

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

1. Is There a Temple in Heaven?

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<https://youtu.be/6TftzmevhM8>

There are currently three basic views on the heavenly temple. One of them is that of Dr. Gerard Pfandl, former vice-president of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference (SDA). For him, there is a sanctuary in heaven, but we cannot know how it is arranged. Pfandl is followed by many in our church, who deny a physical and visible correspondence between the earthly temple and the heavenly one, preferring a functional correspondence between both sanctuaries. For those interested in Pfandl's views on this issue, see my critiques of his views on my webpage:

A second more radical view is that of Jean-Claude Verrechia, former professor of theology at the SDA French Seminar (today Institute) of Collonges-sous-Saleve, France; and later professor of theology in Newbold College, England. While at the Protestant Faculty of Theology of the University of Strasbourg, he prepared a doctoral dissertation on the Sanctuary in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For him, there is no sanctuary in heaven, but just a symbol of the presence of God. In his public dissertation before the jury and about fifty SDAs who attended the defense of his thesis, he said that he didn't believe in the existence of the heavenly sanctuary as his church believed. He reached his conclusion based on the Jewish Hellenistic views of Philo of Alexandria, and was greatly inspired by the Australian theologian Edward Heppenstal, who was followed in turn by his disciple Desmond Ford.

How can we answer these new modern views on the heavenly temple, from the perspective of what our church has believed from the beginning of our history, and still believes? As one of the scholars of the University of Strasbourg told my friend Jean-Claud Verrechia in the defense of his dissertation, we may have problems today believing in a real temple in heaven. But this was not a problem for the Jews of the first century, because they believed in the existence of a real temple in heaven.

In this series of ten dialogues with my sons Daniel and Roy, we will answer about 300 questions that people have asked about the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation. And in this first dialogue, *Is There a Temple in Heaven?*, we will introduce the matter acknowledging that our answers to these new views will determine in a great measure, how we will understand the visions of the book of Revelation, and the kind of literary structural arrangement we will propose for that book. If you want to grow in the knowledge of this important topic in the Bible and, especially, in the book of Revelation, be patient, and allow my sons and me to ask and respond, little by little, to the many questions that some have raised today in the study of these important issues for our faith.

Let me share the first link which you can find under the title of this message. The rest of the ten links will be shared once per week, with an additional written commentary to introduce each one.

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

2. The Temple of the Book of Revelation

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2S9j4WZBk64>

My first dialogue with my two sons, Daniel and Roy, was on the existence of the heavenly temple. In the written introduction, I provided a link where I criticize the views of Gerard Pfandl regarding the temple in heaven. Pfandl believes in a real sanctuary in heaven, but presumes that we cannot know how it is arranged. He prefers to speak, like many, of the functional role of the heavenly sanctuary rather than on a physical existence and spatial correlation of the earthly to the heavenly sanctuary. But Koot Van Wik, who teaches in South Korea, asked me for a link to the doctoral dissertation of Jean-Claude Verrechia, the other SDA theologian whom I mentioned, to study his thesis for himself. As you will doubtless remember, I refer to Verrechia's views as an example of how some go further than the views of Pfandl, denying the existence of a temple in heaven, and presuming that the only purpose of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to show the now insufficiency and lack of necessity of the earthly temple.

Since I don't have an electronic link to Jean-Claude's thesis, Koot asked the help of "brother" Google and wrote to me: "Smile! Elijah is not alone! There are other prophets..." And he shared with me a link to a criticism published by the Argentinian magazine of the SDA University of River Plate, where another French author exposed the serious problems of Verrechia's views. "I am so excited about this author. True Adventist", Koot wrote to me in reference to Andry Ranivoarizaka, who didn't study in SDA institutions, but has a clear view on the true message of our church regarding the nature of the heavenly sanctuary. This is the link to the article of Andry, "The Reality of the Heavenly Sanctuary: Why would it Matter for Adventism?"

<https://documents.pub/document/3-the-reality-of-the-heavenly-sanctuary-why-would-it-matter-15-millard-j.html>

According to what we can read there, Verrechia affirms today that non-Adventist scholars cannot understand or accept the simple views of our church. Therefore, he proposes that in order to survive as Adventists, we should adopt a platonic Hellenistic view on the heavenly sanctuary, like that adopted by Philo in Alexandria in the first century. For Verrechia, the heavenly sanctuary is the universe, which would be, like God, timeless and spaceless. Ranivoarizaka concludes that if this is not a pantheistic view, it is located in pantheistic territory.

There are three things that I want to bring out here on the views of Jean-Claude.

1. For him, the norm for determining truth is the scholarly world, what they can understand or not. In other words, the world is the judge of what Adventists can believe. His basic problem is the problem of several other SDA theologians who want to find a place of recognition and distinction among the "wisest" men of our time, and at the same time, to gain recognition in our church, by teaching them things that most Adventists presumably don't know.

In my first encounter with Verrechia in the University of Strasbourg, I told him that I went to that university to try to understand why our message on the sanctuary was not understood in the theological world, and then, to try to find the best way to introduce our message in that milieu. But Verrechia told me: "I don't believe what our church believes. I don't believe that there is a sanctuary in heaven. And I intend to prove it here." His mentor asked him to document the views of his church, and he gave him

statements of E. G. White and the book *Questions and Doctrine* on the heavenly temple. No wonder that several years later, one of the scholars of the Protestant Faculty told another SDA student, that the University does not change the views of the students who go there. "Some SDA's come here and keep their faith. Others come and try to find documentation to justify views that are in opposition to what their church believes. They developed those views before coming here."

2. The second derived point is that Verrechia tries to interpret the Bible through Greek philosophy, and tries also to impose pagan Hellenistic views on the revealed Word of God. This is very common today among SDA theologians and pastors. They want to impose on the Bible the social criteria of the corrupted modern world. Concerning the temple of the book of Revelation, many try to read the visions of John in the light of these new trends. They try to impose, if not Platonic views, some rabbinic literary patterns in that tradition that have nothing to do with what the Lord revealed to John. We will see this clearly in our dialogues on the temple of Revelation.

3. A third point is that Verrechia was teaching for years in SDA theological centers in France and England, sharing his views with pastors, views that destroy the SDA doctrine of the sanctuary. One of his former students wrote to me: "Jean-Claude Verrechia was my professor of NT in Collonges, and it's partly because of him and his views on the sanctuary that I dropped out of theology." When I was teaching in the same institution, one student from Japan began to weep one day when I was explaining the sanctuary doctrine. Some days later he told me that after taking a class with Jean-Claude he decided to leave our church. But he recovered his faith in my class, offered his services to our church in Japan, and had just been accepted. Under these new ideas which undermine the faith of our church, how can we now explain to many pastors the true teaching of John in the book of Revelation, regarding the heavenly temple? It will automatically be rejected from the start.

The problem is not restricted to Verrechia's views. His views are shared, if not totally, at least in part by many SDA theologians who have studied at various worldly universities. Andry states in the abstract of his article: "Adventism may have unconsciously blended classical Greek philosophy (ontology) with the biblical one," and this "may hinder the consistency of the Adventist vision, its identity and its role, whether in Christendom or beyond its borders."

If you want to get the most from my second dialogue with my sons, I urge you to read the book of Revelation, accepting the testimony regarding furnishings, doors, and ministries that the Lord portrayed to John in the different visions, that correspond to the rituals of the earthly temple. Don't follow books like that of Jean-Claude entitled, *Dieu sans domicile fixe...* [God without fixed residence].

