Andrews University Seminary Studies, Spring 2002, Vol. 40, No. 1, 61-68.
Copyright © 2002 Andrews University Press.

THE DAY OF DEDICATION OR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT? THE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND TO HEBREWS 6:19-20 REVISITED

NORMAN H. YOUNG
Avondale College
Cooranbong, NSW, Australia

The greatest respect an author can receive is when another scholar offers a rejoinder to one of his articles. In the spring edition of *AUSS*, Richard Davidson has done me the honor of offering a criticism of my article in the same issue.[1] Davidson agrees that the veil mentioned in Heb 6:19 is the inner and not the outer veil of the tabernacle. This abandons the position so tenaciously defended by Adventists from Crosier to Rice.[2] However, Davidson then shifts the discussion from which veil is referred to in Heb 6:19-20 to the question of what OT event is behind the language employed by the author of Hebrews. This indeed is the real issue.

Davidson argues that the event alluded to in Heb 6:19-20 is not the Day of Atonement, as most argue, or the Abrahamic covenant, as Rice argued, but "the complex of inauguration services of the sanctuary" as carried out by Moses acting in a priestly role (Exod 40; Lev 8:10-12; Num 7:1).[3] This position is very similar to the view of E. E. Andross,[4] who saw a close parallel between the dedication of the earthly tabernacle and the inauguration of the heavenly. He argued that the daily ministry of the Mosaic tabernacle commenced only after Moses finished anointing both apartments and had come out of the tent. Likewise, Christ, having inaugurated the whole heavenly sanctuary (including the Most Holy Place), came out into the outer apartment to commence his postascension ministry. Davidson is not so explicit concerning Christ's movement in

[1]Norman H. Young, "Where Jesus Has Gone as a Forerunner on Our Behalf (Hebrews 6:20)," *AUSS* 39 (2001): 165-173; and Richard M. Davidson, "Christ's Entry 'Within the Veil' in Hebrews 6:19-20: The Old Testament Background," *AUSS* 39 (2001): 176-190.

[2]O.R.L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day Star* (February 7, 1846): 41; George E. Rice, "Hebrews 6:19: Analysis of Some Assumptions Concerning *Katapetasma*," in *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, ed. F. B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1989), 233-234. [Reprinted with corrections by the author in *AUSS* 5 (1987): 65-71].

[3]Rice, 233-234; Davidson, 176-177.

[4]E. E. Andross, *A More Excellent Ministry* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1912), 42-54.

and out of the inner apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, but this seems to be the logic of his position.[5]

There is no dispute that the dedication ritual is alluded to by the author of Hebrews. I have previously also argued that the dedication service is part of an amalgam of sacrificial ideas found in Heb 9, especially vv. 18-23.[6] But since it is an amalgam of rituals it is a perilous procedure to attribute the description in 9:18-23 to a single OT ceremony. Be that as it may, Davidson's argument that the same ritual is behind Heb 6:19-20 appears flawed to me for several reasons.

First, none of the chapters related to the dedication of the tabernacle (Exod 40; Lev 8; Num 7) actually refer to Moses as a high priest.[7] In contrast, Heb 6:19-20; 9:11-12; and 10:19-21 do refer to Jesus as a high (or great) priest, and thus parallel Aaron's entrance into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:2-3, 11-14, 15). Whenever Hebrews refers to Jesus' entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, or his sacrifice, the contrast is consistently between the Melchizedek order and the Aaronic or Levitical priesthoods, not with Moses (see Heb 7:1-10, 11-28; 8:1-4; 9:6-14, 24-28; 10:5-18). Moses' role is limited to erecting the tent and making it operational (8:5; 9:19-23). Hebrews never describes Moses as offering sacrifices within the tabernacle. This is the exclusive role of the Levitical and Aaronic priests (5:1-4; 7:11; 9:6-7; 10:11).

Second, nowhere in Exod 40, Lev 8, or Num 7 is the language of going "within the veil" used. Davidson's appeal to Exod 26:33 does not overcome this lack, for in this chapter "within the veil" refers merely to the *position* where the various holy objects are to be placed in the tabernacle, whereas Heb 6:19-20 refers to the *function* of the high priest. There is no direct reference in Exod 26:33 to the high priest, or even Moses, entering "within the veil."[8] Leviticus 16 (Day of Atonement) alone in the OT has the high priest entering within the veil. Exodus 26:33 does not deal with this function of the high priest; hence the former provides the background to Heb 6:19-20, and the latter does not.

