

A Response to “Within Which Veil?” by Jamal Sankey

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Preface and Foreword

The following is a reply submitted by email to a 60-page document presented by Jamal Sankey of *The Sure Word*, located in Lancaster, California, where he seeks to honestly answer the objections raised by my “Within the Veil” document discounting the SDA doctrine of an investigative judgment commencing in 1844. While I have no doubt as to his absolute sincerity and Christian integrity in defending what he honestly believes to be true; nevertheless, I have to very respectfully disagree with many of his claims and research done in his article. What follows is my personal email reply to him discussing various points raised in his thesis. I have copied and pasted the body of this email into this document with little or no revisions and present it to the public at large as an answer to his dissertation. I will also refer the reader to my former articles: “Within the Veil” and “Answers to Questions on Within the Veil”, which may be requested in writing or downloaded for free by visiting the following website: <https://www.isdba.org/articles-and-books>

May the reader be blessed and challenged to make the Bible the “man of their counsel”, and thus be led to “rightly divide the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), is my sincere and humble prayer, in Jesus’ name.

Response to “Within Which Veil?”

Hello brother,

Thank you for sending me your document; I have read through it and would like to offer a few very brief preliminary thoughts.

First, thank you for including the text of my arguments in full; I think that is the honest thing to do. I am quite sure that your response will be greatly appreciated by many in Adventism to help establish their faith, although I of course disagree with many (if not most) of your arguments and assumptions.

I would like to offer a few observations on some of the points raised in your thesis and defense without taking all of the time necessary to systematically reply to your 64-page document. I do not promise to ever fully reply to this document since it is clear that you and I are firmly convinced in our own minds of what the Bible clearly teaches on this subject; therefore, it may be that we will ultimately have to respectfully "agree to disagree" on this point and to move on with our respective lives. However, while saying that, I do wish to offer at least a precursory response.

Point #1: You refer to my position on the atonement and the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as a "soul destroying error" (Sankey, p. i of Introduction). In reply to this unfounded charge, I will submit to you that my position is consistent with the vast body of Christian doctrine from the days of the apostles, down through the Protestant Reformation, and to today inside the body of Christendom at large. In contrast, the view you hold is an aberrant view taught only and exclusively by Seventh-day Adventists. This places Adventism outside the purview of Biblical Protestantism and of orthodox Christianity. The remnant theology that you, Ellen White, and the SDA pioneers uphold, is that all of Christendom in its fullness is "fallen" and a part of Babylon. I do not sympathize in the least with this position and view it as a gross error, repudiated by William Miller himself after the "Great Disappointment" of 1844.

Point #2: In part one of your defense and thesis, you go to great lengths in an attempt to prove the table of showbread as God's throne. This supposition is based on the assumption that John's vision was only seeing the holy place and not the most holy place as well. This point I prove in section #2 of my own thesis which you quote in part two of your essay. You never actually answer my claims where I show from scripture that all of the furniture of the sanctuary was placed before the ark of the covenant which was God's throne. Instead you claim to answer my arguments in your first section, which you do not. I will here quote from my own work:

First, the fact that there is a sanctuary in heaven is abundantly plain in scripture. Psalm 11:4; Revelation 11:19; 15:5; 16:7; Hebrews 8:1. Some will refer to Revelation 4:5 in an attempt to prove that God's throne was at one time in the holy place since it is stated that the seven lamps of fire (a reference to the seven branched golden candlestick of the earthly tabernacle that was in the holy place) was "before the throne". However, a careful reading of the scripture does not allow the throne of God to be in the holy place. This claim is based on trying to show that, from the type, the candlestick was directly facing the table of showbread; therefore, it is reasoned, that the throne must be the table of showbread. However, the altar of incense is also said to be "before the throne" (See Revelation 8:3); yet it is obvious that the incense altar was placed directly before the veil which faced the ark of the covenant which symbolized the throne of God, and not the table of showbread. Further, the Bible itself is clear that both the candlestick and incense altar were placed before the ark in the Old Testament type. See Ex. 30:1-6; Lev. 24:1-4; Ex. 40:24-25; 1 Kings 7:49; 2 Chronicles 4:20. Based on those aforementioned scriptures, in order to harmonize the testimony of scripture, and to allow the Bible to explain itself, John the revelator simply saw what the type proves: that is, the throne of God in the most holy place, before which were placed the incense altar and candlestick. The reason why this could be is based simply on the fact that there is no literal veil in heaven separating the holy and most holy places. – *Within the Veil*, J. Isaac Richards, 2019.

Continuing on that theme as quoted above, specifically referred to in the last sentence, I will go on.

Point #3: I will again clarify that I believe the literal veil between the holy and most holy places of the earthly tabernacle was simply a type - that is, a figure - of a living reality in heaven. The fact that the earthly veil was embroidered with multiple cherubim (Ex. 26:1), was simply an illustration of the "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of holy angels

which minister before God's throne in heaven (Rev. 5:11). So rather than being, as you claim, a "queer argument" (Sankey, p. 7), it is a fact that the earthly tabernacle simply represented living truths in heaven, and were not the very substance of the things themselves (see Heb. 9:1-10; 10:1).

