

Typology and the Levitical system—2

The author concludes his two-part series with this article. In it he deals with the questions as to whether there is a basic continuity between sanctuary type and antitype, and what role Hebrews plays in interpreting the Old Testament sanctuary. Is Hebrews the only New Testament interpretation of the sanctuary and its services and must it be regarded as the only and ultimate norm in interpreting them?

The Called Church □ 8 Richard M. Davidson



What is the nature of Biblical typology in general and sanctuary typology in particular? Does the traditional view of typology adopted by Seventh-day Adventists in their interpretation of the Levitical institutions stand the test of sola Scriptura? These are the hermeneutical questions that occupied our attention in a

preceding article.¹

Biblical typology has its roots in the Greek technical term *typos*, which etymologically means "form," probably originally a "hollow form" or "mold."² The characteristics of *typos* in its original (and continued) denotation of "hollow mold" are strikingly suited to illustrate the dynamics of Biblical typology. For example, our family has a soft plastic mold for producing penguin-shaped ice sculptures. When we wish to add a festive touch to our punch at social get-togethers, we fill the hollow, penguin-shaped mold with distilled water, suspend it overnight in the freezer, then peel back the plastic mold, and there is a

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gleaming white penguin ice sculpture for a centerpiece in the punch bowl. Now note how the five essential features of our hollow mold (a *typos*) illustrate the basic aspects of Biblical typology.

First, a penguin *typos*, or hollow mold, is a concrete reality, not just an abstract idea. Likewise, a Biblical type is a concrete historical reality—a person, event, or institution.

Secondly, the hollow mold is not itself the original but has been shaped from a prototype which existed previously, either concretely or in the mind of the designer. So the Biblical type has been "shaped" according to a previous divine design—existing either concretely, as with the heavenly sanctuary original, or in the mind of the Designer, as with the Old Testament historical types.

Thirdly, my hollow plastic penguin functions as a mold to shape the end

product, that is, the ice sculpture. So in Biblical typology the Old Testament type serves to "shape" the end or eschatological product (the New Testament *antitypos* or "antitype").

Fourthly, the end product (the ice sculpture) invariably conforms to the basic contours of the hollow penguin mold. Likewise in Biblical typology the eschatological fulfillment, the antitype, conforms to the basic contours of the Old Testament type.

Finally, the end product (the ice sculpture) transcends the mold and fulfills the purpose for which the mold was designed. In the same way the New Testament antitype transcends the Old Testament type as it fulfills the ultimate eschatological purpose for which the type was intended.

The historical Adventist understanding of the nature of sanctuary

The very fact of differences in the two Old Testament sanctuaries seems to provide an Old Testament indication of what constitutes the essential features—those contours that remain constant in both.

typology harmonizes fully with just such a Biblical view of typology. Building upon this basic Biblical perspective, let's now focus on the use of sanctuary typology in the book of Hebrews—perhaps the most crucial cluster of issues involved in the typological understanding of the Levitical system. Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally maintained that a basic continuity exists between Leviticus and Hebrews, between the essential contours of the Old Testament sanctuary type and New Testament antitype. If so, the earthly sanctuary, with its apartments and services, clarifies the essential features of the heavenly sanctuary. Recently, however, scholars both within and without Adventism have seriously challenged this position.³ They have argued that the author of Hebrews, because of his frequently "manipulating the type to fit the antitype," has virtually collapsed the continuity between the two and thus rendered illegitimate any argument from earthly sanctuary type to heavenly sanctuary antitype.

The issues are indeed complex and require more than cursory treatment.⁴ But I have become convinced that one is not forced to choose between the typology of Leviticus and that of Hebrews. A careful look at Hebrews reveals that its typology is consistent with the nature of typology elsewhere in Scripture and maintains a continuity between the basic contours of Old Testament type and New Testament antitype.

The author of Hebrews frequently argues from Old Testament type to New Testament antitype to prove doctrine, and this approach is what recent detractors from historical Adventist typological method consider to be illegitimate. For example, in Hebrews 9:23 the reaching regarding the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary is based solely upon a typological argument. Because the earthly sanctuary was cleansed, so it was "necessary" (*anagkē*) with the heavenly. Hebrews 8:1-5 uses the same approach, arguing from the sacrifices by the Old Testament Levitical priests to the necessity (*anagkaios*, chap. 8:3) of a sacrifice

by the New Testament heavenly High Priest.

The use of the terms *typos* and *antitypos* in Hebrews 8:5 and 9:24 respectively makes it clear that the author of Hebrews conceives of a continuity between the basic contours of the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. The word *antitypos* means "that which corresponds to the *typos*." As with the penguin *typos* and the ice sculpture *antitypos*, so with the terminology used in a technical sense in Biblical typology: there is a continuity of basic contours between type and antitype.