[5]I am happy to note that Davidson does not in fact follow Andross in this way, though he perceives the mobility of the enthroned Jesus within the heavenly sanctuary in more materialistic terms than I do (Richard M. Davidson, "Inauguration or Day of Atonement? A Response to Norman Young's 'Old Testament Background to Hebrews 6:19-20 Revisited," *AUSS* 40 [2000] 70-71, and n. 5).

[6]Norman H. Young, "The Gospel According to Hebrews 9," *NTS* 27 (1981): 205-206. See also Mary Rose D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), 243-258.

[7]In the OT, Moses' "priestly" function is limited to the establishment of the tabernacle and the priests. Nor, *pace* Davidson, is Moses designated a king in the OT.

[8]It is no doubt implied, and Philo does draw this conclusion (*Vita* 2.153).

Third, Davidson makes too much of the "differences between the LXX and Hebrews in wording and syntax for the phrase 'within the veil.'"[9] The language in Heb 6:19-20 is remarkably similar to that in Lev 16, as both Roy E. Gane and I have noted in our previous articles.[10] The differences do not outweigh the similarities.

Fourth, Moses' dedication of the sanctuary, its altars, and its vessels occurred once; it was not an annual event. If there were any repetition of the dedication ceremonies, it continued through the Day of Atonement (Exod 30:10). The use of dedication language in 9:19 "suggests a reference to the inauguration of the first covenant."[11] Paul Ellingworth correctly notes that "in both occurrences [of ἐγκαινίζω] in Hebrews [9:18 and 10:20] the context requires reference to an initial inauguration."[12] As such, the inauguration service cannot be the background to Hebrews's emphasis on the *repetitious* nature of the old covenant sacrifices (see 7:27; 9:6; 10:11). The repetitious nature of the old covenant sacrifices cannot be dissociated from the repetitious nature of the Levitial priests' entering into the sanctuary, for it is by means of these repeated sacrifices that "the priests go continually into the first tent" (Heb 9:6).

Elsewhere Hebrews speaks of an annual entrance of the high priest into the tabernacle by means of sacrificial blood (Heb 9:7, 25). In contrast to this, Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary once-for-all by means of his own blood (9:12). This contrast would be lost with a once-off dedication entrance. The aorist verb, εἰσῆλθεν, in 6:20 parallels the same aorist verb in 9:12, 24 and refers in all three texts to Jesus' once-for-all (ἐφάπαξ, 9:12) entrance into the heavenly sanctuary in contrast with the annual entrance made by Aaron and his successors on the Day of Atonement.

Fifth, it is quite arbitrary to assert that Heb 10:19-20 "is the key to interpreting" Heb 6:19-20.[13] The reverse is more likely true given that Heb 6:19-20 occurs first in the epistle and sets the meaning of the term "veil" throughout the epistle. Hebrew 6:19-20 is, if anything, more straightforward than Heb 10:19-20. The parallel nature between the two passages certainly demands that "veil" be given the same meaning in each case; on that Davidson and I are agreed.

[9]Davidson, "Christ's Entry 'Within the Veil,'" 175, n. 4.

[10]Roy E. Gane, "Re-opening *Katapetasma* ("Veil") in Hebrews 6:19," *AUSS* 38 (2000): 5-8; Young, 169.

[11]Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 466.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Davidson, "Christ's Entry 'Within the Veil," 179.