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

3. The Court of Judgment in the Most Holy Place

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

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https://youtu.be/l87D_F5V3kc

It is amazing that there are theologians in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today who try at any cost to disconnect the vision of the heavenly court in Rev 4 and 5 from the same vision in Dan 7. Outside our church are Christian theologians who see that connection clearly. But our church, which was called by God to call the world to glorify the Lord because the hour of His judgment has come, has theologians that are denying that connection in the greatest vision of judgment found in the Bible.

E. G. White clearly saw in Rev 4 and 5 a vision of judgment in the Most Holy Place. Sara Peck, her secretary and compiler of her writings, agreed with her. And most SDA commentators in the first half of the 20th century also understood that indeed, the vision of Rev 4 and 5 depicts the last heavenly court of judgment. But in the 70s and most definitely in the 80s, a shift took place which led many theologians in our church to deny that connection and place that vision at the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary when Jesus ascended to heaven in the year 31 AD. Why?

I find in Edward Heppenstal and Kenneth Strand (a theology professor at Andrews University in the 70s), the first inroads to change what we had believed formerly in our church. Kenneth Strand simply concluded that the book of Revelation shows a sanctuary with only one room, not two. In his view, if John employs the language of two rooms, it is only to deal with the functionality of the heavenly priestly ministry (*Symposium on Revelation*, 58). Toward the end of the 1970's, he and Edward Heppenstal (in his book *Our High Priest*), introduced into the church the denial of a heavenly sanctuary divided in two apartments.

After that, Mervin Maxwell, in his commentary of Rev 4 & 5, introduced the idea that there was a throne in the Holy Place, because one candelabrum was seen before the throne. He neglected the fact that the door between the Holy and Most Holy was open. So, the day came when the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference decided to deal carefully with the matter. I participated in those discussions in Newbold College (England), and the following year in one of the rooms of the old building of the GC in Washington DC. At the end of the discussions in Newbold, William Johnsson (who didn't believe at that time that the vision of Rev 4 and 5 projected a heavenly temple scene) asked who would prepare a paper on that vision using the inauguration context. Jon Paulien raised his hand, and he was assigned that task.

I was stunned that at the beginning of a work of research, such a dogmatic approach could be determined beforehand. But I could see that they were up against a strong attempt to introduce futurism into our church through the interpretation of the seals and the trumpets of Revelation. And many thought that in order to confront this new trend which denied the historicist interpretation of the book of Revelation, it was better to see Rev 4 and 5 in an inaugural setting. But the worst way to face a wrong idea is with another wrong view.

The following year, now in Washington DC, Paulien read his paper before DARCOM [Daniel and Revelation Committee], but he was not convincing, and confusion remained in the members of that committee. The outcome was that while trying to dogmatically locate the vision of Rev 4-5 at the inauguration of the temple and priesthood of Jesus in order to face some futurist inroads into our

church, the BRI in the 1990's became bogged down in their study of the seals and the trumpets (Rev 6-11). They announced with confidence for a number of years that they would soon publish their studies, which would clarify the subject. But they couldn't reach an acceptable solution.

Finally, they admitted an interpretive bankruptcy for the first half of Revelation, which continues until today. And it will continue as long as they follow that dogmatic inaugural approach of Rev 4-5 and adopt the hermeneutic principles that are foreign to the legacy left by our pioneers and the Spirit of Prophecy. The BRI in the 1990s published, literally: "The committee at present has not developed a satisfactory interpretation of these prophecies [dealing with Rev 4-11] that solves all the problems inherent in them..." Notwithstanding, according to the report, that committee believed that "while the church may never fully understand these portions of the larger prophecy, we can learn important lessons from them, and we would discourage no one from study" [F. B. Holbrook, "Issues in the book of Revelation," in *Ministry* (Jan 1991), 10; reprinted in F. B. Holbrook, ed., *Symposium on Rev.* (BRI, RH, 1992), 175-181].

Despite this disappointing conclusion, those meetings were for me both enriching and revelatory. I could understand the problems the members of DARCOM faced at that time, which allowed me to reorganize my studies to answer those problems. Shortly thereafter, all the unpublished writings of E. G. White were released, and I was allowed to work for three days in an office of the White Estate's at the GC, with all the statements of the Spirit of Prophecy which were available on a CD. I could see that, in her own words, the Lord began to reveal to her more definitely the purpose of the vision of Rev 5 at the beginning of the 20th century. But most of those statements were never published before. I gathered all her statements about that vision in a book that I entitled, *The Final Crisis in Rev 4 & 5*, and I chose the most definite statements in my third seminar on the sanctuary, *The Apocalyptic Expectations of the Sanctuary* (both available in Amazon and on my webpage).

In this third dialogue, we will continue to answer several questions raised by those who affirm (against what the Spirit of Prophecy and most interpreters of Revelation had written in our church) that the vision of Rev 4 and 5 is not a vision of judgment. If you are free from prejudice, you will enjoy that dialogue, as well as the others where we will be answering, little by little, to all the questions raised concerning the nature and purpose of the visions of John on the heavenly temple.

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

4. The Court's Vindication of God and of the Lamb

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCk20zl_fxw

The lack of interest or attention paid to doors in the heavenly temple allows many theologians to arrange the literary structural visions of John in the book of Revelation according to their own pleasure, then appeal to external literary sources to support their imagined patterns of interpretation. I don't use to give names in the videos, but I thought convenient to be more specific in the written introduction. Let us pay attention to some examples.

Jon Paulien, followed by Ranko Stefanovic, presumed to find in Rev 1-8 the literary sequential pattern of the *tamid* of the *Mishnah*, that is, the daily service of mornings and evenings. The *Mishnah* compiled Jewish traditions about two centuries after John wrote the book of Revelation. In order to adjust the first half of the book of Revelation to that external pattern of the *Mishnah*, both authors presume that the passage to the Most Holy should be seen only in Rev 11:19. But the structural arrangement of the first half of Revelation reaches to events associated with the end time in every septet series. As already seen in the former dialogues, we don't have to wait to reach Rev 11:19 to see the Most Holy Place. The throne, the elders, the four cherubim, the multitude of angels, are always connected in the rest of the book of Revelation with events of the end time (Rev 7:11-14; 11:15-19; 14:1-5; 19:4).

Richard Davidson (in his most recent book published by the BRI, *A Song for the Sanctuary*), agreed with this presumable *tamid* reference in the first half of Revelation, although he believes that the vision of Rev 4 & 5 takes place in the Most Holy, with the four cherubim in the Most Holy Place (221,655). For Richard, the throne in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the book of Revelation is in the Most Holy (392,655). Right! The four cherubim were related to the ark in the second apartment of the earthly temple. But why then, does he connect that vision with the *tamid* or daily service, if he admits that "in the Old Testament type, the *tamid* ministry involved the Holy Place but not the Most Holy Place", and that the *tamid* "was centered in the Holy Place"? (392,394).

As a matter of fact, when the *tamid* was performed in the earthly sanctuary, the door to the Most Holy was closed. And if the sealed book is the Book of the Law—as these authors agree—we have to keep in mind that Moses puts that book beside the ark (Deut 31:24-26). Again, this was a reference to the Most Holy. We don't have to wait to Rev 11:19 to see the ark of the covenant in the second apartment. Evidently, Davidson read the paper of Paulien, but not the *Mishnah*, because when we read the *Mishnah*, we don't find this presumed sequential fabricated parallelism of the *tamid* with the first half of Revelation. (See the lack of foundation of such a lineal analogy in my books, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment*, 663 ff, and again in *The Final Crisis in Revelation 4 & 5*, 128ff).

