

Editorial

In this issue we discuss the one passage (Heb 6:19-20) that over time has proven more difficult for Seventh-day Adventists to deal with than any other. It appears to strike at the very heart of what we say about the sanctuary, which in turn affects our understanding of Christ's return. The issues are not inconsequential. Take the advent out of Adventism and nothing remains.

So far we have not been able to explain the above passage in such a way that it stays explained. Each generation has had to come to grips with the fact that in Hebrews Christ enters "the inner sanctuary behind the curtain" (Heb 6:19) at His ascension in the first century A.D. And for each generation it is a problem. The reason why is that in Daniel Christ does not start ministering in the second apartment until the end of the 2300 days in 1844, almost two thousand years later (see Dan 8:13-14).

But the problem is one of our own making. It does not derive from maintaining that the experience of our pioneers in 1844 was valid but rather from sharing with our critics a crucial assumption which they and we alike bring to our study of Heb 6. In my paper entitled, "The Case for Metaphor in Heb 6:19-20," I seek to remove the problem by removing the assumption which causes the problem. That assumption is that we must interpret Heb 6:19-20 literally. I submit that it is metaphorical.

The challenge before us is not to chart a new course in the book of Hebrews but to finish charting an established course well. If earlier suggestions have already achieved the desired results, why do we still have a problem? If they have not, why should we merely reprint solutions that have failed in the past? Something must change.

Last year I wrote about Dan 11:40-45 ("Toward a Typological Interpretation of Dan 11:40-45," No. 22/Apr 90), linking the last verses of Dan 11 with the last chapters of *Great Controversy*. That approach was different. And yet how does it weaken our understanding of either Dan 11 or *Great Controversy* to study them together? What I propose for Heb 6:19-20 is also different. But my motives for proposing it are to defend established positions.

We must bind the loose ends together. It is unacceptable for the church to be fragmented with conservative Daniel Adventists in one camp and liberal Hebrews Adventists in another. Our need is for Bible Adventists who have made all the data from both books coequally their friends. The Holy Spirit is not divided against Himself. Our model must be rich enough, and simple enough, and biblical enough to do justice to every truth that falls anywhere within the purview of the topic, from whatever quarter. Doing this can be expected to have a seminal influence on our understanding in other areas as well.

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