In Hebrews this continuity is further underscored by reversing the ordinary typological terminology used elsewhere in Scripture. We have earlier used the phrase "argues from Old Testament type to New Testament antitype," and it probably is best to maintain this common use of terms in Biblical typology. But to be more precise, in Hebrews the Old Testament *earthly* sanctuary is labeled the "antitype" (*antitypos*, chap. 9:24) and the *heavenly* reality is referred to as the "type" (*typos*, chap. 8:5). This is because the Old Testament earthly sanctuary not only points forward to a future heavenly reality but also points upward to the already existing heavenly reality. The earthly is therefore the *antitypos*, "that which corresponds to the [previously existing] type." So, to those who would insist that one must not argue from type to antitype, but only from antitype to type, it should be pointed out that such is precisely what the author of Hebrews is doing when he argues from the earthly (antitype) to the heavenly (type)!

In Hebrews the earthly sanctuary is also called a "copy" (*hypodeigma*) and "shadow" (*skia*) of the heavenly sanctuary (verse 5). Obviously this involves an intensification between earthly copy/shadow and heavenly original/true. But just as clearly these word pairs at the same time indicate a continuity of basic contours. A "copy" corresponds to its "original," and a "shadow" reveals the basic contours of its "substance."

Recent detractors from the historical

Adventist sanctuary interpretation argue against such a basic continuity by pointing out the differences between the Mosaic tabernacle and the Solomonic Temple, which were both built according to divinely provided patterns. But such argument can be turned on its head, because the very fact of differences in the two Old Testament sanctuaries seems to provide an Old Testament indication of what in fact constitutes the *essential* features—those contours that remain constant in both. Although there might have been differences in size, types of material used, and numbers of articles of furniture, the basic design of the two sanctuaries (Mosaic and Solomonic) remained the same—the two apartments, the same dimensional proportions, and the same kinds of articles of furniture. It is precisely this basic design that is described in Hebrews 9:1-5.

But the next crucial question is this: Are there not clear deviations from the Old Testament type in Hebrews? Several passages are frequently cited: Hebrews 7:11-28; 8:1-13; 10:1-14. In these passages we do, indeed, find points of stark contrast between type and antitype. The Old Testament priest was (a) mortal, (b) sinful, and (c) from the tribe of Levi; the heavenly High Priest is (a) eternal, (b) sinless, and (c) after the order of Melchizedek. The Levitical sacrifices (a) were ineffective, (b) were offered repeatedly, and (c) involved the blood of animals. The antitypical Sacrifice (a) was efficacious, (b) was offered once for all, and (c) involved the High Priest offering His own blood. The first covenant is contrasted to the new covenant, which was based upon better promises. And finally, the earthly sanctuary is a copy/shadow and the heavenly is the original/true.

How can the author of Hebrews posit such deviations between Old Testament "type" and New Testament "antitype" and still maintain a fundamental continuity between the two? The answer is at once simple and striking: in each of the passages cited above the author of Hebrews introduces a departure from the Levitical type, but *he substantiates such a*

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change from the Old Testament itself! Thus Christ's priesthood does, indeed, differ in essential features from the Aaronic priesthood, but the author of Hebrews shows how these differences are already indicated in Psalm 110. To be sure, Christ's sacrifice differs from the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament ritual service, but this alteration of the type is already set forth in Psalm 40. Again the new covenant does contain better promises than the old, but these are already pointed out in Jeremiah 31. And finally, the heavenly sanctuary is indeed the "greater and more perfect tabernacle," but this is already indicated in Exodus 25:40. In each of these changes from Leviticus to Hebrews, the author of Hebrews does not engage in an arbitrary "manipulation of the Old Testament type," but provides a "sound piece of exegesis" of Old Testament control passages in order to demonstrate the "self-confessed inadequacy of the old order."⁵

Thus the author of Hebrews does not collapse the continuity between type and antitype. To the contrary, he so highly regards this continuity that wherever the New Testament antitype moves beyond intensification to an actual modification of the Old Testament type, he feels constrained to demonstrate that such an alteration is already indicated in the Old Testament.

Do we find this same high regard for the continuity between type and antitype when we move from Hebrews 7, 8, and 10 to the much debated passage of Hebrews 9:1-9? Some recent commentators insist that in Hebrews 9 the author deliberately deviates from the earthly type (the bipartite sanctuary) in his description of the heavenly sanctuary. This interpretation focuses in particular upon verse 8 and concludes that here the earthly holy place stands for the entire Old Testament order, and the earthly Most Holy Place corresponds to the New Testament heavenly sanctuary.