In this dialogue, we will deal with the song of the four creatures or cherubim in Rev 4:8. What they do has nothing to do with a *tamid* or regular service. John says that "day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.'" That Greek expression, ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, "day and night," is not composed of words usually employed in the LXX, πρωὶ καὶ δείλης, or πρωὶ and πρὸς ἑσπέραν, to refer to the daily services of "mornings" and "evenings" (Exod 29:39; Num 28:4; 2 Chr 13:11, etc). The idiom "day and night" or "night and day" is attested to in Mark 5:5 and Luke 18:7, speaking about an action that does not cease, which is strengthened in Rev 4:8 by the word *anápausin ouk*, "never stop" or

“never cease.” In addition, the four cherubim are not interceding for the people, but just praising incessantly the Lord before His throne.

In all these new interpretations which search for literary patterns which don't fit the visions of John, we see as a background a neglect in the details given of the doors that are open and shut, and the lack of interest in placing the scenes of the visions within the corresponding specific framework of the earthly sanctuary (see dialogue 2). For instance, Jon Paulien wrote: “it is best to understand the vision of chapters 4 and 5 as a single scene in a single place in the heavenly sanctuary. The exact location does not seem to be critical to the interpretation of the vision” (*Symposium on Revelation*, 221). Neither can I understand why in his impressive volume on the sanctuary, Richard Davidson does not deal with the doors of the heavenly temple in Rev 3:7-8, (something crucial for Adventism), and its connection like E. G. White does, to the open door of Rev 4:1. This neglect allows him to presume that the scene of Rev 4 and 5 is developed in the Most Holy Place, and at the same time that a *tamid* or daily service is performed in the Holy Place.

We find something similar in Davidson's interpretation of the Day of Atonement ritual. He supposes that when the high priest entered the Most Holy to cleanse the sanctuary, there was no more transference of sins to the sanctuary and forgiveness (*A Song for the Sanctuary*, 327). But what about after 1844, when Jesus closed the door to the Holy Place of the heavenly temple and opened the door to the Most Holy Place? Would there be no more forgiveness?

E. G. White wrote, based on Lev 16:17, that when the High Priest entered the Most Holy, there were no priests officiating at the altars, and the regular service in the Holy Place had concluded to begin the final intercession in the Most Holy. She wrote, indeed, that there was transference of sin to the Holy of Holies, as well as forgiveness by the ministry of Jesus in the Most Holy (8 *T* 284; *GC* 428-9; 9 *MR* 252; *Miscellaneous Collections*, 1368). Therefore, we cannot invoke a different typical sacrifice for this final intercession in the Most Holy Place unless we neglect the doors or curtains even in the earthly sanctuary. A rightful theology on the temple of Revelation cannot be constructed without respecting the specific spatial details given in the visions.

Another problem regarding these new interpretations of the temple of God in the book of Revelation is that the testimonies that God gave us through the Spirit of Prophecy are increasingly neglected. Our pioneers accepted that testimony for the establishment of our doctrines, but some theologians today ignore what she wrote on different matters, or worse yet, they simply don't care about what God revealed to her. They prefer the theological patterns that they receive from the Protestant theological centers where they studied, or from their books. While our faith is to be based on the Bible, we cannot disregard the testimony of Jesus through the gift of prophecy (Rev 12:17; 19:10). I prefer to believe Jesus and neglect the imaginary speculations of those who spend time searching for something original, but which distracts the attention from the very focus of John's visions.

In this dialogue we will also pay attention to the vindication of the heavenly court of both the Creator and the Redeemer whose work is denied and outraged on earth. They are blasphemed on the earth but considered worthy in the celestial abode. This was the principal purpose of the Day of Atonement: to vindicate the Name of God. The divine reputation was damaged throughout the year by the sin of the people (Lev 20:4-5), so only the blood of the sacrifice on this day could cleanse the sanctuary to clear the Name of God which dwelt in His temple (Deut 12:5,11; Ps 51:4; Rom 3:4). No one can praise the Creator for the complex and often painful history of His creation unless everyone can see what the Lord did to redeem it from human chaos.

This is what we see in Rev 4 & 5, in connection with the fact that the four cherubim in the Most Holy Place are represented by four animals. Unlike what men do on earth, the court of heaven in Rev 4 & 5 acknowledges the Creator not only for His work of creation, but also for His work of redemption. They can do so because the blood of the Lamb vindicates God as Creator. So also on earth, God requires us to honor and glorify the Lord for His work of creation and redemption, not only in words but in deeds, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev 14:7,12). The Lord wants our testimony to be an echo of the heavenly praise.

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

5. Why Does John Weep Before God's Throne?

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYWrnTw1Las>

Having covered the general background of the first four chapters of the book of Revelation in the former dialogues, we will now turn our attention to the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation which E. G. White considered “of great importance to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these last days” (T 267). The short introductions that I include in these dialogues are complementary, not a repetition or development of the content of the dialogs. In these short introductions I deal with new problems being proposed regarding the interpretation of the visions of the heavenly temple, something usual and required in academic milieus. I believe this is necessary, because in my understanding, those who for years have been proposing a different picture of the first visions of Revelation are distracting the church with matters that depart from the real purpose of the book. As E. G. White wrote: “they are to be met and opposed, not because they are bad men, but because they are ... endeavoring to put upon falsehood the stamp of truth” (TM 55). For this reason, I recommend those who really want to grow in the knowledge of these important visions of John to follow, step by step, the dialogs that you can open in the corresponding links.

Let us start here saying that Richard Davidson (as well as Jacques Doukhan, Jon Paulien, Ranko Stefanovic, and Ekkehardt Mueller) believes that the scene of Rev 5 has to do with an enthronement of Jesus at the right hand of God. But that vision does not describe such an enthronement. You don't see Jesus sitting at the right hand of God. As non-Adventist authors have remarked, we see in Rev 5 a typical investiture of a Davidic king in the temple, whose enthronement over the New Jerusalem would occur later (see 2 King 11). This is what we find in the message of Jesus to the last of the seven churches: “To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to sit with Me on My throne, just as I overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Rev 3:21). By this He implies that His enthronement on His Father's throne occurred in the past, and that He will sit on His own throne along with the redeemed in the future over the New Jerusalem, at the conclusion of His priestly ministry.

Another interpretive novelty of Richard Davidson, (followed by the aforementioned authors), is that he presumes to find evidence of a lineal progressive sequence of all the Jewish feasts in the visions of the book of Revelation. Since he sees the enthronement of Jesus at Pentecost in the second vision (Rev 4 and 5), [something that John didn't see], he is forced to find evidence of a Passover in the first vision (Rev 1-3), because that feast preceded Pentecost in the Jewish calendar. This of course is impossible, because in Rev 1-3 Jesus is already officiating as a High Priest amid the candelabra on behalf of the churches of Asia, far beyond the original Passover feast. So, in order to be consistent with his view of a lineal progressive sequence of the Jewish feasts in the book of Revelation, Richard suggests that Jesus, in that first vision, is celebrating a *Communion Service* in what he calls an *Ecclesiological Passover*.

Unfortunately, no matter how much effort these interpreters make to find evidence of a Passover Communion in the first vision, that seems to be of no concern to John at all. The first feast of the Israelite calendar cannot be found there either literally or ecclesiologically in the ministry of Jesus in the Holy Place. John does not refer to Jesus as being the Lamb, as he does in the following visions. And in the rest of the book of Revelation, we find the reference to Christ as the Lamb always at the conclusion of the visions, not at the beginning.