To further illustrate this point, I will refer you to a dissertation written by Richard M. Davidson of Andrews University Theological Seminary, who in his thesis defends Dr. Roy Gane's argument that Jesus Christ indeed did have to enter the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary at His ascension. Dr. Roy Gane is a professor of Hebrew at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. Both of these men (along with the great body of actual Bible students and professors of Biblical languages in Adventism) understand that the language of Paul in the book of Hebrews was based primarily on the LXX (Septuagint) translation of the Old Testament, and prove conclusively that Paul was indeed referring to Christ entering through the "second veil" of the heavenly sanctuary in Hebrews 6:19-20 and 10:19-20. They claim that Christ was not entering "the veil" to fulfill the antitypical Day of Atonement, as much as He was fulfilling the inauguration of the temple type of the Old Testament where Aaron was dedicated and anointed as a priest by Moses at the beginning of the earthly tabernacle's dedication. (*INAUGURATION OR DAY OF ATONEMENT? A RESPONSE TO NORMAN YOUNG'S OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND TO HEBREWS 6:19-20 REVISITED*", RICHARD M. DAVIDSON. Andrews University Seminary Studies, Sp~2g00 2, Vol. 10, No. 1,69-88. Copyright * 2002 Andrews University Press.) In this dissertation, Mr. Davidson show conclusively from the Greek and Hebrew, as well as from the context of the book of Hebrews itself, that Christ had full access to both the holy and most holy places since His ascension. Thus the words "holy places" is used throughout Paul's epistle to show access to both compartments, which you also allude to yourself on pages 12 and 20-21 of your own thesis. Regardless of whether I agree or not with Davidson's conclusions that Christ went to inaugurate the heavenly temple in 31 AD, yet it is still an established theological fact that Jesus Christ did indeed have access to the most holy place since His ascension to heaven, rather than in 1844 as you and others claim. Your position plainly contradicts the Bible and the words of Paul on this point.

Point #4: I'm not sure how you arrived to some of your conclusions, but there is a gross twisting of scripture in section three of your thesis. Now I do not mean this in a rude way, but as a matter of simple observation. A multitude of words are employed in an attempt to prove that Paul meant "the holy place" when he uses the phrase "within the veil", *yet not a shred of Bible support can prove this*. The closest you get in an attempt to prove this is by referring to Numbers 18:5-7 along with the words: "that understanding is in perfect agreement with Moses' singular usage of 'within the veil', indicating the sanctuary as a whole when referring to the charge laid upon Aaron and his sons respecting the altar and tabernacle." (Sankey, p. 16). However, when one simply reads the text in question, we read the following: "therefore, thou and thy sons with thee [referring to Aaron] shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve." Num. 18:7. Your words would seem to indicate that "within the veil" as used by Moses in this text somehow conveys that the whole of the sanctuary system, including the service in the courtyard, was included in the words "within the veil"! But this is an obvious and deliberate attempt to avoid the fact that the courtyard, holy place, and most holy place were all distinct and separate compartments in the earthly system, and is instead an attempt to combine them all in one supposed grand term, "within the veil", in order to lessen their clear intent and meaning to indicate the most holy place exclusively. This claim could not be further from the truth. As I stated in my own

(corrected) thesis, there are only twelve instances where the phrase "within the veil" and "without the veil", or "before the veil" are used in the Old Testament; and in every single one of these instances it is referring to inside the most holy place ("within the veil"), or outside the most holy place in the holy ("without the veil" or "before the veil"). See **Ex. 26:23, 35; 27:20-21; 40:22, 26; Lev. 4:5-6, 17; 16:2, 12, 15; Num. 18:7**. Therefore, actually "comparing scripture with scripture", we see that Paul indeed "was in perfect agreement with what the Holy Spirit taught through other prophets" (Sankey, p. 15); however, he does so in a way very unlike the manner in which you claim.

Point #5: The claim that "the Bible is written in a style that puts future things as present to signify their certitude" (Sankey, p. 18), denies the basic truth that the atonement of which Paul wrote in his day that they had NOW received (Ro. 5:11) was available to all. Instead, you teach that this atonement was somehow unavailable for 1,810 years after the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and commencement of the high priestly ministry of Christ in 31 AD. Indeed, this supposition would make Seventh-day Adventists - who did not exist until more than 1800 years after the apostolic age - the sole possessors of true Bible interpretation in order to understand that which the apostles themselves wrote to the Christian church in the first century AD! I take the stand that the Bible, overall, contains a message of salvation in its simplicity which all could comprehend and accept from the earliest epoch of the Christian age, without the need for complicated charts, prophecy seminars, and volumes of "testimonies" which would supposedly be needed to understand the Bible's true meaning.

