

## RESUMEN

“**Hacia una teología sistemática de la doctrina del santuario – Parte II**”— Este artículo es parte de un ensayo que ofrece algunas reflexiones preliminares sobre la relación entre el santuario y la teología sistemática, centrándose solamente en unos pocos aspectos que exponen la relación entre los dos. El primer artículo consideró la naturaleza de los sistemas teológicos, las cuestiones relacionadas con un sistema teológico adventista y la relación entre la teología fundamental y el santuario en particular, con especial atención a algunos puntos de vista generales que compiten entre sí y que están íntegramente relacionados con la manera en que se conciben los principios teológicos más amplios. El primer artículo preparó el escenario para este segundo artículo, que concluye el ensayo discutiendo un número importante de aspectos sistemáticos que arrojan luz sobre una posible teología sistemática del santuario.

**Palabras clave:** teología sistemática, santuario, sistemas teológicos, teología fundamental, teología adventista

## ABSTRACT

“**Toward a Systematic Theology of the Sanctuary—Part II**”— This article is part two of an essay that offers some preliminary thoughts regarding the relationship of the sanctuary and systematic theology, focusing on just a few aspects which expose the relationship between the two. The first article considered the nature of theological systems, issues related to an Adventist system of theology, and the relationship between fundamental theology and the sanctuary in particular, with attention to some broad, competing views of the sanctuary that are integrally related to the way one conceives of broader theological principles. The first article set the stage for this second article, which concludes the essay by discussing a number of important systematic elements that shed light on a potential systematic theology of the sanctuary.

**Keywords:** systematic theology, Sanctuary, theological systems, fundamental theology, Seventh-day Adventist theology

## TOWARD A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY OF THE SANCTUARY—PART II

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### Introduction

This article is part two of an essay that offers some preliminary thoughts regarding the relationship of the sanctuary and systematic theology, focusing on just a few aspects which expose the relationship between the two. The first article considered the nature of theological systems, issues related to an Adventist system of theology, and the relationship between fundamental theology and the sanctuary in particular, with attention to some broad, competing views of the sanctuary that are integrally related to the way one conceives of broader theological principles. The first article set the stage for this second article, which concludes the essay by discussing a number of important systematic elements that shed light on a potential systematic theology of the sanctuary.

### Sanctuary Theology

While it is beyond the scope of this article to demonstrate what a full canonical theology of the sanctuary would look like (to do so would require an entire canonical investigation), a few minimal suggestions relative to sanctuary theology might be made here. I will begin by addressing the question: What is the sanctuary?

The term “sanctuary” might refer to a(n): (1) earthly locus of religious activity (e.g., Israelite ritual system), (2) heavenly locus of the divine throne and divine activity, and/or (3) doctrine. These options are not mutually exclusive but complement one another. Further, the biblical material regarding the sanctuary presupposes divine presence in particular location(s) of space as well as movement from one location to another and sequential temporal (inter)action. It is thus replete with references to spatial location (“here”) and temporal processes (“then,” “now” along with descriptions of [inter]action).

Nevertheless, one must be careful not to posit an overdetermined conception of the sanctuary that mistakes the types (of the earthly sanctuaries) for the antitype (the heavenly sanctuary). Whereas the link between them should never be downplayed or neglected, the type is not the antitype; the antitype is far greater than the type and more glorious than our conceptualizations can reach (cf. 1 Cor 2:9). When we (univocally) project the type onto the antitype we end up with an impoverished view of the heavenly sanctuary that itself may cause others to reject the reality of the sanctuary.

Thus, whereas I am convicted that Scripture depicts the heavenly sanctuary as a spatio-temporal reality with real (salvation-crucial) heavenly processes, I also believe that I have little conception of what heavenly spatio-temporality is like and, as such, it is unwise to project the limitations that I experience on earth onto the reality of heaven and its processes. For instance, although Scripture depicts God as inhabiting the heavenly (and, at times, earthly) sanctuary, it should not be thought that God is limited to inhabiting the sanctuary or any other location.<sup>1</sup> Consider Solomon's words: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!" (1 Kgs 8:27, KJV; cf. 2 Chr 2:6).<sup>2</sup> Here and elsewhere, it is essential to keep in mind the distinction between Creator and creature(s) as well as the anti-type-type differentiation and, in doing so, attempt to avoid positing more regarding the sanctuary than we can defensibly derive from, and demonstrate in, Scripture. After all, "we see through a glass, darkly" and "know [only] in part" (1 Cor 13:12, KJV).<sup>3</sup>

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1. Here, one should keep in mind that Scripture depicts God as omnipresent (see, e.g., Ps 139:7-10) *and* as concentrating the divine presence (at times) in particular locations (e.g., in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary), yet without ceasing to be omnipresent.

2. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations in this essay are from the NASB.

3. See the discussion of the analogical nature of theological language in Peckham, John C. Peckham, "Theopathic or Anthropopathic? A Suggested Approach to Imagery of Divine Emotion in the Hebrew Bible," *PRSt* 342, no. 5 (2015): 341-355. To take theological language as "analogical" means that there is similarity and dissimilarity but one should not attempt to parse the specific manner in which language

Nevertheless, while attempting to avoid any claim to know and understand more than we do, the canon does provide considerable information regarding the sanctuary and its integral role within the biblical system of truth. Some especially fruitful questions that, I believe, warrant further rigorous canonical-systematic investigation include: What kind of God does the sanctuary presuppose and explicate? What light does the sanctuary shed on the Great Controversy? What does the sanctuary tell us about the nature and works of Christ? What view of humanity and of sin does the sanctuary explicate? What does the sanctuary convey about atonement and salvation? Below, I offer only a few suggestive theological implications relative to each of these questions (each pending further canonical-systematic investigation).

### **The Sanctuary and the God-World Relationship**

The canon is revealed within, and descriptive of, the God-world relationship. Humans know nothing about God that was/is not revealed within the context of the God-world relationship.<sup>4</sup> Canonical theology, then, *is* theology of the God-world relationship. According to Scripture, God is love and the God-world relationship was and is intended by God to be a relationship of love (1 John 4:7-16; cf. Deut 6:5; 7:9-13; Matt 22:37; 1 John 3:1). Thus, at the center of the all-encapsulating God-world relationship is God's character of love.

The sanctuary is itself the locus of (among other things) the defense and vindication of God's character. Scripture focuses on the depiction of the relationship between God and humans in light of the Fall, aimed at the restoration of uninterrupted love relationship between God and creatures via the plan of salvation. The history of God's love manifest in this plan to reconcile God and sinners in light

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applies to God or does not apply to God absent biblical revelation in this regard. That is, where the Bible does not indicate the extent of similarity or dissimilarity of language use of God (relative to the way it applies to humans) it seems best to stick with the biblical language while recognizing it is analogical and not reading into such language what is not required thereby and discernible therein.