In his most recent book, *A Song for the Sanctuary*, Richard again sees the Pentecost in Rev 5, though he suggests a degree of uncertainty when he says, "If this interpretation is correct..." (651). To this end, he proposes that just as Moses had to *go up* Mount Sinai to receive the law, so also Jesus invites John to *go up* to the Most Holy Place to see the vision of the throne. But it is John who is invited to "come up" to the Most Holy Place, not Jesus. That would make John the second Moses in that vision because it was John who received the invitation to "come up." And John doesn't receive the law either. A closer context of Rev 4 and 5 is found in Ps 122:4-5, where we are told that the tribes of Judah "go up" to Mount Zion, to praise the Lord "for there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David" (see Rev 4:4). But you will not find this text of Psalm 122 being cited in the books and papers of these authors. Amazing!

Aside from the fact that the feast of Pentecost did not exist when Moses went up the mountain, and that the exact date of this moment of a supposed future Pentecost is debatable, we must acknowledge that Moses did not even receive a book at that time. He received a revelation to be written in a book much later, the one he finally put next to the ark. But the vision of Rev 5 does not describe the moment when the book is deposited in the heavenly temple. We see there the moment when the Lamb is given the book to be invested as the new Davidic King. We will see this more clearly in the next dialogues.

John did not introduce the Lamb as a second Moses or as a second Melchizedek (who was at the same time king and priest: Heb 7:1), but as a second David (who was not a priest, but king: Heb 7:14). The second David was not to be invested as King in the New Jerusalem before concluding His office as Priest and King in the order of Melchizedek. This picture which is so clear in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy, has been almost completely erased in all these new commentaries. From a theological perspective, these interpreters have been confusing the inaugural royal priesthood of the second Melchizedek with the final investiture of the second David whose earthly counterpart was not a priest, but only a king. That exclusive royal event was expected to be fulfilled in the context of the typical seventh month (Autumn) feasts, when the yearly royal calendar began in Israel; not in the priestly (Spring) feast of Pentecost.

Rev 5:10 states that in the judgment the redeemed are made to be a kingdom of priests to reign over the earth. Our royal priesthood is spiritual here (1 Pet 2:9), but there it will be a literal and royal kingdom (2 Tim 2:12). And because the vision of Rev 5 portrays the investiture of a new David, that vision concerns the Father granting His Son the Book of the Law, as David's sons received on the day when they were invested as kings (Deut 17:18; 2 King 11). In the case of Jesus, this act meant the authority given to Him by His Father to reign with His redeemed people in His kingdom (Rev 20:4,6). See my paper at:

<https://seureservercdn.net/104.238.71.109/m5i.cd6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Twosuccesivekingdomessiah-edit.pdf>

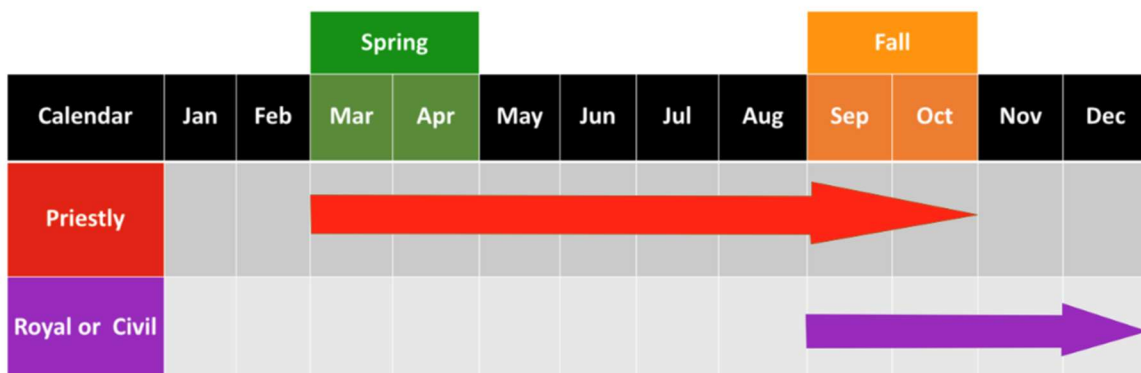
John compares the platform ("sea") of clear and transparent glass that stretches out from the throne of God, with the sea he could see surrounding him every day from his location on Patmos. He is not talking about the "sea [or fountain] of bronze" that was in the courtyard of Solomon's temple. The throne is in heaven, not on earth. The prophets in the OT also saw that sapphire-colored platform surrounding the throne of the Deity, even before the construction of the temple, similarly compared with the sky (Ex 24:10; Eze 1:26), not a bronzed platform like the sea of bronze. Over that blue sea of glass John can see the redeemed who will be made kings and priests of God and of Jesus for a thousand years (Rev 15:2; 20:6). They will reign over the new earth "forever and ever" (Rev 22:5; cf. 5:10).

At Sinai God revealed Himself in a theophany accompanied by thunder and lightning. Thirty years after the heavenly Pentecost, the apostle Paul saw that at the end of the world, this glorious manifestation of the power of God would be repeated also in heaven, in the context of judgment (Heb 12:26; cf. Am 1:2), when the law of God will be revealed in both heaven and earth (Rev 11:19; cf. Ps 50:4-6). And that's what we see in Rev 4:5. These epiphanies in response to the voice of God occur first in heaven, in the final court of judgment before the throne in the Most Holy Place, as the conclusion to the ministry of Jesus among the candelabra in the Holy Place. We find this again before the throne, at the end of the seven seals (Rev 8:1-5), at the end of the seven trumpets before the ark (Rev 11:15-19), and at the end of the seven plagues before the throne (Rev 16:17-18). Likewise, the Spirit of Prophecy projected such apocalyptic manifestations of God's glory not at the beginning, but at the end, in the context of judgment (*RH* 5-7-17). [We will return to this issue in the eighth dialog, when we will analyze the different literary structures proposed for the book of Revelation].

Ranko Stefanovic and his colleagues constantly quote the investiture of king Joash in 1 Kings 11, as the most significant background for the investiture of the Root of David. But as we will see in this dialogue, they don't realize that Joash was invested as king in the autumnal seventh month (which concluded the priestly calendar and started the royal calendar), not in an inaugural Pentecost in the Spring. Let us introduce our dialogue now, asking ourselves: Why does John cry in Rev. 5? It is obvious that He is facing a new situation. In this fifth dialogue we will consider this point more carefully, which is most often neglected by so many.

In this fifth dialog, the friend who prepared the two chronological graphics of the Israelite calendar put the seventh month as being the conclusion of the priestly calendar, and the eighth as the beginning of the royal calendar. In one of the two graphics, he started in November the royal calendar, thinking—I suppose—that in some years, with an additional 13th month, the seventh month could fall on October. But the Seventh Month marked the conclusion of the priestly calendar as well as the beginning of the royal calendar (or civil calendar today because there are no more kings in Israel). I think, however, that it is better to mark both the conclusion and the beginning in the seventh month, to avoid confusion. You can see this in the following graphic.

Priestly Year and Royal or Civil Year in the Hebrew Calendar



Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

6. The New David's Investiture

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<https://youtu.be/LzJvp66iNAI>

At the DARCOM meetings organized by the BRI at Newbold College more than thirty years ago, I saw disbelief on the part of some theologians about the work of Jesus after 1844. It was evident that for some, it was hard to believe that such an important vision like that of Rev 5 could have something to do with what happened in the heavenly sanctuary at that time. But if John weeps, it is because he knows how important that vision is. And this vision is also supremely important to us, because while the context of the judgment in Rev 4 and 5 is clear, the emphasis of the vision is placed on the investiture of the Lamb as the second David at the end of His priestly ministry. The door is already open, the thrones already established. It is then that it is determined who will become citizens of the Lamb's kingdom (Rev 5:7-12).