While it is not possible to provide here a detailed analysis of Hebrews 9, I am convinced that significant contextual and exegetical considerations make such

an interpretation untenable. First of all, we should note that Hebrews 9, unlike Hebrews 7, 8, and 10, gives no Old Testament citation to substantiate a deviation from type to antitype. We should not press the argument of consistency unduly, but certainly it should caution us against too easily positing radical deviations between the earthly sanctuary and the heavenly when the passage sets forth no Old Testament evidence to indicate such changes.

A number of recent studies,⁶ persuasively arguing that the larger context of this passage reveals a comparison between old and new covenants, make the point that each of these covenants has a sanctuary. Thus Hebrews 9 compares the whole bipartite earthly sanctuary of the first covenant—which is a *parabolē* standing for the Mosaic system—and the whole heavenly sanctuary of the new covenant, "the greater and more perfect tabernacle" than the earthly copy. Verses 1-7 constitute a description of the former, or earthly, sanctuary (*protē skēnē*), and then verse 8 moves away from the earthly sanctuary to introduce the heavenly sanctuary (*tōn hagiōn*).

The words *protē skēnē* in verse 8 should be understood, then, in the temporal sense of "former [earthly] sanctuary" (as *protē* ["former"] is used in verse 1), and not as continuing the spatial meaning of "first sanctuary" or apartment (i.e., the holy place), as in verses 2 and 6.⁷ Thus the author employs a chiasmic literary pattern of A:B::B:A to bring the reader back to the main point introduced in verse 1.

Perhaps the most weighty consideration in support of the contextual, structural, and linguistic points just mentioned is the nature of Biblical typology. Those who argue for a disparity between type and antitype in this passage generally consider the word *parabolē* in Hebrews 9:9 as a synonym for *typos*, referring to typology. They see a typological relationship between the earthly holy place and the whole Old Testament Mosaic order on one hand, and between the earthly Most Holy Place and the

ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary on the other. But in the light of the typological structures that have emerged from our study of representative typological passages in Scripture (as summarized in the previous article), we must conclude that *parabolē* in Hebrews 9:9 does not refer to a typological relationship. The author of Hebrews has carefully chosen the word *parabolē* in contrast to *typos* or *antitypos*. According to Hebrews 9:9, the *protē skēnē* (whether denoting the first sanctuary or the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary) only symbolizes or stands for, but does not point forward to or prefigure, the "present age" of which it is a part. Thus there is no prophetic structure operating in this verse. Likewise the eschatological element is missing; the "present age" is not the eschatological fulfillment foreshadowed by the earthly sanctuary.

Because these crucial typological characteristics are lacking, one cannot speak of a typological correspondence between the earthly sanctuary (either in whole or in part) and the old order for which it stands. If this first correspondence is not typological but symbolic, it is not sound exegesis to place this *symbolic* correspondence in direct parallel with the clear *typological* correspondence between earthly and heavenly sanctuary that functions in the wider context of this passage. This is mixing apples and oranges. One cannot say, therefore, that the holy place of the earthly sanctuary is a *symbol* standing for the present age and the Most Holy Place of the same sanctuary is a *type* pointing forward to the New Testament heavenly sanctuary.

Our discussion thus far has not concluded that the author of Hebrews is trying to prove the existence of a bipartite heavenly sanctuary that corresponds to the earthly counterpart. It has been said that in his argument the author remains faithful to the idea of continuity between type and antitype. Apparently he assumes such a bipartite sanctuary in the original as well as in the copy because he uses the terms *typos* and *antitypos*, but this is not explicitly stated and is not the point at issue in his argument.

Thus in the allusions to the Day of Atonement in Hebrews 9, the point at issue is the efficacy of sacrifice, not the issue of time as it relates to the whole Day of Atonement service.

We may expect the author to indicate in this context, as he compares the sanctuaries of the old and new covenant, some reference to the point of transition between the old and new covenant, to the commencement of the new covenant ministry and the inauguration of the new covenant sanctuary. Such is precisely what we find in Hebrews 10:19, 20, where the verb *enekainizō* ("inaugurate") is employed to describe Christ's entrance into the heavenly sanctuary. Just as the Old Testament sanctuary was inaugurated or consecrated before its services officially began, so the heavenly sanctuary was inaugurated when Jesus began His priestly ministry in its precincts.

George Rice has recently shown that Hebrews 10:19, 20 is part of a chiasmic structure encompassing chap. 6:19-10:39 and that Hebrews 10:19ff. is the explanatory development of the parallel member of the chiasm, Hebrews 6:19. Therefore, in the light of the clear reference to the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary in chap. 10:19, 20, it appears likely that the same inauguration event is viewed in the description of Jesus' entering of the heavenly sanctuary in chap. 6:19f.