4. Even general revelation takes place within the context of God-world relationship, where "world" refers to the entirety of that which God has created.

of the Great Controversy (i.e., atonement) is articulated in the sanctuary and is essential to all Adventist doctrines.

In many ways, the sanctuary itself articulates the nature of the God-world relationship. As such, the God articulated in and by the sanctuary is the God of love who is deeply involved in, and affected by every facet of our lives. By creating this world, God voluntarily bestowed love upon this world and opened himself up to being profoundly affected by it, including the best interests of all in his own interests (cf. Eph 5:25-30) such that he is at times deeply grieved (Gen 6:6; Ps 78:40; Isa 63:10; Jer 31:20; Hos 11:8-9; Matt 23:37) and at other times takes considerable delight in his children (Zeph 3:17; cf. Ps 147:10-11; Isa 62:4; Col 3:20; Heb 13:21).

Notably, Scripture depicts a prominent evaluative aspect of divine love that sheds considerable light on the sanctuary (and vice versa) via its illumination of the nature of divine judgment.<sup>5</sup> Scripture closely associates God's love and evaluative delight/pleasure.<sup>6</sup> For example, note the parallel of "delight" and "love" in Prov 15:8-9, "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight [Heb. רָצוֹן]. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but He loves [אָהֵב] one who pursues righteousness" (cf. Prov 3:12).<sup>7</sup> God "loves righteousness and justice (Ps 33:5; 11:7) and takes delight in goodness but deeply hates evil (as he should). As such, God's people might be evaluatively "delightful" and/or pleasing to him (2 Sam 22:21-28; 1 Kgs 10:9; Jer 31:20; Ps 147:10-11; 149:4; Prov 16:7; Dan 9:23; 2 Chr 9:8; Rom 14:18; Col 1:10; 3:20; 1 Thess 4:1; Heb

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5. This evaluative aspect of divine love is one of five complementary aspects of divine love that make up what I call the foreconditional-reciprocal model of divine love as found in the canon (they are, volitional, evaluative, emotional, foreconditional, and ideally reciprocal). The depiction of God's evaluative love in the main text is derived from my research on divine love. See Peckham, *The Love of God*, 117-145; John C. Peckham, *The Concept of Divine Love in the Context of the God-World Relationship* (New York: Lang, 2014), 235-255, 399-431, 502-509.

6. On the overlap of language of divine love see the further discussion later in this essay.

7. Further, God "does not delight [רָצוֹן] in the strength of the horse" and "takes no pleasure in the legs of a man" but the "LORD takes pleasure [רָצוֹן] in those who fear Him" (Ps 147:10-11, NKJV).

11:5; 1 John 3:22).<sup>8</sup> Conversely, God is displeased, pained, and grieved by humans who practice evil (Is 9:17; 65:12; 66:4; Eccl 5:4; 1 Cor 10:5; 1 Thess 2:15). In all this, God “loves the righteous” (Ps 146:8; cf. 11:7) and “loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7).<sup>9</sup>

Yet, there is a significant tension between this evaluative love of God and the fact that no *mere* human has ever remained worthy of such love. God loves the righteous (Ps 146:8), yet “there is none righteous, not even one” (Rom 3:10; Ps 143:2); all our righteousness is but filthy rags (Isa 64:6). Without divine mediation, fallen humans are unworthy of divine love.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, any relationship between the all-holy God and sinful humans is impossible apart from God’s mediating atonement.<sup>11</sup>

The sanctuary system displays God’s atoning mediation that makes such divine-human love relationship possible. Among other things, the OT (earthly) sanctuary system of rituals displays the priestly and sacrificial mediation of the acceptability of humans before God. The sacrificial system itself typifies Jesus, who gave himself as “an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma” (Eph

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8. Indeed, human beings are precious and valuable to God (Isa 43:4; Matt 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:6-7, 24), even depicted as his special treasure (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18). Thus, “the Lord takes pleasure in his people” (Ps 149:4) who are precious in his sight (Exod 19:5-6; Deut 26:18; Isa 43:4; Matt 10:31). Further, God may be “please[d] [*ἀρεσκεία*] in all respects” when one walks in a manner “worthy of the Lord” (Col 1:10; cf. 1 Thess 2:12; 4:1; 2 Thess 1:5; Rom 14:18 Col 3:20; Heb 11:5) and children who are obedient to their parents are “well-pleasing [*εὐάρεστος*] to the Lord” (Col 3:20; cf. 1 Tim 5:4).

9. These texts do not say nor imply that God does not love the unrighteous or those who do not freely give. Scripture teaches that God loves everyone (cf. John 3:16). These texts, then, suggest that God loves the righteous and the cheerful giver in some specific, evaluative, manner.

10. While humans cannot generate value without mediation, all humans possess intrinsic value, not deservedly or of their own making but because God has invested value in every person whom he “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14) in his image (Gen 1:26-27).

11. Here, God has made a way to reconcile fallen humans to love relationship, including partially and temporarily suspending the consequences of evaluative judgment (e.g., Acts 17:30). Thus, evil is not immediately eradicated but God works to save all who are willing to be saved, that is, those who accept and reflect God’s love.

5:2; cf. Ezek 20:39-42; 2 Cor 2:14-15) and through whom mediation is truly accomplished.<sup>12</sup> Christ's mediation makes up for the deficiencies of those who are "in Christ" by faith (Rom 8:1; cf. 8:15-17; Eph 1:6).<sup>13</sup> Here, God values human intention to please him (itself impossible without God's prior action) and adds to that intention the ongoing mediation of Christ that makes up for human deficiencies. Thus, "through Christ," who is "choice and precious in the sight of God," humans may "offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" as a "chosen race, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet 2:4-5, 9) and be "pleasing in His sight" (Heb 13:21; cf. 15-16; 12:28; Rom 12:1-2; 1 John 3:21-22).

Note the overlap here between what is "acceptable" and "pleasing" to God. This overlap recurs throughout the OT and NT. Indeed, one of the primary terms of evaluative love and pleasure in the OT (הִצַּדֵּק) is also frequently used of the acceptability of sacrifices in God's sight.<sup>14</sup> The term הִצַּדֵּק refers to strong delight in something or someone, often including the connotation of acceptance (notably, this verb corresponds to the noun הִצְדִּיק, seen in Prov 15:8-9 in relation to divine love above). According to H. M. Barstad, the "basic meaning of the verb is best defined as 'be pleased with, find good or pleasant,

12. This phrase, "fragrant aroma" (ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας), corresponds to the OT phrase "soothing aroma" (רִיחַ הַנְּחִיחַת), being used to translate it 37 times in the LXX (including twice in the OT Apocrypha). The OT idiom refers to God's acceptance of the offering as pleasing (see., e.g., Gen 8:21). In the NT, it appears only here and in Phil 4:18, where it refers to gifts sent to Paul that are "an acceptable sacrifice" and "pleasing to God."