Point #6: I do not ever assert, and have never taught (as you claim on p. 21 of your thesis), that the atonement was completed at the cross. To the contrary, I taught and still teach that the purpose of Christ ascending to heaven as our Great High Priest was to make full atonement in the most holy place with His blood. I simply believe that this atonement was made available 1,810 years before you do when our Lord Jesus Christ ascended to heaven to present His blood before the "presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). This we see clearly taught by the author of Hebrews in chapters 9 and 10 (see Heb. 9:11-14, 23-28). Therefore, the majority of the rest of your arguments in this particular section (at least as they relate to my position personally) are without merit and not applicable to my own belief or faith, and are apparently written for flair to your readers to emphasize your point. In other words, they are a "straw man" argument. Your conclusion is to insinuate that I somehow believe in "once saved, always saved", claiming that "this concept is rife within his argument whether intended by Richards or not". (Sankey, p. 24). Again, I do not, and never have at any point in time, believed this; therefore, this "straw man" argument is moot.

Point #7: In section five, you go through a detailed argument (mostly based on James White's explanation of the sanctuary) to show that the most holy place had to be "anointed" within the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy of chapter 9. This is a similar argument to Davidson's dissertation which I alluded to in point #3. To respond to this, I will here copy and paste my brief answer to the individual who sent me Davidson's article:

Dear _____,

I finished reading the 16-page article you sent me by Richard Davidson, published by the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. I will only offer some brief comments here that come to mind after reading through this essay...

The author offers evidence, but also much supposition on his thesis that Hebrews must be interpreted in light of the Septuagint. Although scholars can agree that the Septuagint was commonly in use at that time, it is also an established fact that the Hebrew Masoretic text was available. Furthermore, the author admits several times that it is not unanimous that the Septuagint was consistently followed in the language of the Greek as used in the book of Hebrews....this article should not be used as authoritative, but rather as an argument by one man in a thesis who is a Seventh-day Adventist and attempting to support his church's theology by way of argumentation. In many places he simply offers his opinion as a scholar, and not as an authority....

The...most important point to be made here, is that the author admits that the most prominent of Hebrew scholars and learned theologians - even within the body of Adventist seminarians - admit that the language of the both Old and New Testaments - specifically the book of Hebrews - proves that Jesus Christ did, in fact, enter the most holy place at His ascension. Whether this was to inaugurate the heavenly sanctuary (including the most holy place) as he claims, or to fulfill the antitypical Day of Atonement, is irrelevant for the sake of this particular dialogue. The reason being is that it is abundantly proven - and this from your own source - that Jesus Christ did, in fact, enter "within the veil" into the "holiest" to function as our intercessor and great high priest. This fact alone (again, regardless of whether it was for an inauguration or day of atonement), impeaches all of the combined wisdom of the SDA pioneers, contradicts the plain testimonies of Ellen White who claimed to be an inspired prophetess, and destroys the carefully crafted theology of the SDA church, that all combine to teach that Jesus only entered the most holy place on October 22, 1844; and that up until that time the door was "shut" to the most holy place (with even the Father being supposedly in the holy place for 1,810 years until His throne "moved" into the most holy place, according, supposedly, to Daniel 7). Conclusion: this article proves that Ellen White's visions and testimonies were false which taught her people that Jesus only entered the most holy place in 1844; that Hiram Edson's vision was false, as well as the teaching of all early SDA pioneers; and that the SDA church was built upon a deception (or, at minimum, a grave misunderstanding of the plain text of Hebrews 6:19-20 and 10:19-10).

This article admits that the New Testament antitype does not follow the Levitical Old Testament type in regard to the high priest accessing the most holy place. For while the Levitical type teaches that access was only granted once a year on the 10th day of the 7th month, and while SDA theology teaches that Jesus had to follow this type by remaining in the holy place until the antitypical Day of Atonement on October 22, 1844; this article states the opposite of those two facts by positing that Jesus had full access to the entire sanctuary - both holy and most holy places - directly after His ascension and continuing until the close of human probation and His second coming: again, thereby impeaching SDA theology and the plain testimonies of Ellen White.

Melchizedek is of a different order than both Aaron and Moses. This article assumes that the Melchizedek order was a combination of both Moses and Aaron, but this is not the case. Moses and Aaron were indeed types; however, they were bound to the Old Testament types in their fullness and symbolism. Whereas, Melchizedek prefigured Christ in a completely different sense (as the writer of Hebrews brings out), inasmuch as he was of a completely different lineage, not even of the seed of Abraham, but rather as the "king of righteousness", the "king of peace", and "priest of the most high God", obviously being a priest of "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man" (see Hebrews 8:1-2). Moses was neither a "king of righteousness" nor a "king of peace". This point alone - that is, of Christ being of a different and higher order than the Old Testament Levitical priesthood - seems often times to be entirely lost on SDA's; inasmuch as they do not seem to realize that Jesus Christ is not bound to the exact details of the Old Testament types since they were simply "shadows of good things to come", and not "the very substance of the things themselves."