Davidson seems to think that the presence of the verb ἐγκαινίζω in Heb 10:20 points unambiguously to the dedication ritual of the sanctuary. This is not really so. In the LXX this verb speaks of the renewal of such things as the altar, the gates, an ordinary house, kingship, a right spirit, and inward parts. It is used for "the house of the Lord" (3 Kgdms [LXX] 8:63 = 1 Kgs 8:63; 2 Chron 7:5, חנך), or in 1 Macc 4:36; 5:1 for the renewal of the sanctuary, though it does not occur in the LXX for the dedication service as such. In Heb 10:20 it is "a new and living way" that has been consecrated, not the sanctuary. It means here, according to Behm, "to make a way which was not there before."[14]

Sixth, Davidson seems to make the same mistake as Rice—he deals with a word but neglects the sentence. The evidence certainly demonstrates that τά ἅγια in the LXX refers to the sanctuary as a whole, but this does not mean that the context in Hebrews is not drawing on the language of the Day of Atonement. Just as a twenty-first-century Christian knows that steam pudding, holly, stocking, presents, conifer tree and snow *when all found together* point to a northern Christmas, so equally a first-century Jew knew that the grouping of high priest, blood of goats and calves, entered, sanctuary, and once-for-all (not annually) pointed to the entrance of the high priest into the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (Heb 9:11-12; 24-25).

Davidson accepts the presence of the Day of Atonement imagery in Heb 9:7, 25, but rejects it in 9:11-12 despite the nearly identical language used in all three texts, allowing for the contrast between the earthly high priest and Jesus. The following chart emphasizes how inconsistent it is not to give these texts the same OT background.

Aaronic			Christ
Day of Atonement Heb 9:7	**Day of Atonement Heb 9:25**	**Day of Atonement Heb 13:11[15]**	**Day of ??? Heb 9:11-12**
High Priest	High priest	High priest	High priest
Goes into	Enters	Brought into	Entered
The second [tent]	Holy Place	Sanctuary	Holy Place
Once a year	Year after year	————	Once for all
Not without . . . blood	With blood	Blood	With his own blood

[14]J. Behm. *TDNT*, s.v. ἐγκαινίζω.

[15]Heb 13:11 quotes from Lev 16:27 the Day of Atonement chapter.

The parallel between τὰ ἅγια (9:12, 25) and ἡ δευτέρα [σκηνή] (9:7) is added proof that the general term τὰ ἅγια is being used contextually by the author with specific reference to the Most Holy Place, for the second tent is indisputably referring to the inner shrine of the tabernacle. The main point, however, is that if 9:7, 25 and 13:11 have the Day of Atonement as their background, so must 9:11-12.

Seventh, it is an overstatement to say that the conjunction of τράγων and μόσχων in Heb 9:12 is based on the same combination in Num 7 (LXX), a chapter concerning the inauguration of the tabernacle. The two words do occur in Num 7, but never conjoined as sin offerings. In Lev 16, the calf (young bull) and the goat form a combined sin offering for the priests and the congregation. However, in Num 7 the thirteen references to τράγος (עתוד) occur in a repeated listing of animals offered for a peace offering (θυσία σωτηρίου = זבח השלמים), a ritual that does not bring the sacrificial blood into the sanctuary (Lev 3:12-16). In Num 7, μόσχος (פר) is repeatedly included among a group of animals sacrificed for a whole-burnt offering (ὁλοκαύτωμα = עלה), but again such sacrifices do not require the priest to bring the blood into the sanctuary (Lev 1:10-13). In contrast, the OT sacrifice that Hebrews draws upon does require the blood of both sacrificial animals to be brought by the high priest into the sanctuary (9:7, 12, 25; 13:11 [note the plural]).

Hebrews also uses τὸ αἷμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων (9:13; 10:4 [in reverse order]), a conjunction that never occurs in either the dedicatory service or the Day of Atonement, which indicates the author is choosing his terms for the sacrificial animals with less than a precise match with the LXX.[16] Hence we should use data based on the terms for the sacrificial animals with care, giving more consideration to the context than the words. We should also note that the central—though not exclusive—concern of Hebrews is with the sin offering for the people (2:17; 5:1, 3; 9:7, 22, 26, 28; 10:3-4, 11-12, 18; 13:11-12) and not the peace offering or even, despite 10:6, 8, the whole-burnt offering.[17]

Furthermore, Philo, the first-century Jewish philosopher, uses τράγος more frequently than χίμαρος for the sin-offering goat of the Day of Atonement.[18] Most scholars recognize that Philo has strong affinities with

[16]"Bulls and goats" occurs in the LXX only in Deut 32:15; Ps 49:13; Isa 1:11, Song 2:14.