13. It must be recognized, then, that prior to any human action, God has loved humans and draws them to himself (Jer 31:3) such that human love is predicated on, and responsive to, prior divine love (1 John 4:19; cf. Deut 30:6).

14. Note that NT descriptions of the way Christians should conduct themselves as "good and acceptable in the sight of [ἐνώπιον] God" (1 Tim 2:3) and "acceptable in the sight of [ἐνώπιον] God" (1 Tim 5:4) includes sanctuary language, not only of acceptability but also of divine evaluative judgment by way of the phrase "in the sight of [ἐνώπιον]." This important phrase, "in the sight of [ἐνώπιον]" suggests coming before one for evaluative judgment and is also used elsewhere of various ways in which humans might be pleasing or acceptable in God's sight (e.g., Rom 3:20; 1 Tim 2:3; 5:4; 1 Pet 3:4). In the LXX, this divine evaluation is referred to by the term, ἐνώπιον, which means "in the judgment of, before" (Gen 6:8, 11; 7:1; Exod 5:21; 15:26; Lev 1:3; Deut 6:18 among many others). See H. Krämer, "ἐνώπιον," *EDNT*, 1:462.

love, like, wish for,' etc."<sup>15</sup> G. Gerleman explains further that lexical evidence shows that "the verb was used almost exclusively as an expression of a positive assessment: 'to find something good, be pleased with something,'" most often "indicat[ing] divine pleasure."<sup>16</sup> This הֶצִיחַ word group frequently appears in sacrificial contexts to describe an offering that is pleasing and thus acceptable to Yahweh (conditional upon many aspects of the offering itself and ritual performance, Lev 1:3-4; 7:18; 22:19-27) through which its offerer may be reckoned pleasing, that is, "so that [the offerer] may be accepted" by God (Lev 19:5; 22:29; 23:11; cf. Exod 28:37[38]).<sup>17</sup>

All of this is situated within the context of God's evaluative love and judgment, mediated via the sanctuary.<sup>18</sup> In light of Scripture's repeated emphasis on God's evaluative judgment of humans (Jer 11:20; Ps 7:9[10]; 2 Cor 10:18; 13:5-7; 1 Thess 2:4), including eschatological judgment (1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:9-10; 1 Pet 1:7; 4:12), Christians are frequently exhorted to "examine" (δοκιμάζω) themselves to see where they stand (2 Cor 13:5-6) and to be "approved" (δόκιμος) rather than "unapproved" (ἄδοκιμος; 2 Cor 13:7; cf. Rom 12:2; 1 Cor 11:28).<sup>19</sup> Notably, the δόκιμος word group evokes (at least in some contexts) the concept of investigative judgment as it generally refers to that which has been tested, examined, or inspected and is found pleasing, accept-

15. H. M. Barstad, "הֶצִיחַ," *TDOT*, 13:619.

16. G. Gerleman, "הֶצִיחַ," *TLOT*, 3:1259-1260.

17. This assumes divine responsiveness to humans and appraisal of their actions (which would be ruled out by divine impassibility). Cf. the frequent contrast of the term with the negative evaluation of תועבה (abomination, e.g., Prov 15:8).

18. As noted above, the primary OT term of love, אהב, frequently overlaps with language of delight, including נהנה, which may connote delight, pleasure, or desire, and רצה/רצהו. Cf. Prov 3:12; 15:8-9; 11:20; 12:2, 22. Likewise, the primary NT language of love (the ἀγαπάω and φιλέω word groups) is also closely associated with the NT terminology of evaluative delight, pleasure, approval, and/or acceptance (the εὐδοκέω and δόκιμος word groups, among others).

19. The term δόκιμος means "'approved by testing' and indicates that the person in question, being pleasing to God, has survived the test." Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 489. Cf. Walter Grundmann, "δόκιμος," *TDNT*, 2:255-260. The corresponding verb δοκιμάζω refers to proving the quality, acceptability, or worth of something by careful examination and/or testing (e.g., 1 Cor 3:13; 1 Tim 3:10).



able, approved, worthy, and/or reliable.<sup>20</sup> In this regard, Christians are to “be diligent to present [παρίστημι]” themselves “approved [δόκιμος] to God” (2 Tim 2:15). Here, the sanctuary system and investigative judgment is further evoked not only by the use of δόκιμος but via the terminology of παρίστημι (to present oneself), which is used of “offering oneself as a sacrifice” (Rom 12:1; Col 1:22) and of “presenting someone before a judge” (Col 1:28; Rom 6:13; 2 Cor 4:14).<sup>21</sup>

Accordingly, Paul emphasizes the ambition “to be pleasing” (εὐάρεστος) to God, for “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor 5:9-10). Eventually, the “quality of each man’s work” will be tested (δοκιμάζω) by fire (1 Cor 3:13) and it is God himself who “examines [δοκιμάζω] our hearts” (1 Thess 2:4).<sup>22</sup> As such, Peter refers to the “proof” (δοκίμιον) of “faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested [δοκιμάζω] by fire,” which will “result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 1:7; cf. 4:12).

In all this, God “is a rewarder of those who seek Him” by “faith,” without which “it is impossible to please Him” (Heb 11:6). God reconciles to himself those who respond to his love, accounting them worthy through Christ’s mediation (Luke 20:35; 2 Thess 1:5) and finally transforming them into his likeness (1 Cor 15:51-56; 1 John 3:2). As Jas 1:12 puts it, “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved [δόκιμος], he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love [ἀγαπάω] Him” (cf. Jas 2:5; 1 John 5:2; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3).

20. See Grundmann, “δόκιμος,” *TDNT*, 2:255-260.

21. Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 520.

22. According to Anthony C. Thiselton, this test “discloses definitive approval (or otherwise) in the sense of a disclosure of all the factors which contribute to God’s definitive verdict” including “whether the person concerned shares the right-wised (justified) status of those who are in Christ; but it will also disclose the extent to which their work has produced some lasting effect in God’s sight.” Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 313. Emphasis in original.

Conversely, humans may *eventually* reject God’s love and thus cut themselves off from the benefits of love relationship with God. Whereas God’s love is ideally reciprocal and God does everything that he can do (cf. Isa 5:1-4; 2 Chr 36:16) to effectuate reciprocal love relationship with each human, God will never force his love on anyone. Indeed, love by definition cannot be determined and, as such, humans possess the freedom to reject God and forfeit the benefits of his love. This freedom that is requisite to genuine love itself points back to the Great Controversy’s close association with the sanctuary, to which we now turn.

### The Sanctuary and Great Controversy Theodicy

This very freedom that is necessary for love relationship provides the background toward addressing why God has temporarily allowed evil.<sup>23</sup> Many are deeply troubled by the problem of evil, asking: If God is omnipotent and always and in every way good (omnibenevolent), why is there (so much) evil in the world? Although the Great Controversy perspective does not answer all of our questions regarding the presence and magnitude of evil, it does provide a compelling framework to approach such issues.

