indicate which veil is referred to. This ignores the strong parallel between the promise that was confirmed by an oath, which God gave to Abraham (Heb 6:13-17) and the divine oath that installed Jesus as the Melchizedek high priest and a guarantor of a better covenant (Heb 7:20-22). The unalterable nature of the divine oath is common to both passages (6:17-18; 7:20-21, 28). Hebrews 6:19-20 acts as a link-verse between these two passages and concludes with the promise that Jesus is a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.²² Hence Heb 6:19-20 is as much

¹⁹As previously noted, Gane makes a good case for taking Lev 21:23 and Num 18:7 as references to the inner veil; see 6, n. 5 above.

²⁰Rice, "Hebrews 6:19," 232.

²¹Ibid, 234.

²²Rice's conclusion, based on his belief that Heb 7:1-10.39 forms a "three-step chiasm," agrees that Jesus as King-Priest is central to Hebrews, not least in Heb 6:20 (G. E. Rice, "The Chiasmic

about high priesthood as it is about covenant, and the priesthood theme is not something that the author “simply dropped” in.

Furthermore, Heb 6:19-20 is not merely concerned with the investment of Jesus into the Melchizedek high priesthood, but also assures us that as our forerunner he has *entered* within the veil. Hebrews’ contrast between Jesus’ Melchizedek high priesthood and the Aaronic high priesthood is particularly concerned with how and where the respective priests entered (9:6-7, 11-12, 24-25). There is only one passage in the OT that speaks of the high priest going within the veil—that is the Day of Atonement chapter, Lev 16. Even Exod 26:33 is excluded, for the command there addresses Moses and refers to the setting up of the tabernacle, not to its cultic service. The phrase “the innermost place from the veil” cannot be dissociated from the contextual terms “high priest” and “entered”; and these terms are not the language of the Abrahamic covenant.

The aorists (v. 20) are instructive too: “having become an high priest” (ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος), “Jesus entered” (εἰσήλθεν Ἰησοῦς). Jesus’ entrance is not something he did partially, or momentarily; nor is it something he is to do repeatedly, as is the case with the Aaronic high priests, but something he has concluded once for all.²³ The LXX passages in Lev 16 use the present imperative or the future tense, and the Greek of Hebrews is always present tense when speaking of the Levitical priests. Contrariwise, Hebrews consistently uses the aorist when speaking of Jesus’ self-offering or entrance into the presence of God.²⁴ That the one priesthood was ongoing while the other was final is an essential part of Hebrews’ contrast.

The Parallel with Heb 10:19-20

Rice argues, on the basis of his belief that Heb 6:19-20 and 10:19-34 form corresponding components of a chiasm, that whatever veil is referred to in 6:19 must also be referred to in 10:20.²⁵ On his premises,

Structure of the Central Section of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *AUSS* 10 [1981]: 243-246).

²³Thus, it is incorrect to think of Jesus temporarily entering the heavenly holiest to dedicate his office, only to retreat to some outer region of the heavenly sanctuary. On the other hand, denying that Jesus continues to make an offering for sin beyond the cross is not to deny that he continues to minister the benefits of his atonement to all who seek him.

²⁴For the aorist in connection with Jesus’ offering and entrance, see Heb 1:3, 4; 2:18; 5:10; 6:20; 7:26, 27; 8:3; 9:11, 12, 15, 28; 10:12. The present subjunctive in Heb 9:25 is, of course, in the form of a denial.

²⁵Rice, “Within the Veil,” 21. In his more scholarly article, Rice consistently translates “inner shrine” for καταπέτασμα in both passages (“The Chiasmic Structure of the Central Section,” 243-246).

this means the outer veil at the entrance of the tabernacle. However, we have shown that this view is incorrect, and that the language of Heb 6:19-20 has as its background the Day of Atonement entrance of the Aaronic high priest into the most holy place. Consequently, if there is any chiasmic parallel between 6:19-20 and 10:19-20, we must conclude that the latter passage also refers to the high priest's entrance into the most holy place on the Day of Atonement. This is confirmed when one notes the parallel nature of the two passages.²⁶

Hebrews 6:19-20	Hebrews 10:19-21
ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν <u>ἔχομεν</u> τῆς ψυχῆς, ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην	<u>Ἔχοντες</u> οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρηρησίαν
<u>εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος</u> , ²⁰ ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν	<u>διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος</u>
<u>εἰσῆλθεν</u> Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν	<u>εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ</u>
<u>Μελχισέδεκ ἀρχιερεὺς</u> γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα	καὶ <u>ἱερέα μέγα</u> ν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ

The parallel nature of the passages leaves little doubt that the veil in both texts is the same—that is the inner veil. The use of the neuter plural τῶν ἁγίων in Heb 10:19 supports this. It is true, as Rice says, that the LXX demonstrates that τὰ ἅγια is a general reference for the whole sanctuary.²⁷ However, context can give a general reference term a specific meaning. “Car,” for example, is a general term, but if I say that someone drove off in their car it is reasonable to assume that they are seated in the driver’s seat. Any first-century Jew who read Hebrews’ language of an annual entrance of the high priest by means of blood through the veil into the sanctuary, would think of the Day of Atonement. This was the only occasion when *all these acts occurred at one time*.²⁸

²⁶I have abridged and rearranged Heb 10:19-21 for the purpose of the parallel.

²⁷Rice, *The Priesthood of Jesus*, 38-46.

²⁸I have dealt with these issues elsewhere; see my “*Tout estin sarkos autou* (Heb. X. 20):

Conclusion

Adventist exegesis of Hebrews is often influenced by eschatological premises drawn from Daniel and Revelation, premises that lead to a bias against seeing Day of Atonement language in the Hebrews passages that describe Jesus' triumphant ascent into the presence of God. Thus, Rice has Jesus' post-ascension ministry at the right hand of God occurring in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary. He allows that Hebrews also teaches a second-apartment ministry, but he believes that Hebrews leaves its commencement to an unspecified date in the future.²⁹

This position underestimates the force of the aorist and of the other terms of finality and perfection that are so frequent in Hebrews' affirmation of Jesus in contrast to the old Aaronic order. Furthermore, Hebrews uses this language of finality in connection with Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary.³⁰

Of course, the theological concerns of Hebrews should not be debased into crassly spatial terms no matter to what part of the sanctuary one relates the author's language. It goes without saying that the legitimate Adventist insight that the last judgment includes Christians is not jeopardized by faithfully accepting the theology of Hebrews. Nor should Adventists, on the basis of Hebrews, abandon their conviction that Christians' lives are assessed prior to the Second Advent. Such a viewpoint places the judgment of believers very much within the framework of the gospel, and no Christian community need apologize for doing that. On the other hand, Hebrews certainly confirms the Adventist concern to do justice to the continuing validity of the historic atonement wrought through the death of Jesus. Therefore, the essence of Adventist theology has nothing to fear from an unbiased exegesis of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Apposition, Dependent or Explicative?" *NTS* 20 (1974): 100-104; idem, "The Gospel According to Hebrews 9," *NTS* 27 (1981): 198-210.

²⁹See Rice, *The Priesthood of Jesus*, 53-54.

³⁰A significant, but not unique, recognition of this is the Consensus Document that resulted from the historic meeting of the Sanctuary Review Committee at Glacier View Ranch, Colorado, 10-15 August 1980. The Consensus Document was accepted by 114 leading Adventist administrators and scholars and contains this statement: "The symbolic language of the Most Holy Place, 'within the veil,' is used to assure us of our full, direct, and free access to God ([Heb] chaps. 6:19-20; 9:24-28; 10:1-4)" ("Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," *Ministry*, October 1980, 17).