Let us not forget what E. G. White wrote about this issue: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is *as essential to the plan of salvation as was his death upon the cross*" (GC 489). "The fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of *great importance* to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these last days" (T 267).

Let us consider the nature of the vision portrayed in Rev 4 & 5, according to what some theologians are currently writing in our church. I can tell you beforehand that I agree with them concerning the reception of the Davidic kingdom by the Lamb, except for their application to the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary. As seen in our former dialog, the problem is confusion regarding the different roles to be fulfilled by the Messiah in the inaugural versus the final expectation. Some are not even aware of a second coronation of the Lord.

Let us start with Ranko Stefanovic. In his doctoral thesis he tries to prove that the background of the scene in Rev 5 is the investiture of the Davidic kings. He insists on this point in his commentary of the book of Revelation, where he wrote: "although Revelation puts a strong emphasis on" the "royal role [of Jesus], the epistle of Hebrews describes more particularly the priestly aspect of his exaltation" (*Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 210). This is true, but in a successive way! He is first a priest-king like Melchizedek and later on becomes exclusively a king, as was David.

Hans LaRondelle commented at the end of Ranko's thesis: "In a clear and convincing way the author shows how the book of Deuteronomy, as the Covenant Book for a newly crowned king in Israel, forms the background for the heavenly scene in Rev 5." Richard Davidson likewise commented on that thesis, saying that Ranko "provided persuasive evidence for interpreting Revelation 5" where Christ, "like the OT Davidic kings, receives the Covenant Book symbolizing His right to rule." However, David Aune, who wrote the most extensive commentary on the book of Revelation, commented on Stefanovic's thesis in this way: "Even if I end up skeptical of Stefanovic's theses, I very much enjoyed interacting with his work." He rejects the view of Stefanovic who sees Jesus sitting on the throne of God, and compares that vision to the Son of Man appearing before the throne of judgment in Dan 7, who also is not shown sitting on God's throne.

In his book *A Song for the Sanctuary*, Richard Davidson insists on the same position he had formerly, saying: "in his doctoral dissertation, Cortez shows how Jesus' being inaugurated/enthroned as the

eschatological Davidic King serves as the leitmotif of the entire epistle” (394). What did Félix Cortez write in his thesis to attract the admiration of Davidson? We can see his views on this point summarized in his commentary of the *Sabbath School Quarterly on Hebrews*, for February 10, 2022. Félix wrote, literally: “According to the New Testament, both oaths [those of Abraham and David respectively] were fulfilled in Jesus, the seed of Abraham, who ascended and was seated on the throne of David (... Luke 1:31-33).” And he sets it in the context of the titles given to Jesus in Rev 5: the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” and “Root of David” (January 2).

I don't wish to tire the readers with statements like these in this brief introduction to dialog six. We must categorically affirm that these assumptions are incorrect. Jesus is not yet seated upon the throne of David. This was expected to happen at the end of the investigative judgment, when He will remove His High Priestly attire, don his kingly robes and become the King of the New Jerusalem. In this dialogue we prove again that this is not what was expected at the inauguration of the priestly ministry of Jesus. Let us share here just one of the many statements of the Spirit of Prophecy which affirm the opposite of what Félix and the other professors at Andrews say. Pay special attention to how different she interprets Luke 1:32,33:

“He ‘shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne’ [Zech 6:12-13]. Not now ‘upon the throne of His glory;’ the kingdom of glory has not yet been ushered in. Not until His work as a mediator shall be ended will God ‘give unto Him the throne of His father David,’ a kingdom of which ‘there shall be no end.’ Luke 1:32,33. As a priest, Christ is now [in this current dispensation] set down with the Father in His throne. Revelation 3:21” (GC 416).

See more in this dialog, and a wider scope in my webpage:

<https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.71.109/m5i.cd6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/TwoSUCCESSIVEkingdomessiah-edit.pdf>

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

7. When the Lamb Opens the Sealed Book in the Court

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www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Krl0LudPG0I>

In his book, *A Song of the Sanctuary*, Richard Davidson disagrees with Mervin Maxwell and his followers in making the table of the presence a symbol of a throne in the Holy Place. DARCOM (a committee organized by the *Biblical Research Institute* in the 80s), also rejected that view. As a matter of fact, a table is not a chair to sit down on. Moreover, in the book of Revelation the throne is not in motion as in other visions of the Old Testament. It is always revealed as being fixed in one place, in connection with the judgment and the end of the world.

This doesn't mean that, (according to prophecy and typology and the fact that Jesus was not only a priest, but also a king like Melchizedek: Ps 110:1,4; Zech 6:13; Heb 5 and 7), God could not be seated on a throne in the Holy Place. Several decades after the enthronement of Jesus, the apostles portrayed Him seated at the right hand of God, (again, according to the typological context), in the Holy Place (Col 3:1; Heb 8:1, etc). But as anticipated by prophecy, when the time comes for the court of judgment to be set, the Ancient of Days moves. Where? According once more to typology, to His throne in the Most Holy Place (Dan 7:9-14). As already seen in the former dialogues John sees those thrones already set in Rev 5, because the emphasis is put on the conclusion of the judgment when the investiture of the second David takes place.

Richard also rejects the views of some of his colleagues like Roy Gane, (followed also by his disciple Martin Pröbstle in his doctoral dissertation), who believe that in Lev 16, the sanctuary was cleansed also by the blood of the sacrifice from the unforgivable sins (283,321). I rejoiced seeing that Richard quotes my books to affirm that the blood of the sacrifice cleansed the sanctuary only from the confessed sins of the people, and that only the death penalty vindicated the Name of God from an *illegal* contamination of the sanctuary (283). This means that the pre-advent court in heaven considers in the Most Holy Place, only the names of those who had been forgiven and, therefore, were written in the book of life. No wonder we can see the songs which praised the Lamb in Rev 4 and 5, only for the triumph already consummated of the redeemed, by the blood of the Lamb.

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Rev 5:9-10; 20:4.6; 22:5).

Now, how is the sealed book of Rev 5 related to the other books mentioned in the vision of Dan 7? The inauguralist interpreters of our church argue that in Rev 5, the court cannot be related to the court of Dan 7 because differing from Daniel, only one book is mentioned in Rev 5. But in Dan 12:1, at the conclusion of the time of the end, Daniel also mentions only one book in the court, the book of life. So, are we not permitted either to relate Dan 12:1 with the court's judgment of Daniel 7 because the other books are not mentioned? In addition, the term “judgment” does not appear in Dan 12:1. Does it mean that Daniel is not referring there to the judgment scene of the preceding vision in Dan 7? Rev 5 concludes with only one seated on the throne: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb” (v. 13). It is clear John doesn't intend there to show Jesus sitting at God's right hand. This is also what we see at the conclusion of the vision of judgment of Dan 7.

It is notable what E. G. White wrote on the sealed book. She saw that when Jesus died, the book was still being written, which shows us that this was the time to seal the book in the Most Holy Place, and deposit it beside the throne, as Moses did in the typical earthly sanctuary when God covenanted with His people in the wilderness. She also is clear to affirm that the book was expected to be both received and unsealed by the Lamb in the future. As a matter of fact, the Lamb does not take the sealed book at the inauguration of His priestly office and keep it under His arm until the day of judgment. Neither does Jesus open the book over the course of two millennia, carrying the book through different doors and rooms in the heavenly temple until He reaches the end. The scene is the same: the Lamb opening the book in the midst of the four creatures/cherubim in the Most Holy Place.