Central to the God-world relationship throughout Scripture (which is articulated via the sanctuary) is the ongoing Great Controversy and central to the Great Controversy is love itself.<sup>24</sup> The Great Controversy is itself an “act” in the cosmic “play” that is the histo-

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23. Evil is not itself necessary but in so far as God cannot control the decisions of others while granting them the kind of freedom necessary for love many things occur that God does not want and “cannot” determine otherwise. See John C. Peckham, “Does God Always Get What He Wants? A Theocentric Approach to Divine Providence and Human Freedom,” *AUSS* 52, no. 2 (2014): 195-212.

24. As noted earlier, the God-world relationship itself encapsulates the scope of all reality. If the God-world relationship encapsulates all of reality and love is central to this relationship, itself made possible via the sanctuary, which is integrally connected to the Great Controversy and the understanding and operation of God’s love relationship to the world (via evaluative judgment and atonement etc.), then it is not difficult to see the sanctuary as a principle of articulation of theology (that is, of the God-world relationship).

ry of God's love (cf. 1 Cor 4:9).<sup>25</sup> Further, in many significant ways, the sanctuary is integral to the Great Controversy. The sanctuary is, among other things, a primary locus of a cosmic courtroom drama.

According to Ezek 28, the controversy began in the heavenly sanctuary, with the fall of a covering cherub who was created "blameless" but who chose to slander God's character such that in him iniquity was found (Ezek 28; cf. Exod 25:19-20). According to the text, the enemy's "heart was lifted up because of [his] beauty," and he "corrupted [his] wisdom by reason of [his] splendor" (Ezek 28:17; cf. Isa 14:12-14).<sup>26</sup>

On earth, the controversy began in the garden of Eden, itself a type of the sanctuary.<sup>27</sup> Whereas all of God's creation was perfect (cf. Gen 1:31), Eve ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, believing the serpent's slanderous claims that God did not really want what was best for her and was lying regarding the inevitable consequences of sin (Gen 3:4-5), bringing the Great Controversy to earth with all its enmity, yet not without God's grace and promise of reconciliation (Gen 3:15).

The Great Controversy, here and elsewhere, is over the question of God's character as raised by his accuser, who is also the "accuser of the brethren" (Rev 12:20; cf. Zech 3:1-9; Jude 9). Given that the controversy introduced sin and evil to a previously perfect world, the Great Controversy is also highly concerned with the matter of divine presence. Whereas sin separates from God (Isa 59:2), God makes a way to dwell with his people and provide reconciling atonement (cf. Exod 25:8-9). Nevertheless, in the midst of the Great Controversy God is both present and "absent," he speaks in revelation and acts in the world and yet he often appears silent and hidden from view.<sup>28</sup> This tragic state

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25. The Great Controversy perspective will be discussed further below. For more on this in relation to the problem of evil, see John C. Peckham, *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018).

26. Notably, this ought not have been a matter of pride given that his beauty was not of his own making. It should have been a source of praise to God.

27. See Richard M. Davidson, "Earth's First Sanctuary: Genesis 1-3 and Parallel Creation Accounts," *AUSS* 53, no. 1 (2015): 65-89.

28. God is omnipotent (possessing all power, see Jer 32:17; Rev 19:6) but does not exercise all of his power. Further, God is omnipresent in one sense while God also

of affairs is brought to an end by the plan of redemption typified in the earthly sanctuary system. By way of reconciling at-one-ment, those who receive and reflect God's love will have the privilege of experiencing God-with-us forevermore. This brings us to the systematic implications of the sanctuary relative to atonement, sin, and soteriology.

### The Sanctuary and Atonement/Sin/Soteriology

Within the Great Controversy context, sin is revealed as horrendous and deadly serious, requiring reconciling atonement, which can only be provided by God himself (cf. Gen 22:8, 13-14). That salvation can only come from above (from God) rather than from below (from human effort) is exemplified in the sanctuary service, pointing to the self-giving of the Son of God for humanity. The nature of sin as more than act but also a stain that can be cleansed only by the purgating blood of the lamb (rather than by oneself) is evinced over and over via the ritual systems of the earthly sanctuary (cf. Ps 51:3-7).<sup>29</sup> That salvation is more than an abstract transaction is driven home by the display of the death of innocent victims pointing to the ultimate Innocent Victim (cf. Isa 53) who redeemed us from the debts we could never settle for ourselves (cf. Eph 1:7 and the kinsman-redeemer motif in Ruth).

As such, the sanctuary system points to a multi-faceted conception of the atonement as, among other things, sacrificial (1 Cor 5:7;

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localizes and/or concentrates his presence in particular localities (e.g., in the Most Holy Place and in the incarnation) and, at times, removing such concentrated presence (cf. Ezek 9:9; 10:18-19). While there is no place one can escape God's presence (Ps 139:7-10; cf. Prov 15:3; Matt 18:20), the biblical conception of omnipresence does not mean that God is *uniformly* present in all "space." God is thus omnipotent and yet appears to not exercise his power, omnipresent and yet sometimes appears to be absent, the all-knowing (omniscient, 1 John 2:20) one who knows the future (theoretically, cf. Ps 139:16; Isa 46:9-11; Rom 8:29-30) and yet (experientially) appears to wait in anticipation for what will occur next (theoretical vs. experiential knowledge).

29. Further, the horribleness of sin is seen in that for high-handed sins there is no atoning sacrifice in the earthly sanctuary (cf. Num 15:22-31) but there is such a sufficient sacrifice in the ultimately perfect Lamb of God (cf. the case of Manasseh, 2 Chr 33:10-18).

Heb 9:22, including expiation of guilt and corresponding removal of occasion for divine wrath), substitutionary (e.g., Isa 53:6; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18; Eph 5:2; Rom 5:8), ransom-redemption (1 Tim 2:6; Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; Eph 1:7; Tit 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18-19; cf. Ruth), a demonstration of God's love (Rom 5:8; cf. John 3:16; 15:13), and Christ's victory over Satan and the forces of evil (1 John 3:8; Heb 2:14; cf. Gen 3:15; Rev 12:7-9).<sup>30</sup>

Further, via the two-phase sanctuary atonement, the awesome holiness of God is continually manifest such that humans should humble themselves and approach God with due regard, which is especially highlighted via the Day of Atonement and its crucial self-searching and divine cleansing aspects (cf. Lev 16:29-31; Dan 8:14; 1 John 1:9; 2 Tim 2:21). Moreover, the ritual transference of responsibility for sin from the guilty to the sanctuary manifests the responsibility taken on by God in dealing with the sin problem (for which he was never culpable), cleansed via Christ's day of atonement ministry, thereby vindicating God's own spotless character and vindicating those who believe in him and, finally, making them spotless. As such, God is both the "just and the justifier" of those who believe in Christ (Rom 3:26), who "is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for" us (Heb 7:25), thereby making up for our deficiencies (see the earlier discussion of God's evaluative love and the mediation of Christ).