Finally, and probably most importantly, this article admits that atonement through the blood of Christ has been available - and access into the most holy place available - since the bodily ascension of our Lord after His resurrection. This being the case (which entirely proves my point which I argue in my article on "*Within the Veil*"), admitting that the New Testament authors were therefore justified in believing that they had "now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11), it becomes wholly unnecessary to teach a future atonement in 1844 which is only based on one entirely ambiguous and debatable text in Daniel 8:14. In contrast, the prophecy of the 1,260 days is repeated seven times in scripture (Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5), and is supported in interpretation by the vast body of Reformers and majority of early Protestant and evangelical churches. The 2300 days, however, (as interpreted by the SDA church) is not admitted by one of them to support 1844; and only the body of Seventh-day Adventists believes this to point to a supposed "investigative judgment" (again, a doctrine which lacks even basic scriptural support in either the Old or New Testaments).

In conclusion, although I appreciate you sharing with me this scholarly article, I cannot use it to base my faith upon since it is, at best, based on supposition; and, at worst, contradicts the plain teaching of the scriptures and of the apostles in regard to the atonement which Christ accomplished on the cross to reconcile us to God and to wash us clean from our sins in His own blood. - *Response to Andrews University Article on Christ dedicating most holy place*, J. Isaac Richards, 2019.

Point #8: In section six, you delineate two separate arguments: the first, that the judgment scene of Daniel 7 is for the saints; and second, that the typical feasts had prophetic significance to specific events, each separated by time elements and fulfilled separately by Christ.

To the first argument, I simply refer you to the language of Daniel itself regarding the judgment scene in chapter 7 and the power to which it referred, for the clear and plain language of Daniel can defend itself:

I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn

were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame....I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:8-11, 13-14.

Here we have the following sequence clearly delineated:

1. Judgment set
2. Beast burned
3. Christ receives His kingdom

This is again reiterated and emphasized in the interpretation which Daniel receives from the angel Gabriel in verses 25-27:

And he [the little horn] shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Daniel 7:25-27.

Again, we have the same sequence repeated:

1. Judgment sits
2. Beast and little horn have dominion taken away to be destroyed
3. Saints receive the kingdom

To emphasize this point: *nowhere in the context of the chapter does the judgment sit to judge the saints*. The Bible clearly says, "the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." (vv. 10-11). And again, "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his [the little horn's] dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." (v. 26). The judgment is on the Papacy, not the saints.

Continuing on this point, it is of interest to note that the angel clearly tells Daniel that, while the little horn would reign for "time and times and the dividing of time" (v. 25), yet "the judgment

shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." (v. 26). In other words, the judgment sits *because of* (or in consequence to) the little horn's reign of persecution. This would then give the text an entirely different meaning from what Seventh-day Adventists have historically applied it to.

Again, for the sake of perfect clarity, the sequence of the scene is as follows:

1. Judgment is set
2. Beast is burned
3. Saints receive the kingdom

From this we can see three different applications of the text in question, none of which support the theory of 1844.

First application: the judgment sits on the papacy prior to 1798, after which time "they shall take away [the] dominion" of the little horn and it would receive its deadly wound after "time and time and the dividing of time".

Second application: Christ comes the second time to "judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom" (2 Ti. 4:1). At the second coming of Christ, the beast power is destroyed by "the brightness of his coming" (2 Thess. 2:8) since Jesus comes "in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. 1:8). Christ comes as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (Rev. 19:16), having received the kingdom from His Father; at which time "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." (2 Cor. 15:24-25).

The third application, and what is to be the final, true, and ultimate fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy: the great white throne judgment after the millennium. Notice in Revelation 20 that we have the same sequence as noted in Daniel 7:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away...and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Revelation 20:11-15, 10.

Notice again the sequence which is the same as found in Daniel 7: a) Judgment is set and books are opened; b) Multitudes stand before God; c) They are judged out of the books; d) The beast power is burned, along with the false prophet, the devil, and all the wicked. And then, in Revelation

chapters 21 and 22, which directly follow this scene in chapter 20: e) The saints possess the kingdom and the "meek inherit the earth" (Rev. 21:1-7; Mt. 5:5).

Therefore, it is the same sequence overall:

1. Judgment is set
2. Beast is burned
3. Saints receive the kingdom

To summarize this point, the judgment is for the beast power and the wicked, and not for the saints. The beast power is judged in 1798 and receives a deadly wound; it is again judged at Christ's second coming and destroyed "by the brightness of His coming"; and finally judged when it is cast into the lake of fire after the millennium at the great white throne judgment of God. All the "repetition and enlargement" in the world does not alter these facts; nor can "Miller's Rules" change the plain meaning of the text as found in Daniel chapter 7.

Continuing on to the second argument of the feast days, I will only here point out the utter inconsistency of your position, for the claim is set forth that the four Jewish feast days held in the spring were fulfilled on a specific *day*, while the three fall feasts were fulfilled in a specific *year*. Your application is made as follows:

Passover = crucifixion of Christ (Friday)
Unleavened Bread = Christ's burial (Sabbath)
Firstfruits = Christ's resurrection (Sunday)
Pentecost = Descent of Holy Spirit on Church

All of the aforementioned are fulfilled on specific days. But then the fall feasts are supposedly fulfilled on specific years, where the following application is made:

Trumpets = 1833/34 - 1844
Day of Atonement = 1844
Tabernacles = ???