This, however, is not the primary concern of the epistle and the cultic argument of the central section. William Johnsson has persuasively shown that the major concern in this central portion of the epistle has to do with "the relative value of sacrifice."⁹ To those Hebrew Christians who are tempted to turn away from Jesus and return to Judaism, the author of Hebrews argues that only in Jesus does one find the "better blood," the one all-sufficient and efficacious sacrifice that can purify the conscience of the believer. If they turn from Him, where will they go? The author indicates from Psalm 40 that all the sacrifices of the Old Testament coalesce into the one great Sacrifice in the person of Jesus. Because all of the sacrificial types of the Old Testament converge upon Jesus, the author in Hebrews (especially in chapter 9) draws upon the various strands of sacrificial imagery of the Old Testament ritual. In particular he selects the sacrifi-

cial setting of the Day of Atonement, the service that marks the high point of the Old Testament services. The argument is simple: Even at its high point, the Old Testament sacrificial services are not able to purify the conscience, as is evidenced by the fact that they must be continually repeated (even the yearly service). But Christ's sacrifice is far superior; it is the once-for-all, all-sufficient sacrifice.

Thus in the allusions to the Day of Atonement in Hebrews 9 (and elsewhere in the epistle), the point at issue is the efficacy of sacrifice, not the issue of time as it relates to the whole Day of Atonement service. In the process of alluding to the sacrifices at the Day of Atonement, even though the timing of the antitypical Day of Atonement services is not a point at issue, still the author does provide hints of the timing by his reference to the cleansing of the sanctuary (chap. 9:23), followed by references to a future judgment (verse 27) and the second coming of Christ (verse 28).

The book of Hebrews upholds the basic continuity between sanctuary type and antitype, but we must hasten to add that the author lays no claim to pronouncing the only interpretation of the Levitical services. The interpretation of the Levitical system given in Hebrews is only part of the rich typological mosaic which includes the total witness of Scripture. In particular, the apocalyptic visions of Daniel and Revelation present profound insights into the timing and nature of the eschatological fulfillment of sanctuary typology.¹⁰

In recent years Seventh-day Adventists have enjoyed a deepened understanding and appreciation of the Biblical mosaic of sanctuary typology, building upon the pillars of the foundation that God has provided in our past history. Still the depths have not been plumbed. "The significance of the Jewish economy is not yet fully comprehended. Truths vast and profound are shadowed forth in its rites and symbols."¹¹ The doctrine of the sanctuary has lost none of its brilliance and beauty. The closest investigation of sanctuary typology will con-

tinue to make it radiate with greater relevance, force, and glory.

¹ See *Ministry*, February, 1984, pp. 16ff.

² For a full discussion of the etymology and semantic development of *typos* both within and outside of Scripture up to and including New Testament times, see Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1981), vol. 2, pp. 115-190.

³ The leading proponents of this view are identified and their arguments more fully articulated and critiqued in a paper by the present writer, "Principles of Hermeneutics: The Nature of Typology in Hebrews," to be published as part of a book prepared by the Hebrews Subcommittee of the Daniel and Revelation Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The discussion of typology in Hebrews in the present article is adapted in part from this paper.

⁴ For a more detailed examination of this issue, see "Principles of Hermeneutics," *passim*.

⁵ George B. Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5 (1959): 47. Caird refers specifically to Psalm 110 and Jeremiah 31 (along with Psalms 8 and 95). See my analysis of Exodus 25:40 in Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, pp. 367-388. The present writer has also found Caird's statement applicable to use by the author of Hebrews of Psalm 40. (See Davidson, "Typology in Hebrews," for further discussion).

⁶ See, e.g., F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 181-198; Aelred Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (St. Meinrad, Indiana, Grail Publications, 1960), pp. 147, 148; Jean Héring, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), pp. 70-75.

⁷ See, e.g., Bruce *op. cit.*, pp. 194, 195: "It is further to be noted that, whereas hitherto our author has used 'the first tabernacle' of the outer compartment of the sanctuary, here [in Hebrews 9:8] he uses it to mean the sanctuary of the 'first covenant' [chap. 9:1], comprising holy place and holy of holies together." Note that Josephus (*Contra Apionem* II. 12) used *protē skēnē* in this same temporal sense of "first tabernacle" (i.e., the earthly sanctuary preceding the Solomonic Temple).

⁸ George E. Rice, "The Chiasmic Structure of the Central Section of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 19 (1981): 243-246.

⁹ William G. Johnsson, "The Significance of the Day of Atonement Allusions in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *The Sanctuary and Atonement*, ed. by A. V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshar (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), pp. 389-391.

¹⁰ The hermeneutical issues involved in the interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy have been the subject of previous articles in this series on "The Called Church." See Kenneth A. Strand, "Apocalyptic Prophecy and the Church," *Ministry*, October, 1983, pp. 20-23; December, 1983, pp. 14-18.

¹¹ Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 133.