However, some systems obscure this sanctuary soteriology; the sanctuary and Christ's priesthood is obscured and/or replaced by a counterfeit (sacramental) ritual system in some forms of Christianity (e.g., the sacramentalism and sacerdotalism of Rome) whereas others obscure the sanctuary and Christ's priesthood by viewing it as purely symbolic and thus obsolete after Christ (e.g., the primarily de-ritualized perspective of some Protestant systems). In the former, particularly, but also in some forms of the latter, instead of the true paschal

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30. Indeed, one might perhaps speak of a sanctuary model or conception of the atonement, which itself entails all of these facets as situated within the Great Controversy and thus, in my view, makes greater sense of each facet and the whole picture of atonement collectively.

lamb of Christ, earthly elements are purported to *be* and/or transform into the broken body and blood of Christ (seemingly requiring an eternal, or timeless, sacrifice of Christ), thus replacing (being put in place, or instead of—ἀντὶ) the ongoing mediation of the living Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

## The Sanctuary and Christ

Sanctuary soteriology presupposes Christology and the obscuration of sanctuary soteriology correspondingly involves a usurping of Christ's role(s). The earthly replacement of Christ's priesthood offers a substitute for Christ. The emphasis on the purported (earthly) presence of Christ in the Eucharist (via transubstantiation, consubstantiation or otherwise) engenders a lack of recognition of the presence and work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Christ's priesthood might thus be spoken of but is reduced to a minimized and largely (if not fully) completed role. Accordingly, some shift to either a mediating clergy or a priesthood of all believers without proper recognition of the work of the one true once-for-all High Priest.

Christ is, however, the true unblemished (absolutely sinless) and perfect Lamb (typified by the various offerings, cf. 1 John 3:5) and the true Prophet, Priest, and King. Christ's priesthood is not merely symbolic or an already completed task but he is the genuinely functioning High Priest, our ever-interceding mediator (cf. Heb 4:15). As such, "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (Heb 7:22). Whereas there were "many priests" in the earthly sanctuary, Jesus, "because He continues forever, holds His priesthood permanently" and is "able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:23-25; cf. Rom 8:34).

Christ's mediation is crucial for it is only through Christ that we might have peace with God by faith (Rom 5:1) and offer "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 2:5). Through the true Son we might become sons and daughters of God (Gal 3:26; cf. Rom 8:15-17; Heb 2:9-17; 1 John 3:1-2). Through the truly elect One we might be elect (Eph 1:4-6; cf. Luke 9:35). Through the genu-

inely worthy beloved One we are beloved (Eph 1:6; 5:1; cf. Matt 3:17; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13). Through Christ, we might enter into the very presence of God; we might even go boldly to the throne of grace in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 4:16).

Yet, Christ also brought to earth the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9), the divine presence as God incarnate and the fullest revelation of God to humans; God with us (Immanuel). Even prior to the incarnation he manifested the presence of God with humans as (among other ways) the divine “angel of the LORD” (Gen 16:7-11; Exod 3:2-4; Judg 13:13-22; et al.), functioning as the “angel of His presence” who “saved them” and “in His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old” (Isa 63:9). In the incarnation, “the Word” who both “was God” and was “with God” in “the beginning” and through whom “all things were made” (John 1:1-3, KJV) also “became flesh, and dwelt [or “tabernacled,” *σκηνώω*] among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). As such, he was the true shekinah glory; greater than the earthly temple (Matt 12:6). He was and is the only and ultimate mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2:5), bringing full and free reconciliation for all who are willing, the one who “will come again,” that where he is we might also be (John 14:3).

Thus, Christ took sin and death and defeated them and will “destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8; cf. Heb 2:14-15; Gen 3:15). Thus, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” and “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor 5:19, 21). Thus, God in Christ took the penalty upon himself as our substitute and does so willingly as the just and justifier (Rom 3:26; 8:32; Gal 3:13; Eph 5:2; 1 Tim 2:4-6; Tit 2:14; 1 John 3:16). None but God alone could do this and even he could do this only by becoming human without becoming any less divine (cf. 1 Tim 2:5).

Thus, via the mediation of the God-man Jesus, both God and humanity are vindicated as in the gospel the “righteousness of God is revealed” (Rom 1:17). Accordingly, “at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and un-

der the earth” and “every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” for

although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name (Phil 2:6-11; cf. Rev 15:3-4; 16:5).

### **The Sanctuary and Humanity/Anthropology**

Beyond the sinful nature of humanity that is manifested as a problem that humans cannot resolve but one that requires divine action and human transformation (cf. Jer 13:23; 31:33; Ezek 36:26) via a substitutionary Savior and mediating high priest, the sanctuary also presupposes and illuminates a particular conception of human nature relative to human freedom and moral responsibility, the constitution of human nature and conditional immortality, and the inestimable value and divinely intended destiny of humanity.

With regard to free will and moral responsibility, the sanctuary presupposes that humans are both culpable for their sinfulness and possess (via prior divine action, cf. Deut 30:6; Jer 31:3; 1 John 4:19) the free will to accept God’s love and thus choose to be reconciled via God’s atoning work to full love relationship with God and others (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37; cf. Josh 24:15; Ezek 33:11; 1 John 4:8-16). This kind of freedom is not only requisite for love but also for any conceivably coherent conception of evaluative judgment relative to moral responsibility (see the earlier discussion).

With regard to human constitution, the biblical teaching of conditional immortality (Gen 2:7; Ps 146:4; Eccl 9:5; 12:7; Dan 12:2; John 11:11-13; 1 Thess 4:16-17) complements the sanctuary teaching of an investigative judgment on the basis of which humans receive their reward (cf. Dan 7:9-14; Matt 12:36-37; 16:27; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 10:27-39; Rev 11:18; 22:12). With regard to human value, the lengths that God



has gone to save us and to manifest his love for us, despite the cost to himself, evinces the inestimable value that we possess in Christ (cf. Matt 10:31; 12:12; Luke 12:7, 24; John 15:13; Gal 2:20; Eph 5:2). As such, how should we treat one another? Finally, the sanctuary and its emphasis on reconciliation with God points toward the destiny that God intends for humans; we were created to be with God forever and the God of the universe wants to dwell in the midst of us (cf. Ps 23:6; John 14:3). As such, we should live with eternity in mind.