[17]Num 7 includes the sin-offering some thirteen times, but the LXX elsewhere consistently uses χίμαρος ἐξ αἰγῶν (שעיר מעזים) (see, e.g., Lev 4:23). Χίμαρος (שעיר) is used for the sin-offering in Lev 16 (LXX), but it does not occur at all in the NT.

[18]*Spec. Leg* 1.188 (χίμαρος); *Leg.All.* 2.52; *Post.* 70; *Plant.* 61; *Heres* 179 (τράγος). Pseudo-Barnabas, also uses τράγος for the sin-offering goat of the Day of Atonement (7.4, 6, 8, 10). Josephus (37-post 93 C.E.) is another first-century example of how fluid Jewish writers were in their choice of words for the sacrifices. He uses ἔριφος (kid, he-goat) and ταῦρος (bull, ox) for the sin-offerings of the Day of Atonement (*Ant.* 3.239-240).

the Epistle to the Hebrews. Philo died around 50 C.E., so he is a near contemporary of the author of Hebrews. If another first-century Jew can use τράγος for the Day of Atonement sin-offering goat, I am hard pressed to understand why the writer to the Hebrews cannot.

Eighth, the aorist participle (γενόμενος) in Heb 6:20 does not point, as Davidson suggests, to some heavenly inauguration of Jesus as high priest.[19] The aorist participle generally refers to action completed with or before the main verb. The aorist participle in 6:20 (as does παραγενόμενος in 9:12) modifies εἰσῆλθεν. The point being made by the author is that Jesus had become high priest before he entered the heavenly realm. The writer uses the aorist participle in this way over and over again (1:3, 4; 5:9, 10; 6:20; 7:26, 27; 9:11, 12, 28; 10:12) to denote action completed before the action of the main verb.[20]

Davidson's study leaves me with a query. How is he able to see the Day of Atonement in Dan 8:11-14 where there is no mention of a high priest, blood, calves and goats, entering, sin offering, cleanse, annual (to the contrary, Dan 8:11, 12, 13 refer to the "daily" service, חחמיר), inner veil, or the burning of carcasses outside the camp? Yet despite their *absence* in Daniel, he is able to find the Day of Atonement in 8:14. However, despite their *presence* in Hebrews, he is unable to see the Day of Atonement in 6:19-20 or 9:11-12. The root צרק is a very common one in the OT (some 509 times), but it is never used of a sacrifice in the cultic material. It takes considerable linguistic dexterity to make נצרק mean "cleanse" in a Day of Atonement context.[21] Likewise, without the contextual indicators that we have in Lev 16:2

(אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת אֶל־פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֹן),

the reference to קדש (Dan 8:14) relates to the sanctuary as a whole.

It has all the appearances of desperation to use (as some do) the symbolic references to a ram (Dan 8:3, 4, 6, 7, 20, איל) and to a goat (vv. 5, 8, 21, צפיר) as evidence of Day of Atonement language. The sin-offering animals in Lev 16, let us recall, are פר (young bull) and שעיר (goat). The ram for a burnt offering does not cleanse the tabernacle. My appeal is for him to look for the Day of Atonement in Hebrews with the same openness to the text that he exhibits with his exegesis of Dan 8:14.[22]

[19]Davidson, "Christ's Entry 'Within the Veil,'" 177, 189.

[20]See Norman H. Young, "Bearing His Reproach (Heb 13:9-14)," *NTS* 48 (2002): forthcoming.

[21]Richard M. Davidson, "The Meaning of *Nisdaq* in Daniel 8:14," *JATS* 7/1 (1996): 107-119.

[22]Richard M. Davidson, "The Good News of Yom Kippur," *JATS* 2/2 (1991): 4-27; and cf. William H. Shea, *The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier: Daniel 7-12*, 2 vols (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 111-118.

In summary let me review the arguments.

1. The use of ἐγκαινίζω in Heb 9:18 and 10:20 does not shift the focus from the Day of Atonement to the inauguration service. Neither this Greek word nor the related Hebrew word (חנך, חדש) actually occur in the dedication rituals Davidson appeals to, namely, Exod 40, Lev 8, and Num 7, that is, it is never used in connection with the dedication of the tabernacle. Hebrews's concern is, of course, with the Mosaic tabernacle, not the Solomonic Temple or the Second Temple. Jesus' death inaugurated a new covenant and a new and living way to God, but that does not mean the entrance language through the veil or within the veil has its background in the dedication of the Mosaic tabernacle.