How long does it take to break the seals of a book? Perhaps ten or fifteen minutes or maybe a little more to give time for reflection. What is the purpose of opening the book of the kingdom at the end of the investigative judgment? Obviously, God intends to offer a rapid panorama of the way the Word of God was treated on the earth, and its final vindication with the triumph of the last generation who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus, namely, the 144,000 (Rev 7:4-8; 14:1-12). Again, the event takes place in the Most Holy Place, with the four cherubim calling John to watch the revelation of the seals (Rev 6). This pre-advent review is equivalent to the vision that God will give to the world at the conclusion of the Millennium. We find this in the book *The Great Controversy*, p. 666: "like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam's temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption."

Let us watch this seventh dialog where we deal with the moment when the book is sealed, and when it is unsealed by the Lamb. We will also specify what the seals are, as well as their fulfillment in history. It is noticeable that in the fifth seal, the outcry of the martyrs reaches heaven like the outcry of Abel requiring vengeance for the shedding of his innocent blood. The court of judgment answers the outcry of the martyrs by assigning them the white robes reserved for the righteous at the end in the investigative judgment (Heb 9:27-28; Rev 6:11; see 3:4-5). We can see here another internal evidence of a review of the seals in the court that takes place in the Holy of Holies. John is also shown how the court vindicated their testimony which judged first the dead in Christ, and then the living ones who are sealed (Rev 6:11).

Another important related thing is that the moment when the *Root of David* and *Lion of the Tribe of Judah* receives the book, it marks the transition from His royal-priestly role to His exclusive role as King. Only in this way may His priestly and royal role be related in the end of the investigative judgment. For this reason, in some of the slides of the dialog you will see Jesus receiving the book of the kingdom dressed in the robes of the High Priest. My purpose in this is to illustrate that moment of transition from one role to the other.

But what does the Lamb do first? Does He receive the book still in the High-Priesthood apparel? Or does He change His robes before taking the book? I don't know. We are told that He changed His robes at the end of the investigative judgment, like the High Priest in Lev 16:23-24, to put upon Himself His most royal clothes. So, if someone is not comfortable with Jesus being still dressed in His pontifical robes as depicted in some of the slides, I will not argue with him because he could be right. The emphasis of Rev 5 is focused on His exclusive royal Davidic assumption. Anyway, let us also recognize that the vision marks the transference of the priestly role of Jesus to the exclusive kingly role, and this was the reason why I thought it useful to illustrate that point in the picture.

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

8. The Order of Earthly and Heavenly Events

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVCyOlbdqvg>

The visions on the sanctuary in the book of Revelation are designed to show the connection of what happens simultaneously in heaven and on earth. That connection is lost when we don't respect the successive correspondence between the earthly sanctuary with the heavenly sanctuary. There is consecutive reference made to doors that are opened and closed, which mark the different steps in the heavenly priestly ministry.

We have already seen in former dialogs that Richard Davidson, Jon Paulien, Ranko Stefanovic and Jacques Doukan neglect these specifications found in the visions. Another example is Ekkehardt Mueller. Contrary to what E. G. White and our pioneers believed, he places the sixth trumpet near the end, in our time, after 1844. He wrote, literally: "Adventists... are convinced that the present generation lives already on the verge of Christ's second coming, in the time of the sixth seal and the sixth trumpet" [https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BRI-newsltr-10-13-44_0.pdf]. So, it seems evident that Ekkehardt doesn't care about the doors of the heavenly temple, in correspondence with the Old Testament temple. As a matter of fact, the sixth trumpet is related to the altar of the Holy Place (Rev 9:13), and only in the seventh trumpet is the door to the Most Holy Place opened (Rev 11:15-19). As usual in Hebrew literature, the last sentence involves the description of the whole literary piece (in this case, of the seventh trumpet).

In order to help the viewers of this dialog see the importance of the spatial specifications given by John regarding the sanctuary above, let us consider the statement of the Spirit of Prophecy which affirms that in 1844, Jesus closed the door to the Holy Place, and concluded His ministry in that apartment to start His ministry in the Most Holy Place. This indicates that when Jesus entered the Most Holy Place in 1844, He ceased His ministry in the Holy Place. But in the sixth trumpet He is still in the Holy Place (at the altar), because the door to the Most Holy is not opened before the seventh trumpet. Therefore, it is impossible to place the sixth trumpet on earth beyond the date given by Daniel and John in Dan 8:14 and Rev 9:13-15. Ekkehardt's problem is that he and others (like Gerhard Pfandl) neglect not only the doors of the heavenly temple, but also the dates given in the fifth and sixth trumpets. See my web page: [<https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.71.109/m5i.cd6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/DiesiebenPosaunen-reviewed.pdf>]

For a consideration of the prophetic dates of the fifth and sixth trumpets, see my web page:

[<https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.71.109/m5i.cd6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Trumpetsdates.pdf>] and

[<https://secureservercdn.net/104.238.71.109/m5i.cd6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Chronologypachymeres.pdf>]

Further explanation of the statement of E. G. White found in her book *The Great Controversy*, 428-9 complements this dialog. People in Israel entered by faith into the earthly temple, following spiritually the priestly ministry within the sanctuary. The same happens today. We are participants from the earth, of the heavenly events that take place successively in the Holy and Most Holy Places. How? Like the ancient Israelites, by faith, spiritually, because we—like ancient Israelites—cannot enter the inner sanctuary physically. So, it was the high priest who at different times opened and closed the doors of the different apartments of the earthly temple. The same happens in the Christian era regarding the

heavenly temple. The High Priest who intercedes for us is Jesus Christ (Heb 8:1). When He concluded His “regular” (*tamid*) ministry in the Holy Place in 1844, He went into the Most Holy for a final intercession before the court of judgment.

How may we know that on the Day of Atonement, the entrance door to the Holy Place was closed? Because Lev 16:17 prohibited anyone else to be in the Holy Place when the High Priest entered the Most Holy. It is obvious that he had to close the door of the Holy Place to prevent the people outside from dying by beholding the glory of God (see v. 2). In 1 Kings 8:8, we are told that the “poles [of the ark] were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place.” They could not be seen from the courtyard because on that day, the door of the Holy Place was closed just before opening the door of the Most Holy.

These divine visions were not given to us to discuss whether doors are needed or not in heaven—as many speculate today. If you don’t believe in doors that are opening or closing in the heavenly sanctuary, that is your problem. Independently of what you want to believe, we have to respect the spatial descriptions given in the vision or go astray following fantasies to fabricate a different literary structure of the book of Revelation. This is what we will see extensively in this eighth dialogue. I think, however, that it would be advisable to show in this complementary written introduction, the different way the book of Revelation has been divided from a literary perspective. We will see in our conversation available in the link above, the problems of those literary structural reconstructions that entertain our different theologians today.

I. Kenneth Strand; Eckhardt Mueller: (1) Historical (Rev 1-14) (2) Eschatological (Rev 15-22)

II. Ranko Stefanovic: (1) Holy Place (Rev 1-11:18) (2) Most Holy Place (Rev 11:19-22)

III. Jacques Doukhan: (1) Holy Place (Rev 1-10) (2) Most Holy Place (Rev 11-22)

Mueller, as well as Davidson (641), also follow Stefanovic in placing the terms “flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder” of Rev 11:19, in the next vision of Revelation, cutting it from the vision of the trumpets. This is forced because this description appeared at the end of the seventh trumpet, involving the whole time of that last trumpet as is usual in the Hebrew literary style where the conclusion encompasses the entire section portrayed (Rev 11:15-19). Is this the reason why Mueller believes that we are still living in the time of the sixth trumpet which is linked to the altar of incense? Do we have to place the seventh trumpet which deals with the time of judgment and the final assumption of God’s kingdom (Rev 11:15-18), before the opening of the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary (v. 19)? Of course not!