### The Sanctuary and Ecclesiology

The sanctuary is further linked to biblical ecclesiology, that is, the doctrine of the church. Because Christ is the true high priest through whom we may approach the very throne of grace (in the Most Holy Place), there can be no earthly priesthood that must mediate between God and humans. Christ is the only mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and the once-for-all sacrifice (Heb 10:10; 1 Pet 3:18; cf. Rom 6:10; Heb 7:27; 9:12). No additional sacrifices or sacraments are required in order to be in right relationship with God but “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

The church, then, is not a mediating conduit of salvation and is not to be a sacramental hierarchy; there is a priesthood of all believers (1 Pet 2:5-9; cf. Exod 19:5-6; Heb 13:15-16) who, as the collective body of Christ, are to be conduits of the message of what the true high priest has done and is doing (e.g., the everlasting gospel, Rev 14:6-12). The sanctuary, as a place of atonement (i.e., reconciliation) enables the unity of the church that is not a man-made institutional (and thus artificial) unity but true unity in Christ as “members of his body” (Eph 5:30) without removing our diversity as “many” who “are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (Rom 12:5). Thus, only union with Christ leads to the genuine unity of the Church. Those who are in Christ are thus friends of the bridegroom (cf. Isa 5:1-7; John 3:29), whose duty it is to proclaim and manifest that He is who He says and to help people to recognize and come to love Him.

## **The Sanctuary, Judgment, Law (Sabbath et al.), and Hell/Eschatology**

As has been seen in various ways above, the sanctuary is closely connected with judgment and vindication. According to 2 Cor 5:10, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (cf. Rom 4:10).<sup>31</sup> While many react negatively to the very thought of judgment, for those who are in Christ, the judgment is exceedingly good news because the judge is the One who vindicates Himself and His people (cf. Rom 3:4-6, 21-26). As explained earlier, it is through Christ the truly Elect and Beloved that we might be elect and beloved of God (cf. Eph 1:4-6; 1 Pet 2:4-6). Through the one true and pleasing sacrifice (Eph 5:2) we can bring offerings acceptable to God (1 Pet 2:5; cf. Rom 12:1-2; Heb 13:15-16). Through faith in him we are pleasing to God (Heb 11:6) and will finally be made like Him (1 John 3:2).

The sanctuary judgment is indeed good news for there is no judgment without Christ, unto whom all judgment has been given (John 5:22; cf. 2 Tim 4:1; 1 John 2:1-2). We may have full assurance in Him rather than in ourselves. As 1 John 2:1-3 states: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”

The very commandments of God are a reflection of His character of love. The placement of the Ten Commandments in the ark of the covenant of the earthly sanctuary (Deut 31:24-26; 1 Kgs 8:9; Heb 9:4; cf. Exod 2:16; Rev 11:19) show the relationship between God’s law and the sanctuary. Indeed, “righteousness and justice are the foundation of [God’s] throne” (Ps 89:14) and through Christ’s ministry it is manifest that “lovingkindness and truth have met together; righteousness

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31. For just some of the texts regarding the judgment, see Dan 7:9-10; Rev 14:7; Rom 2:6; 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:12; Rev 22:12; Matt 16:27; Acts 17:31; Jas 2:11-12; Matt 12:36-37; Eccl 12:13-14.

and peace have kissed each other” (Ps 85:10).<sup>32</sup> At the heart of God’s law of love (Matt 22:37-40; cf. Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8)—the Ten Commandments—stands the Sabbath commandment, which is aimed at remembrance of who God is and what He has done as Creator of all and the nurture of relationship with God and with fellow humans (Ex 20:8-11; cf. Rev 14:7). The Sabbath is rightly described as a temple in time and a sign of those who are in loving relationship with God (cf. Exod 31:13; Ezek 20:12). The Sabbath is thus integral to the three angels’ messages as the memorial to the Creator and judge who will judge with just judgment and create again a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 14:7; 21:4).

According to Scripture, before Christ’s return, those who have truly accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord will be vindicated by heavenly judgment (Dan 7:9-10; 8:14). Thus, when Christ comes in glory all cases will have been decided and He will “reward each according to his works” (Matt 16:27, NKJV; cf. Rev 20:12; 22:12).<sup>33</sup> Through Christ the righteous judge,<sup>34</sup> the “accuser of our brethren” and those who follow him are cast down and defeated (Rev 12:10). God is vindicated as He saves us and also fulfills the law of love, “demonstrat[ing] His righteousness” such that he is both “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom 3:25-26; cf. 5:8).<sup>35</sup>

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32. God’s love is just love and his justice is loving. The love of God is inseparable from justice and vice versa in the biblical text. See Peckham, *The Concept of Divine Love*.

33. Of course, God is omniscient and thus has no need of any investigation to reveal to Him who should be saved and lost (2 Tim 2:19). This pre-advent (investigative) judgment, then, does not supply information to God but clearly manifests to the universe that God is just (1 Cor 4:9); God has not arbitrarily chosen some to be saved and some to be lost, but justly saves all those who have manifested faith in Christ and persevered in love (Matt 24:13; 2 Tim 4:8) whereas all those whom God does not save are lost due to their own decision to reject God’s love; sadly yet justly condemned by their own unbelief (cf. John 3:18).

34. Recall the judgment language associated with God’s evaluative love as discussed earlier.

35. Notice the parallel demonstration of God’s justice (Rom 3:26) and love (Rom 5:8). God thus defeats the enemy’s allegations that God’s people should not be saved (among others, cf. Zech 3:1-5; Jude 9; Rev 12:10).

Indeed, the sovereign of the universe calls his creatures to “judge” between he and his vineyard (Isa 5; cf. Rom 3:4) and while we are not to judge before the time (1 Cor 4:5) but should love even our enemies (Matt 5:44) while they might yet become friends of God, the redeemed will also “judge the world,” indeed “we shall judge angels” (1 Cor 6:2-3). As such, we will ratify that God’s justice and mercy have indeed kissed (cf. Ps 85:10); that his infinite love and immeasurable compassion have justly saved all those sinners who would be saved and unwillingly condemned those who reject love and life itself (Lam 3:33), being condemned by their own unbelief (Rom 2:5; cf. John 3:18). This astonishing demonstration of God’s justice (Rom 3:26) and love (Rom 5:8) itself evokes our love in response (1 John 4:19), contributing to reconciliation (cf. Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Col 1:21).

The judgment thus not only manifests God’s redemption, reconciliation, and vindication of his people via the atoning action of Christ but also manifests that God has done everything that He could do to save as many as He could. Those who are condemned have tragically rejected the mediation and love of Christ and, as such, there is nothing more that God can do to save them (Isa 5:3-4; cf. 2 Chr 36:16). As such, the most loving thing he can do is put them out of their misery. There is no place of eternal conscious torment but God’s love and justice forever eradicates evil from the universe<sup>36</sup> and, finally, “God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Rev 21:4, NKJV).<sup>37</sup> Reconciliation (atonement) will then finally be complete, the universe restored.

## **The Great Controversy and God’s Reputation Revisited**

Yet, many have asked: Why is this Great Controversy process necessary? It is not strictly necessary but, because of the creaturely misuse of free will that brought evil into the universe and onto our

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36. Indeed death and Hades are themselves thrown into the lake of fire.