And so somehow – without explanation, proof, or support from the Bible or any stated interpretation principle – the literal fulfillment of these feasts on specific days, transitions to a fulfillment on a particular year...But it does not stop there, for indeed the claim that October 22, 1844, commences the great antitypical Day of Atonement goes beyond this in supposing now that this "fulfillment" has now been in process for over 175 years, with still no end in sight!! So while Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, and Pentecost were apparently fulfilled on a specific day, the Trumpets pointed to years instead of days, and the Day of Atonement has been ongoing for the past 175 years!! Now how is this clear in scripture or consistent at all? And as for the Feast of Tabernacles, which pattern shall it follow (for as of yet there is nothing consistent in this pattern)? Shall it be fulfilled on a specific day? Or in a specific year? Or shall it also be for an indeterminate period of time? Another 175 years? Or 200 years? Or is this another area open to "private interpretation" (2 Pe. 1:20), as you charge me with?

Point #9: In regard to Christ serving the "example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5) "after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 7:17), I do not mean to say (as you charge in your thesis under section 7) that the heavenly sanctuary was not the basis for the structure and services of the earthly tabernacle, for this is obvious to all. I mean to say, rather, that Jesus Christ as our high priest was not bound to remain in the holy place for 1,810 years (as the Levitical priests were bound to remain in the holy place until the 10th day of the 7th month, and only enter the most holy place once per year). Instead, it is my position that because of His sacrifice and shed blood, Jesus was able to enter "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. 9:24). And because of this fact - coupled with the fact that the presence and throne of God were ever found in the most holy place of the earthly type - Paul could affirmatively write: "having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter *into the holiest* by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, *through the veil*", etc. (Heb. 10:19-20). And, contrary to your opinion that this was supposedly the "first veil" (which term is never once used anywhere in the Bible at all), this was the majority view by apostles, Christians, apostolic fathers, and Reformers for millennia; until, that is, Seventh-day Adventists invented a "new view" completely out of harmony with proper Biblical exegesis.

To support this, I will do what you have done throughout your thesis in quoting from many different Bible versions:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the **holiest** by the blood of Jesus." *KJV*

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the **holy places** by the blood of Jesus." *ESV*

"And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's **Most Holy Place** because of the blood of Jesus." *NLT*

"Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the **Most Holy Place** by the blood of Jesus." *NIV*

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the **Most Holy Place** by the blood of Jesus." *Berean Study Bible*

"Therefore, brothers, having confidence for entering the **holy places** by the blood of Jesus." *Berean Literal Bible*

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the **Holiest** by the blood of Jesus." *NKJV*

"My friends, the blood of Jesus gives us courage to enter the **most holy place**." *CEV*

"We have, then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the **Most Holy Place** by means of the death of Jesus." *GNT*

"Having therefore, brethren, a confidence in the entering into the **holies** by the blood of Christ." *Douay-Rheims*

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness for entering into the **[holy of] holies** by the blood of Jesus."
Darby Bible

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the **holiest** by the blood of Jesus." *Webster's Bible Translation*

"Having, therefore, brethren, boldness for the entrance into the **holy places**, in the blood of Jesus."
Young's Literal Translation

In all of these various versions, whether based on the Textus Receptus, the Greek Majority Text, or Wescott and Hort's revised Greek text; and regardless of whether the translation philosophy was a Literal Formal Equivalence translation or Functional Equivalence translation, nearly all state the same thing: that we have access with boldness to enter the "holiest", the "holy places" (plural: denoting both the holy and most holy places), the "holiest of all", the "holy of holies", "most holy place", etc, etc. And so on this point, I choose to stand with the majority of Christendom - from the days of the apostle Paul until now – rather than with Ellen White and the SDA pioneers. The "falsities", "dirt and shavings and sand and all manner of rubbish" (Sankey, p. 46) which you claim I promote, would rather more accurately be leveled against Mrs. White whose writings you use profusely in your thesis in order to prop up a claim regarding 1844 that strikes at the very heart of the atonement which Christians have believed in, been saved by, and have preached from the housetop in the face of dungeon, rack, and flame for thousands of years.

Point #10: In section 8 of your thesis, you raise several points regarding the blotting out of sin that I answer in my subsequent article entitled, "Answers to Questions on Within the Veil". I will refer you to read that article as an affirmative defense against some of your claims, which you can find here:

<https://www.isdba.org/articles-and-books>

To the false claim that my "opposing view emphasizes that atonement was completed on the cross" (Sankey, p. 52), I will refer you to Point #6 where I specifically and categorically deny this.