Amazingly, in one of his papers, Mueller doesn’t quote Rev 16:17-18 in his literary structure of the book of Revelation. As a matter of fact, these theophanies of the power of God appear in the seventh plague, not as an introductory scene, but again, as the conclusion of the plagues. This fact requires us to place the “flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder” of Rev 4:5 that comes from the throne in the Most Holy Place, as a conclusion to the message of the seven churches, which are related to the Holy Place. And again, the lightnings and thunders come from the throne in the Most Holy Place at the conclusion of the seven seals (Rev 8:1-5), as well as in Rev 11:19 which is linked to the ark in the Most Holy. We saw that in our second dialogue.

Let us insist on the fact that the lightnings and thunders in the seventh plague come also from “the voice of God,” “from the throne” in the Most Holy Place (Rev 16:17-18). We cannot place the seventh plague in an inaugural setting, as presumed by these new interpreters. One of the cherubs portrayed in Rev 4

and 5 in the Holy of Holiest, gives the cups with the plagues to the seven angels to pour them on the earth (Rev 15:7). So, why do we have to place the first half of the book of Revelation in the Holy Place, and the second half in the Most Holy Place, (according to these new propositions), if the same cherubim and/or the elders of Rev 4-6 are seen in Rev 14:3; 15:7; 19:4-5? The heavenly court is not in operation from the inauguration to the end during the whole Christian dispensation. The thrones are set for judgment in the Most Holy not before the end of the world (Dan 7:9-14). "There [in the Most Holy] I saw thrones that I had never seen before" (*To the Little Remnant Scattered Abroad*, 4-6-1846).

It is unfortunate that these new interpreters of Revelation neither take into account the confirmation of the Spirit of Prophecy who projects the lightnings and thunders to the end, as we will see also in this dialog. These are not introductory scenes, but conclusive divine interventions which close every septet section. As already seen in our written introduction to dialogue 5, these manifestations were already anticipated in Heb 12:26-27 in the context of judgment (Amos 1:2).

Another surprise! In his book *A Song for the Sanctuary*, Davidson follows W. Shea in a section where he doesn't deal with the structure of Revelation, in admitting that "the common denominator" of the theophanies shown in "Rev 4:6; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18, ... is that of judgment. The phenomena are seen to issue from God's throne at the times He sends forth His judgments" (673). Davidson gives these examples to affirm that the seven thunders of Rev 10:3-4 are judgments of God. Did he forget what he wrote in the former pages of his book where he agrees with other colleagues in stating without foundation, that no "language of judgment" can be seen in Rev 4:1-5:14? (642-3).

Let us watch, then, the youtube video of this eighth dialogue to see how subjective these new propositions are, as recognized by some of those who propose that literary twisted arrangement. It will be easier to understand these facts with a graphic that we offer in the video which takes into account the furnishings and doors in the different visions of the heavenly temple.

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

9. The Final Measurement of the Heavenly Temple

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www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLn8kq01sik>

In the written introduction to the first dialogues, we could see the tendency of some theologians to spiritualize the temple of God. The most exaggerated example is that of Jean-Claude Verrechia, who taught theology for years at Collonges in France and Newbold in England. By saying that the universe is the temple of God, it borders on pantheism. He began by seeing temples of God in different places and occasions and ended up spiritualizing the temple of heaven, neglecting the fact that only the tabernacle of the wilderness and the temple of Solomon followed the pattern of the heavenly temple.

This is the perhaps unconscious path of several theologians of our church today, since we cannot yet openly term them as pantheists. But a second generation of those who follow them often go one step further and deny the spatiality of the heavenly temple. In other words, they are in the first stage of my colleague Verrechia. They see temples everywhere. They begin by transforming Eden into a temple, then the various places where God met with the patriarchs, and even make Mount Sinai a temple. They conclude by arguing that the New Jerusalem is the temple of God. What a mishmash!

These new interpreters do not overlook, of course, the tabernacle of the wilderness, nor the temple of Solomon. But when they go to the New Testament, they begin to spiritualize the temple of heaven by denying doors and relativizing its furniture in correspondence with the earthly temple. Some of them openly speak against a "geography" of the heavenly temple, rejecting the very clear spatial correspondence of the book of Revelation with the earthly temple. In their new way of "measuring" the temple of heaven, they are left with the functionality that they freely alter by disconnecting it, who more who less, from its spatial context. And a second or third generation of their followers ends by rejecting even the functional earthly-heavenly correspondence.

Moreover, the mind of the new interpreters of the book of Revelation divagates in different fantasies. They look for foreign literary patterns to the text under consideration that have nothing to do with the visions of John. We saw this in our former dialogues. Let us advance here a new example. In the measurement of the New Jerusalem, they conclude that the city is the Most Holy Place because that inner room of the temple of Solomon was cubic (20 cubits x 20 cubits x 20 cubits). However, as we will see, a more careful study of the description of John, shows us that the New Jerusalem is not cubic.

This trend to look for external patterns and then to try to fix everything in those foreign patterns, is seen already in the sixth chapter of the book of Richard Davidson, *A Song of the Sanctuary*. He concludes that the Garden of Eden was the first temple of God on earth, because several words employed by Moses and Ezekiel to depict the temple which was built near three millenniums later, are also chosen to tell the history of Creation. When Richard and others like him read the history of creation and the history of the construction of the temple, they seek similar words employed to tell those different stories, to conclude that they are dealing with the same subject: both depicts supposedly two similar temples.

Thus, in Richard's view, in the history of Creation "the mist rose up (Heb. *'alah*) and wafter over the 'face of the ground' in the garden and beyond (Gen 2:6), just as the smoke of the incense altar rose up (*'alah*) and wafter over the sanctuary and beyond (Exod 30:1-10). Since Ps 104:3 refers to "clouds" in a poetically description of creation, he sees there an implicit reference to the cloud of incense which filled

the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. The same Psalm portrays poetically the stretch of heaven like a curtain in the second day of creation, so Richard compares it with the curtains of the Mosaic sanctuary. Since in the fourth day of creation, Moses refers to the Sun and the Moon as being the greater and lesser lights, Richard relates it to the candelabrum of the Holy Place. That methodology was taken from modern evangelical authors who enjoy dreaming with these childish comparisons. In the fantasy of some evangelicals, the candelabrum can be also seen in the branches of the tree of life.

Again, Richard sees in the trees of the Garden the presence of God as in the table of bread or of the presence in the future sanctuary, because both offer the divine meal. Where can we see in Davidson's view, the altar of incense in the Garden of Eden? In the mist rose up over the garden. Again, the sea and the rivers in the story of creation are seen in the bronze fountain of the earthly temple, and therefore, we have in the first garden all the furnishings of the Holy Place.

The list goes on with the comparison of equal or equivalent terms you find elsewhere in the Bible to tell different stories. In this case, they relate the history of creation with the post-diluvial sanctuary. But at this point we wonder if they are not kidding us, since Richard is not the only one who rambles in that fantasy. Others who follow him in these fabricated terminological typologies are Elias Brasil de Souza, Jacques Doukhan, and Angel M. Rodriguez who sees Mount Sinai as the pattern for the Israelite sanctuary. Since I dealt with this new style of reading the Bible in my criticism to the first volume written by Jacques Doukhan in the *Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary*, I will not tire here the readers with more examples. You may read the methodological problems involved in these studies in my criticism to Doukhan. Fortunately, he was not permitted to include these imaginations in the *Sabbath School Quarterly* which studied the book of Genesis.