37. Christ thus defeats all the enemies of goodness: sin, death, Satan and his demonic forces; evil is overcome and defeated once and for all (Gen 3:15; Rev 12:7-9; 1 John 3:8; Heb 2:14; Rev 20:2, 10).

planet, God has taken it upon himself to deal with this problem of evil once and for all, manifesting the depth of his matchless love in the process (cf. Rom 5:8). It is the enemy, not God, who is culpable for the entrance of evil in the universe. Satan sowed the seeds of evil all over and then turned around and blamed God for it (Matt 13:24-30), manifesting himself as the “father of lies” (John 8:44) and the slanderer par excellence (cf. Gen 3:1-5; Ezek 28:16; Rev 12:10). In this context, God desires to manifest His character because, if human beings think God is a tyrant who is responsible for evil, how could they love him? If God does not vindicate his name (reputation) how will creatures know the truth about him and come to love Him? For this reason, God is profoundly concerned with His reputation and character before the world (e.g., Gen 18:24-25; Exod 32:12-13; Num 14:15-16; Deut 9:28; Josh 7:7-9; Ps 23:3; 25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 106:8; 109:21; 143:11; Isa 5:1-5; 48:9-11; 66:5; Jer 12:1-4; 14:7; Ezek 18:25; 20:9, 14, 22, 44; Dan 9:19; Rom 3:3-5). God’s name is thus defended for the sake of love. Scripture, accordingly, depicts a crucial link between God’s demonstration of His righteousness and love and His justification of sinners (see especially Rom 3:25-26; 5:8).

Notably, the two phases of the atonement highlight this link. Via the daily (תָּמִיד) sanctuary sacrifices and rituals, the people’s sin was transferred into the sanctuary. As such, God takes into his house and thus onto his own reputation the sins of his people (cf. 2 Sam 14:9). In the second, Day of Atonement, phase, the sanctuary is cleansed and all the sins are removed from the sanctuary as God completes the vindication of himself and his saints, manifesting that he is “able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through” Christ (Heb 7:25, NKJV), without in any way compromising his justice. God deals with sin righteously and fairly, shouldering it and taking responsibility though He is not at all culpable for it (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 3:5).<sup>38</sup>

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38. Notice that 1 Pet 2:22 points out not only that Christ “committed no sin” but also “nor was any deceit found in his mouth” (cf. Isa 53:9) This itself may point to the Great Controversy context of a charge against God’s character; the liar from the beginning (Satan) accused the one who never lies (Tit 1:2) of lying (cf. Gen 3:4).

The sanctuary thus manifests a theology of God's character as part and parcel of his glory. Rather than history being about the manifestation of God's sovereignty and/or power, God's character is manifest in dealing with evil, his power in taking upon himself weakness. No show of force could reveal God's character of love. God manifests his glory by revealing his character (cf. Exod 33:19; 34:6-7). God is vindicated finally by himself in the atonement; the giving of Godself for sinners on the cross demonstrates once and for all his righteousness, that he is both "just and the justifier" (Rom 3:26) and, as such, demonstrates his love (Rom 5:8). All the universe will have seen in the pre-advent and post-advent judgments that God is fair and every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (Rom 14:11; Phil 2:10-11) and that God is just as they sing "the song of Moses" and "the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED'" (Rev 15:3-4; cf. 16:5).

The problem of apparent injustice in the world is nevertheless acute and the magnitude thereof is recognized throughout Scripture. Yet, the solution is in the sanctuary. Consider, Ps 73, wherein Asaph's "feet came close to stumbling" because he "was envious of the arrogant" as he "saw the prosperity of the wicked" who "mock and wickedly speak of oppression" and "have set their mouth against the heavens" yet are "always at ease" and "increased in wealth" and "say, 'How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?'" (Ps 73:3-4, 8-9, 12, 11; cf. Ecclesiastes; Job). Asaph, conversely, has "been stricken all day long and chastened every morning" and seemingly "in vain" he has "kept [his] heart pure" (Ps 73:14, 13). When he sought to "understand this, it was troublesome" to him. That is, he states: "Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end" (Ps 73:16-17).

Via the sanctuary, the goodness and justice of God is manifest and God's utter goodness, justice, and love will continue to be manifest throughout eternity. Whereas the Great Controversy over God's

character began in the (heavenly) sanctuary, it will finally be ended via the sanctuary atonement. The Great Controversy began in the sanctuary (in heaven), spread to the earth via Eden (an earthly sanctuary type), the plan of redemption was typified in the earthly sanctuaries, God takes sins upon himself in the sanctuary and makes atonement (Christ took sin and death and defeated them and God carries/shoulders the sins of the world) and, finally, when one looks into the sanctuary, one sees the love and justice of God.

### **The Conceptual Framework of the Sanctuary: A Tale of Two Sanctuaries Revisited**

The sanctuary thus manifests knowledge about the true character of God, putting down the accusations of God's enemies, and suggests a conception of reality that stands at odds with the wisdom of the world. Indeed, the above-outlined system of sanctuary theology is excluded by classical first principles of theology (as well as by liberal first principles thereof).

As we saw earlier, given traditional Thomistic macro-hermeneutical principles, there cannot have been or be a real heavenly sanctuary.<sup>39</sup> In response, however, there is no sufficient canonical reason to exclude the reality of the heavenly sanctuary. On the contrary, the particulars of the canonical data strongly indicate otherwise. On a canonical theological method, the abundant canonical data would require other intra-canonical data as a defeater, but none is forthcoming.

Further, given traditional (Thomistic) classic theism, the Adventist teaching regarding the sanctuary is systematically impossible. However, the Adventist teaching regarding the sanctuary is systematically impossible only on those (traditional) first principles. Yet, those first principles are not canonically derivable; indeed, particulars of the

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39. Recall as noted earlier that not all who self-identify as classic theists would adopt all of the first principles of traditional theism. Many have noticed the problems with at least some of them (for instance, that the traditional ontological categories as framed by Aquinas do not cohere with the canonical material) and thus adhere to varying forms of what some call modified classic theism.

canonical data point in the opposite direction.<sup>40</sup> The Adventist teaching regarding the sanctuary is (intracanonically) systematically coherent. Indeed, in my view, it is the best explanatory model of *all* of the biblical data (*tota scriptura*), so much of which is sidelined, treated as purely symbolic, and/or ignored in some other theological systems.

## The Nature of Reality

The two systems that we have briefly addressed here posit two competing views of reality (worldviews). How, then, should one decide which first principles to adopt? Given the view that Scripture should be the basis of one's worldview (canonical theological method), the question comes down to which worldview corresponds to the data of the canon (all of it) and does so coherently. There are many ways by which one might come to the conclusion that Scripture does not cohere with classical macro-hermeneutical principles such as timelessness and divine impassibility. One straightforward way to see this is to exploit the link between divine impassibility and divine timelessness in (traditional) classic theism.<sup>41</sup>

Consider, in this regard, the prominent Calvinist theologian Paul Helm's argument that: "(1) God is timelessly eternal. (2) Whatever is timelessly eternal is unchangeable. (3) Whatever is unchangeable is impassible. (4) Therefore, God is impassible."<sup>42</sup> If God is timeless in the way that Helm asserts, then God cannot experience any succession

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40. See the discussion in Peckham, "Divine Passibility, Analogical Temporality, and Theo-Ontology."