Finally, your very brief passing over of what I argue in my thesis regarding Enoch, Elijah, Moses, etc., et al, does nothing to answer the question at hand. Your answer that "these saints, taken to glory before the judgment, some even before the cross, were given a credit of salvation" (Sankey, p. 53), is not an explanation at all, for can it not be said of every single saint who has ever believed on Christ from the days of Adam until the cross that they "were given a credit of salvation"? For the sake of clarity, and for those who will read this in the future, I will here include both my original argument to you, as well as an expanded thought on this subject as included in my "*Answers to Questions on Within the Veil*":

An investigative judgment for the righteous, where their sins come in remembrance before God, contradicts the plainest teachings of Jesus and the testimony of scripture on this point. Notice the plain words of Christ on this point:

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” John 5:24

The word used for “condemnation” is “krisis” which Strong’s states as follows:

Greek: κρίσις

Transliteration: krisis

Pronunciation: kree'-sis

Definition: (Subjectively or objectively for or against); by extension a tribunal; by implication justice (specifically divine law): - accusation condemnation damnation judgment.

KJV Usage: judgment (41x), damnation (3x), accusation (2x), condemnation (2x).

Occurrences in Bible: 48

Occurrences in verses: 47

So Jesus states that those who believe on him do not come into judgment; that is, a tribunal with the basis of the divine law. Yet this is exactly what SDA’s teach: that Christians who place their faith in Christ, who become new creatures in Christ, who have their consciences purged from dead works to serve the living God, who have been washed and regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost, who have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, who have been adopted into God’s family and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, who have been sanctified and who have received the atonement (all phrases used by the New Testament authors), suddenly in 1844, by a fluke of prophecy, now have all of their sins brought to remembrance and are closely investigated to see whether they are saved. Yet all of this in the face of God’s word which declares that “the Lord knoweth them that are His”. 2 Timothy 2:19.

To further prove this point, and that the sins of believers are blotted out once they are confessed and forsaken, and not in 1844; and that it is impossible that the righteous dead would come up in judgment in 1844 when their cases would supposedly come up before God - thus not allowing for their sins to be blotted out until that time - I submit the following evidence:

Moses was resurrected and taken to heaven prior to 1844, before which time his sins supposedly would have been brought up in judgment and blotted out.

As was Enoch translated to heaven prior to his case being decided in 1844.

As was Elijah.

As was the great multitude of witnesses who were resurrected after Christ’s resurrection.

And all of this prior to 1844 when their books were supposed to be opened and their cases eternally decided in an investigative judgment for the righteous. So either God judged them worthy of eternal life and blotted out their sins prior to taking them all to heaven, and the theory of an investigative judgment commencing in 1844 is incorrect; or SDA theology is correct and the SOP (writings of Ellen White) is correct at the expense of God contradicting himself and making the Bible a mockery.

I haven't even mentioned the souls under the altar (Revelation 6:9-11) who were judged righteous and given white robes under the fifth seal which was also prior to the dark day, etc, under the sixth seal and prior to 1844. Nor did I mention Ellen White stating that she saw Fitch and Stockman in heaven in vision, along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others...does this mean that their cases had been decided by December of 1844 when she received her vision, only two months after the great day of atonement had commenced? The whole theology is unsound. - *Within the Veil*, J. Isaac Richards, 2019.

My reply from *Answers to Questions on Within the Veil*:

Greetings brother,

I received your email which did nothing to answer the questions I posed to you regarding the theological can of worms which SDA's never touch or mention: i.e.: God taking people to heaven prior to their cases coming up in a supposed investigative judgment in 1844 that is supposed to determine their destiny. To answer you directly, yes, I understand that Moses, Enoch, and Elijah were types. That is not my issue. My issue is that they, as well as others (those resurrected at Jesus' resurrection) were taken to heaven prior to the books being opened (as Adventists claim) and their sins being blotted out in a judgment that was supposed to begin in 1844. To the contrary, and in contradiction of SDA doctrine, these people were obviously all saved through faith in Christ who is "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world"! The point I was attempting to make to you is that if God could find them all righteous and forgive their sins and take them all to heaven prior to a supposed investigative judgment in 1844, then what is the point of having an investigative judgment at all for everyone else? Is God that inconsistent? So some have to have their cases investigated and others do not? And what about Ellen White's own words? I quote them below:

"At the time appointed for the Judgment—the close of the 2300 days, in 1844—began the work of investigation and blotting out of sins. All who have ever taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass its searching scrutiny. Both the living and the dead are to be judged 'out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.'" – {GC88 486.1}

She says ALL who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ must pass the judgment that began in 1844. This includes all those who have ever lived since the days of Adam.

"As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected." – {GC 483.1}

Ellen White states clearly that the investigative judgment of the righteous dead - beginning with those who first lived on earth - began in 1844. And she goes on to say that it is impossible for sins to be blotted out until after their cases come up in the judgment.