2. The variation of terms in Hebrews and the usage of Philo (and other first- or second-century writers) make the appeal to the word τράγος as pointing to the dedication of the tabernacle and not the Day of Atonement quite dubious.

3. The word "car" describes the whole of a motor vehicle, but if I say "my wife drove off the car at speed," most of us would think of her positioned behind the steering wheel—only James Bond drives from the roof. Likewise, contextual clues—such as a high priest who entered with sacrificial blood—give τὰ ἅγια (sanctuary) a specific reference to the Day of Atonement and the high priest's entrance into the most holy place (Heb 9:12; cf. 9:7, 25).

4. This is confirmed when one finds in the same book a linguistic connection to the Day of Atonement when Jesus as a high priest after the order of Melchizedek entered "within the veil" (6:19-20), a phrase that is exclusive to the Day of Atonement *when it is connected with a high priest entering the sanctuary.*

Davidson has rightly reminded us that Hebrews contrasts Jesus' death with a range of OT cultic events. The presence of some allusion to dedicatory ideas in 9:18-23 and perhaps 10:19-20 is not denied, but by itself it is an insufficient background for all the sanctuary language found in Hebrews, especially Heb 6:19-20. He is also surely correct when he argues that the fulfillment of the high priest's annual Day of Atonement entrance into the sanctuary is the death of Christ on the cross.[23] However, I'm not persuaded that the proverbial saying in 9:27 points to a future Day of Atonement judgment.[24] This does not rule out

[23]Davidson, "Christ's Entry 'Within the Veil,'" 187.

[24]The stress on the death of Christ throughout the section (9:15-28) should be observed: "a death has occurred" (v. 15), "the death of the one who made it" (v. 16), "takes effect only at death" (v. 17), "shedding of blood" (v. 22), "nor . . . to offer himself again and again" (v. 25), "to suffer again and again (v. 26), "the sacrifice of himself" (v. 26), "to die once . . . so Christ having been offered once" (vv. 27-28).

the Day of Atonement as a type of last judgment, but is this the concern of Hebrews? I would simply contend that "better blood" involves a better entrance (εἰσῆλθεν, 6:20; 9:12; 9:24), once-for-all instead of once a year; and that sounds to me like the Day of Atonement and not the initial dedication of the sanctuary.[25]

Davidson and I approach Hebrews differently. For me the death of Christ directs the author's selection and treatment of OT material. Thus he uses in an unparalleled way the verb "offer" (προσφέρω) to describe the high priest's blood manipulation on the Day of Atonement (9:7) because this facilitates the application of this act to the offering (προσφορά) of Christ on the cross (10:10, 14). In a unique manner he describes the tabernacle as consisting of a first and second tent (9:2-3), because this allows him to relate the apartments to the first and new covenants (8:13; 9:18).[26] He speaks of "shedding blood" (9:22), because it matches the death of Jesus better than sprinkling. He focuses on a minor part of the Day of Atonement—the burning of the sacrificial carcasses outside the camp—because this for the author coincides with Jesus' death outside the city's wall (13:11-12).

Hebrews uses the OT language of the Day of Atonement and other sacrifices as a means of conveying a profound theology about the achievement of the death of Jesus. The writer, to my mind, is not interested in the details of the heavenly sanctuary, but emphasizes the heavenly realm to encourage harassed Christians to look beyond their present trauma to the glorified and triumphant Christ. Davidson, in contrast, treats Hebrews as though it were a literalistic commentary on the OT types.

This has been for me a salutary exchange. Davidson has forced me to reexamine my position, to adapt some points, and even to abandon others. It shows the benefit of a dialogue between one who is trained in NT and another who is an OT scholar. The conversation has been fruitful and friendly, which I appreciate. Nevertheless, I remain convinced that the Day of Atonement is the OT background for Heb 6:19-20 and 9:11-12.

[25]We must emphasize that Hebrews is using Day of Atonement language to achieve a theological idea and not to give a spatial description of the heavenly sanctuary.

[26]This is one of the alternatives allowed in the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:451.