41. More broadly, one might work from the particulars of divine revelation. I have done this in one fashion by considering the conception of God's love and what light it sheds on who the God of love is. See Peckham, *The Concept of Divine Love*; Peckham, *The Love of God*.

42. Paul Helm, "The Impossibility of Divine Passibility," in *The Power and Weakness of God: Impassibility and Orthodoxy*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Edinburgh: Rutherford, 1990), 119. While others might define the various terms like "timeless," "immutable," "impassible" in ways that run counter to Helm, given Helm's definitions (representative of this view) his conclusions appear to be coherent. Of course, I do not believe that God is timeless, (unqualifiedly) immutable, or impassible as Helm contends.



or sequence of events and can neither enter into time nor temporally interact with creatures. He cannot be affected by any other (impassibility) and can have no experiences (immutability).

However, one can reverse this argument in compelling fashion. (1) The canonical data depicts God as experiencing passible (responsive) emotions.<sup>43</sup> (2) There appears to be no good intra-canonical reason to reinterpret these as merely accommodative. (3) Canonical theology concludes that God is passible in relation to the world. (4) (Responsive) divine passibility, by definition, entails experiential changeability. (5) That which is changeable is not timelessly eternal (on Helm's definitions). (6) God is not timelessly eternal (on Helm's definition) or, put positively, God does possess and exercise the ability to responsively interact (dynamic action) with humans in particular locations (here) and at particular times (now).<sup>44</sup>

The wider canonical depiction of the particulars of the God-world relationship further evinces divine spatio-temporal sequential activity in relationship with humans. Dovetailing with the broader argument from the depiction of the God-world relationship (only minimally outlined here), the sanctuary itself suggests divine presence ("here"—space) and sequential action ("then" and "now"—time). These two lines of evidence together suggest major implications for canonical systematic theology.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, these two lines of evidence likewise point to an indeterministic conception of history such that what human agents do *really* matters. The sanctuary and the Great Controversy are themselves predicated on such a conception of reality.

The sanctuary, as I see it, is the *real* model of the God-world relationship (ontology/metaphysics). Theology should not be reduced to the sanctuary but theology that neglects the sanctuary will thereby

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43. See, in this regard, Hos 11:8-9; Jer 31:20 and a myriad of other texts. For a discussion of this evidence, see Peckham, *The Love of God*, 147-89; Peckham, "Theopathic or Anthropathic?"

44. These points are a summary of Peckham, "Divine Passibility, Analogical Temporality, and Theo-Ontology."

45. Among such implications, the sanctuary itself requires indeterminism. Love in the God-world relationship requires indeterminism. The canonical theology of divine love dovetails perfectly with this (working) canonical theology of the sanctuary.

be severely impoverished and distorted. Attention to the subject of the sanctuary illuminates an oft-overlooked systematic outlook (e.g., history matters!). The sanctuary sheds significant light on the canonical theological system and holds the system together. The sanctuary as depicted in Scripture itself presupposes an entire worldview (first principles: reality, knowledge, God, humanity). Most importantly, the sanctuary's inner logic or coherence points to the God of love, the One who actually can and does walk in the garden in the cool of day (Gen 3:8) and will be intimately present with us again in the eschaton; the God who condescends to facilitate investigative judgment, not for the sake of His own knowledge but for the benefit of relationship with intelligent creatures; the God who allows Himself to be questioned and even "judged" (cf. Isa 5:3-4), thereby vindicating Himself as recognized even by His enemies such that, finally, *every* knee (without exception) bows (Rom 14:11; cf. Phil 2:10).

### The Nature of Knowledge

With regard to the nature of knowledge and knowing (epistemology), the sanctuary and the Great Controversy are themselves about (but not only about) knowledge, relational knowledge in particular. As has been seen, the controversy that brought the separation for which atonement is required and provided via the sanctuary began in an earthly type of the sanctuary and spread via the lies and slander of God's enemies (propagating falsehood as knowledge). In the Eden earthly type of the sanctuary, Eve faced the choice to believe God or believe the lies of the serpent, which claimed God was a liar ("you surely will not die," Gen 3:4) and did not really want what was best for her, not wanting her to have her eyes opened to *know* "good and evil" (3:5). The Fall commenced by eating from the forbidden fruit of the tree of the *knowledge* of the good and evil and, as such, the Fall itself relates to (experiential) knowledge of evil (they already had knowledge of good!). Conversely, knowledge of God's goodness is historically demonstrated via the Great Controversy/sanctuary plan of redemption.

The Great Controversy is, in large, part about the revelation of God's character. Knowledge matters (in particular, relational and

historical knowledge), for “this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3) and such knowledge of and in relationship to God is manifest in and via the sanctuary. The sanctuary plan of redemption, things into which even angels long to look (1 Pet 1:12), manifests (among other things) that God is wholly good and just and true and “in him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Thus, *in* the sanctuary, we might behold the true knowledge of good, that is, knowledge of the One who alone is good (Mark 10:18). Indeed, if we look into the sanctuary our foolishness and ignorance might be assuaged and we might, with Asaph, trust God and make Him our refuge so that we might “tell of all [His] works” (Ps 73:28).

If the sanctuary is integral to the theology of Scripture, as I believe it is, how much more should we be doing to articulate, employ in our lives as a living witness (cf. 2 Pet 3:9-13), and by proclamation and action disseminate the biblical system of truth by which God’s character might be manifest to the entire world? We who have been entrusted with the light of this biblical system of truth are to carry the message of God’s love, of his character (itself manifest in the sanctuary and the everlasting gospel) to the entire world. For “we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16).

### Conclusion

The contents of this essay only scratch the surface regarding the relationship of the sanctuary and systematic theology. In my view, there is far more digging to do to uncover ever-more of the treasures of Scripture and, in the process, have our own worldviews be brought ever-more in consonance with the mind of Christ. Far more should be said about the evaluative love of God and the broader God-world relationship, about the presence of God and the nature and mediation of Christ and the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 8:26), the cosmic vindication of God’s character, and the personal appropriation of sanctuary soteriology.

Although much more can and should be studied and said, we have seen that the sanctuary is far more than a doctrine and holds

incredibly far-reaching theological implications. We can no longer afford to implicitly or explicitly treat the sanctuary as an extraneous component appended to an otherwise fully functioning system. It is, I believe, our duty, to present a robust, full-throated, and systematic conception of the sanctuary that explicates how the sanctuary is integral to the biblical system of truth itself, without going beyond the canonical data. This sanctuary message, I firmly believe, is the best of good news, itself crucially connected to the “everlasting gospel,” which (as part and parcel of the three angels’ messages) it is our privilege and calling to share with the world.

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