“The work of the investigative Judgment and the blotting out of sins is to be accomplished before the second advent of the Lord. Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, *it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the Judgment at which their cases are to be investigated.* When the investigative judgment closes, Christ will come, and His reward will be with Him to give to every man as his work shall be.” – {GC 485.2}

Her words are as plain as day:

- Investigative judgment begins in 1844 at close of 2300 days
- This judgment is for the righteous
- It begins with the righteous dead - starting with Adam and Eve - and concludes with the righteous living
- Sins cannot be blotted out until after their cases come up in the judgment and their books of record are investigated
- Once the saints pass the searching scrutiny of the judgment, their sins are blotted out, their names retained in the book of life, and then Christ comes to bring His reward: to resurrect the righteous and to translate the living saints and take them to heaven

And yet in the face this “inspired testimony” from Ellen White, according to the Bible a multitude of people are already found righteous enough to be taken to heaven prior to 1844! Perhaps this is because the Word of God teaches that “the Lord knoweth them that are His”! 2 Timothy 2:19.

So who is right? The Bible prophets, or the SDA prophet Ellen White? *Because it cannot be both in this case no matter how one tries to spin it, reconcile it, reason it away, harmonize it, twist and turn it, deceive oneself, or do mental gymnastics.* Moses, Enoch, Elijah, and a multitude of unnamed saints - representing all generations since the days of Adam to the time of Christ - can all be saved, and have their sins blotted out and taken to heaven prior to the cross; but since the time that Christ gave His life on Calvary and provided the omnipotent gift of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin, not one has been able to stand in Christ’s perfect righteousness as they? and now need an investigative judgment that begins in 1844? And yet – according to the prophetess Ellen White – multitudes prior to the cross also need this investigative judgment so God can know who to take to heaven, but certain others did not need this same work of investigation? How does this make any sense at all? Where is the logic or consistency?

The intellectual dishonesty and/or blindness by the SDA church has become too much. I am tired of the mental games and word games people play in order to justify and attempt to prove something that is unreasonable and contradictory. It should at least make sense and be consistent. I do not blame you for this since you are a product of SDA theology as I was. I just wish people could deal with these issues honestly and without viewing every point of doctrine through the myopic lens of Ellen White. Because - whether you know it or not, and whether you realize it or not - this is exactly what you are doing. You and others

are unable to separate your thinking process from what the church terms “the spirit of prophecy” (the writings of Ellen White). It has become the governing principle in Bible interpretation - especially among “present truth” brethren. And that is why you cannot understand my questions on this point, and how this one issue alone absolutely destroys the theory of an investigative judgment for the righteous dead commencing in 1844. God does not need this judgment because it has already been demonstrated conclusively that He was able to take people to heaven long before 1844. These are the facts and the plain testimony of the scriptures - which is the Word of the living God - whether you, or I, or anyone else for that matter, wishes to face these facts or not.” - *Answers to Questions on Within the Veil*, J. Isaac Richards, 2019.

Point #11: In section 9 of your thesis, "the war of words" (Sankey, p. 55), we have set forth before us a difference of hermeneutics (or principles and process of Biblical interpretation) between you and I. For while you take the position of Miller, that "God will guard the translation of his own word, and throw a barrier around it, and prevent those who sincerely trust in God, and put implicit confidence in his word, from erring far from the truth, though they may not understand Hebrew or Greek" (Sankey, p. 55); I take the position that "proof texting" any English translation of the Bible may or may not arrive at ultimate truth. The truth of the matter is that, while the Authorized Version is perhaps the best and most accurate literal formal equivalence translation based on the Hebrew Masoretic and Received Greek texts, yet it still has some mistranslation errors in it, just like any translation may have, that proposes to take an ancient language like Hebrew or Koine' Greek and to transliterate it into another unrelated language. This is why the KJV has many supplied words (known by words in italics throughout the English text), in order to add sense to the phrase in English which is translated from the original languages. Therefore, understanding the basic genre of a biblical book; discovering the background, history, and context of the passage at hand; utilizing tools to learn the meaning behind the original words used; in addition to then comparing these meanings with other portions of scripture (correct "proof texting"), will help the Bible student to arrive at correct conclusions.

To illustrate this point, perhaps if Miller would have understood that the word used in Daniel 8:14 for "cleansed" meant to be "justified", he would not have erred "far from the truth" in predicting that the world would end and the earth be "cleansed with fire" at the second coming of Jesus Christ in 1844. Additionally, perhaps if Ellen White and the SDA pioneers would have also realized that the word used for "cleansed" had no relation whatever to the Day of Atonement "cleansing" in Leviticus 16, they would not have falsely claimed that Jesus went into the most holy place in 1844, shutting the door to the holy place in the process, and believing that the whole world was lost! To conclusively prove these false beliefs of Ellen White and the pioneers, please read my essay entitled, "*Testimony of a Former SDA Pastor*" which can be downloaded here:

<https://www.isdba.org/articles-and-books>

Point #12: I do not dispute your history on the Seventh Day Baptists, and, to clarify, I do not claim to necessarily be one of them, although I certainly have much in common with them. Our organization is called **the Independent Seventh Day Bible Baptist Association**, and our Articles and Statement of Faith uphold the Biblical view of the Godhead (in contrast to the Trinity), the state of the dead (soul sleep), etc. Our Statements of Faith may be viewed here:

<https://www.isdba.org/articles-of-faith>

<https://www.isdba.org/bible-inspiration>

<https://www.isdba.org/distinctive-baptist-principles>

<https://www.isdba.org/original-christian-faith-7-pillars>

<https://www.isdba.org/statement-of-faith>

But that is not the point at hand. Your claim (which I dispute) is that the SDA church is the remnant church of Bible prophecy based on your interpretation of Revelation 12:17. The official position of Seventh-day Adventists is that the "remnant" must possess "the testimony of Jesus" or "the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10), which you and the SDA church claim is the prophetic gift and writings of Ellen G. White. To this claim I will again refer to my essay, *"Testimony of a Former SDA Pastor"*, where I include nearly 70 citations and proofs (including dozens from the SDA church itself) showing problems with Ellen White's claim and status as an inspired prophetess.

To keep it simple, the "testimony of Jesus", in its most basic form, was and is simply the testimony of believers about Jesus. So says Wycliffe and others in their translations:

"And the dragon was wroth against the woman [is wroth to the woman], and he went to make battle with others of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and have the witnessing of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. *Wycliffe*

"And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus." *ASV*

"And the dragon was angry with the woman and went away to make war on the rest of her seed, who keep the orders of God, and the witness of Jesus." *BBE*

"So the dragon was furious with the woman, and he went off to make war on the rest of her children, on those who keep God's commandments and hold firmly to the witness of Jesus." *CEB*

"The dragon was infuriated over the woman and went off to fight the rest of her children, those who obey God's commands and bear witness to Yeshua." *Complete Jewish Bible*

"So the dragon was furious with the woman and left to wage war against the rest of her offspring-those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony about Jesus." *Holman*

"And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus." *Darby*

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." *KJV*

"And the dragon was angry at the woman, and went away to {fight against} the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and who hold to the testimony about Jesus." *Lexham English Bible*

"So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." *NASB*

"Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus." *NIV*

"And the dragon was angry at the woman and declared war against the rest of her children—all who keep God’s commandments and maintain their testimony for Jesus." *NLT*

"Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus." *NRS*

"And the dragon was angry against the woman: and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." *Douay-Rheims*

"Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus." *RSV*

"This made the Dragon furiously angry with the woman, and he went elsewhere to make war upon her other children--those who keep God's commandments and hold fast to the testimony of Jesus." *Weymouth*

"Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus." *ESV*

Conclusion: translators of all different stripes and equivalence theories are nearly unanimous that the "testimony of Jesus" is what the believers bear witness to personally in their faith. This would then agree with Revelation 14:12 which states the same in essence: "here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, *and the faith of Jesus.*" (Rev. 14:12). It is by this faith, or this "testimony" that the saints overcome the devil: "and they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and *by the word of their testimony*; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. 12:11). Indeed, this is the reason why John was imprisoned on Patmos: "I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, *and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" (Rev. 1:9). He certainly was not being imprisoned for possessing the writings of Ellen White, but rather for his faith in, and testimony of, the resurrected Christ!

But beyond this, the "testimony of Jesus" being "the spirit of prophecy", as described in Rev. 19:10, refers to the canonical writings of the "prophets" which the church possessed in her day; in addition to the writings of the New Testament prophets. In other words, possessing the "Law and the Prophets" – that is, the Old and New Testaments – is to possess the "testimony of Jesus". In a final application, the "spirit of prophecy" which John possessed in his day, more specifically referred

to his own prophetic book of the Apocalypse which pointed out the errors of Rome and helped to guide the church through the Dark Ages of Papal rule. Seventh-day Adventists deny this truth and instead applying the term "spirit of prophecy" exclusively to the writings of Mrs. Ellen White whom they claim to be an inspired prophetess, who, they claim, was greater than John the Baptist or any of the other Bible prophets. Their position is the same as the Mormons who make no lesser claim for their own prophet Joseph Smith, who, incidentally, also used the same term "spirit of prophecy" and applied it to his own writings.

In conclusion then, while I appreciate your closing appeal to "participate in that glorious closing work" of calling people out of Babylon (Sankey, p. 60), and I do indeed pray also for an essential preparation of character essential to meeting our Lord in peace at His coming, it is my own prayer that the merciful and good God of heaven would work to enlighten "the eyes of your understanding" (Eph. 1:18); that Bible truth may stand unsullied and unmixed with error in recognizing the glorious truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ in justifying the sinner and presenting him clothed in the spotless garments of Christ's righteousness before the presence of God and throne of grace.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God...For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. Romans 5:1-2, 6-11.

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away." 2 Corinthians 3:14-16.

May God bless and guide you, my brother. Until that day when we no longer "see through a glass darkly", but rather "face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12), I wish you only the best in Christ, as I remain...

Sincerely your brother in Christ,

Pastor J. Isaac Richards