<https://seureservercdn.net/104.238.71.109/m5i.cd6.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/GenesisCritiqueDoukhan.pdf>

What is the purpose behind all these apparently innocent imaginations? We find the answer when Davidson claims that Adam and Eve were both together the leaders of the liturgical worship by "serving and guarding" the garden, just as the priests and Levites would "serve" and "guard" the sanctuary near three millenniums later. In other words, the intention of these new interpreters is to make Eve equal to Adam, to be a priestess or a shepherdess of God's people like her husband, following the modern trend of "gender equality."

In order to construct all this imaginary construction of the Garden as a temple, Richard resorts to the account of Lucifer's creation in Ez 28. There Richard sees the Garden of Eden of heaven as a pattern of the earthly Garden of Eden. But the question is whether the text that sees the rebellious angel in the figure of the king of Tyre does not also try to show the fall of that angel in light of what happened to Adam in Eden. The same we can say on the pagan "sanctuaries" of the king of Tyre which would be destroyed, as an illustration of what happened with the attempt of Lucifer to build his own sanctuaries in opposition to God. Moreover, nowhere does Ezekiel say that the supposed garden where the rebellious cherub had been created, was a temple. Nor does it say that the mount of the Eternal was the temple. No temple is either mentioned in the Eden of our first fathers.

These authors know that their construction is highly subjective. Davidson admits it when he says that these comparisons are "not explicitly stated as such in the immediate context" (108). "Details—especially distinctive sanctuary terms and clusters of terms—in the creation accounts, which may not at first glance seem to be relevant, when viewed in light of the overarching canonical sanctuary/temple

context of Scripture take on new significance as closely linking creation with sanctuary, filling out our understanding of earth's first sanctuary" (109). Adventists and non-Adventists authors have rejected that kind of typology "arguing that identifying the garden of Eden and surroundings as a sanctuary involves illegitimately reading back into Genesis 1-3 descriptions of later sanctuaries" (107).

As already seen in the former dialogues, Richard recognizes in reference to his fabricated literary structure of Revelation, that "some of these allusions... are more elusive" (655), but insists that what counts is the emphasis he chooses in this linguistic connections (650). The question must be asked here. Can a set of supposed "elusive" allusions end up offering an explicit picture? Do we need to bring more unsubstantiated imaginary details proposed by these authors who build their hypotheses by leaning on themselves?

Again. Are we compelled to conclude that a table is also a lion, because it has four feet like the lion has? The fact that the same term, "foot," used sometimes to describe the table and the lion, is enough to presume, conversely, that the lion is a table? Can it be presumed that, although the comparison of each separate foot does not seem so obvious to transform the table into a lion, or a lion into a table, the sum of the four elusive feet in both allows us to believe that the table is, truly, a lion, or the lion a table?

The question we ask ourselves is whether a set of white lies, by force of number, can end up transforming them into a truth. It is as the saying goes that asks ironically, "how many times does a lie have to be repeated for it to end up being true?" As we begin to consider that same kind of interpretive fantasy in the book of Revelation, with similar conclusions from Richard Davidson, we ask ourselves: why not rely on what John saw, rather than construct imaginary parallels which John didn't see, which twist the meaning and purpose of his visions?

The only temples measured in the Bible are the tabernacle of the wilderness (Exod 25-27,30,36-38), the temple of Jerusalem (1 Kigs 6-7; 2 Chr 3-5), the temple of Ezekiel (40-43,46), and the temple of heaven (Rev 11:1-2). The only cities measured in the Bible are the city of Jerusalem and the land in Eze 45,48; and the New Jerusalem in Rev 21. Don't mix fantasy with those measurements, as if you were permitted to measure all the gardens, mounts, and foreign presumed external literary patterns to try to fix everything in every story and vision of the Bible!

Let us state here that the city of the New Jerusalem is not the temple, nor the cubic Most Holy Place of the temple of Solomon. That city of God is measured by one of the seven angels who had the bowls with the wrath of God. He measured the city before John. God and the Lamb are the temple of the city. The city is not cubic, like the second apartment of the earthly temple. Let us see the reasons that we give in the dialogue to reject the view of a cubic New Jerusalem city, as well as the meaning of the heavenly temple measurement.

Dialogues on the Heavenly Temple in the Book of Revelation

10. One Last Attack on the Heavenly Sanctuary

Dr. Alberto R. Treiyer

www.adventistdistinctivemessages.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E5EGrDLVz1A>

As this series is concluding today, I would mention one reaction that arrived a few days ago from a pastor in Australia. He wrote to say he recently spoke with a former pastor who lost his faith over the investigative judgment. One of his arguments was that if the investigative judgment was as relevant as indicated by the Spirit of Prophecy, why does the book of Revelation (supposedly) say nothing about it? That former pastor (and others like him) have entertained themselves with some of the new books that have been written in our church on this matter, which do not represent the prophetic heritage of our church. As a matter of fact, many things began to change in our theological circles in the understanding of the temple of Revelation starting in the 80s., as already seen in our former dialogs. This is the outcome of neglecting more and more the Spirit of Prophecy.

“It is Satan’s plan to weaken the faith of God’s people in the *Testimonies*. Next follows skepticism in regard to the vital points of our faith, the pillars of our position, then doubt as to the Holy Scriptures, and then the downward march to perdition. When the *Testimonies*, which were once believed, are doubted and given up, Satan knows the deceived ones will not stop at this; and he redoubles his efforts till he launches them into open rebellion, which becomes incurable and ends in destruction” (*Testimonies for the Church* 4:211).

The good news is that earthly attacks on the heavenly sanctuary (subtle or open) cannot overcome. The Lord will finally be vindicated there before the universe, and the whole creation will end up praising His Name (Rev 5:13). But many will be deceived, to their own loss. This is the message that comes from the old law of the Day of Atonement (Lev 16), and reaches its majestic conclusion in the book of Revelation. God is finally completely vindicated before and by the whole universe (Rev 5:13).

We don’t have to be concerned about whether the Lord will overcome His enemies or not. Our real concern is with saving souls from the last deception which is making an impressive attempt to undermine the character of God and His government. Because the revelation of God comes from His sanctuary in heaven, the demonic and earthly attacks against the throne of God have taken a number of different forms. But they have a common denominator which is to confuse the people on what is really going on in the temple of heaven.

This dialogue contains a summary of the different attempts of the devil to divert our attention from the fact that Jesus, the Lamb, will be invested as King of kings and Lord of lords, in essence, King of the New Jerusalem. The greatest vision that illustrates this fact, (a development of the vision of Dan 7), is found in Rev 4-5. Let us not permit anyone or anything to divert our attention with other matters that blur that glorious vision in the heavenly temple ...

Here we reach the end of our dialogues on the temple of Revelation. Let us conclude with a positive note. As already seen in panoramic view during the exposition of this series, the book of Revelation is an open window to the past, the present, and the future from the perspective of the judgment. John was taken in vision to the time of the end, and from that perspective he could see beforehand what would happen in the Christian era and how the court of heaven reviews the relevant events occurring during that period of time till the coming of the Lord. Even in the epilogue, which projects the New Jerusalem

and the New Eden, we can see warnings to us who are living during the time of probation, as well as the assurance of victory and the reception of such wonderful promises as eternal life in God's paradise.