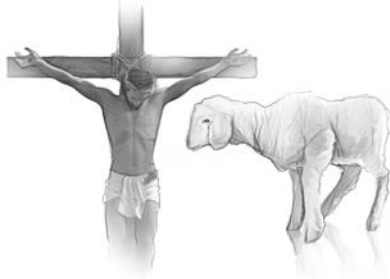


New Covenant Sanctuary



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *Exod. 25:8; Isa. 53:4–12; Heb. 10:4; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 8:1–6; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.*

Memory Text: “Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance” (*Hebrews 9:15, RSV*).

A moonless evening, the sky, black like spilled ink, covered Frank in shadow as he walked the empty urban streets. After a while, he heard footsteps behind him, someone following in the darkness. Then the person caught up with him and said, “Frank, the printer?”

“Yes, I am he. But how did you know?”

“Well,” answered the stranger, “I don’t know you. But I know your brother very well, and even in the darkness, your mannerisms, your way of walking, your figure, all reminded me so much of him I just assumed that you were his brother, because he told me that he had one.”

This story reveals a powerful truth regarding the Israelite sanctuary service. It was, the Bible says, a shadow of the real. Nevertheless, there was enough in the shadows and images of the earthly sanctuary to clearly foreshadow and reveal the truths they were supposed to represent: the death and high-priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary.

The Week at a Glance: Why did God want the Israelites to build a sanctuary? What does the sanctuary teach us about Christ as our Substitute? What does Jesus do in heaven as our Representative?

* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 12.

Relationships

“And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people” (Lev. 26:11, 12).

One point should be clear by now: whether in the *old* covenant or *new* covenant, the Lord seeks a close, loving relationship with His people. In fact, the covenants basically help form (for lack of a better word) the “rules” for that relationship.

Relationship is crucial to the covenant, in whatever time or context. Yet, for a relationship to exist, there needs to be interaction, communication, and contact, particularly for sinful, fallible, doubting humans. The Lord, of course, knowing this, took the initiative to be sure that He would manifest Himself to us so that—within the confines of fallen humanity—we could relate to Him in a meaningful way.

Read Exodus 25:8, the Lord’s command to Israel to build a sanctuary. What reasons does the Lord give for wanting them to do this?

The answer to this question, of course, brings up another question, and that is *Why*? Why does the Lord want to dwell in the midst of His people?

Perhaps, the truth could be found in the two verses for today, listed above. Notice, the Lord will “tabernacle” (or “dwell”) among them; He then says that He will not “abhor” them. He also says that He will “walk” among them and will be their God, and they will be His people (Lev. 26:11, 12). Look at the elements found in these verses. Again, the relational aspect comes through very clearly.

Take a few minutes: analyze Leviticus 26:11, 12 and Exodus 25:8. Write down how the various elements all fit in with the notion that the Lord seeks a relationship with His people.

Focus specifically on the words, “my soul shall not abhor you.” What is it about the sanctuary itself that provides the means by which fallen, sinful people can be accepted by the Lord, and why is that so important for the process of forming a covenant?

Sin, Sacrifice, and Acceptance *(Heb. 9:22)*

The divinely appointed way for the Old Testament sinners to rid themselves of sin and guilt was through animal sacrifices. The Israelite sacrificial offerings are detailed in Leviticus 1 through 7. Careful attention was paid to the use and disposal of the blood in the various kinds of sacrifices. Indeed, the role of blood in sacrificial rituals is one of the unifying features in the Israelite sacrifices.

The person who had sinned—and thus had broken the covenant relationship and the law that regulated it—could be restored to full fellowship with God and humanity by bringing an animal sacrifice as a substitute. Sacrifices, with their rites, were the God-appointed means to bring about cleansing from sin and guilt. They were instituted to cleanse the sinner, transferring individual sin and guilt to the sanctuary by sprinkling blood and reinstating communion and full covenantal fellowship of the penitent with the personal God who is the saving Lord.

How do these concepts expressed above help us to understand the questions at the end of yesterday's study?

What prophetic significance was there in the animal sacrifice? (See *Isa. 53:4–12, Heb. 10:4*.)

The Old Testament animal sacrifices were the divinely ordained means for ridding the sinner of sin and guilt. They changed the sinner's status from that of guilty and worthy of death to that of forgiven and reestablished in the covenantal God-human relationship. But there was a sense in which the animal sacrifices were prophetic in nature. After all, no animal was an adequate substitute in atoning for humanity's sin and guilt. Paul states it in his own language: "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (*Heb. 10:4, RSV*). Thus, an animal sacrifice was meant to foreshadow the coming of the divine-human Servant of God, who would die a substitutionary death for the sins of the world. It is through this process that the sinner is forgiven and accepted by the Lord, and the basis of the covenant relationship is established.

Put yourself in the position of someone who lived in Old Testament times, when animals were sacrificed at the sanctuary. Remembering, too, just how important livestock were to their economy, culture, and whole way of life, what lesson were these sacrifices supposed to teach them about the cost of sin?

The Substitution

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father” (*Gal. 1:4*).

There is no question: one of the key themes (if not *the* key theme) of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ died as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. This truth is the foundation of the entire plan of salvation. Any theology that denies the blood atonement of Christ denies the heart and soul of Christianity. A bloodless cross can save no one.

Meditate upon the text for today, and then answer these questions: **Did Jesus volunteer to die? For whom did He die? What would His death accomplish?**

Substitution is the key to the entire plan of salvation. Because of our sins, we deserve to die. Out of His love for us, Christ “gave himself for our sins” (*Gal. 1:4*). He died the death that we deserve. The death of Christ as the Substitute for sinners is the great truth from which all other truth flows. Our hope, that of restoration, of freedom, of forgiveness, of eternal life in Paradise, rests upon the work that Jesus did, that of giving Himself for our sins. Without that, our faith would be meaningless. We might as well place our hope and trust in a statue of a fish. Salvation comes only through the blood, the blood of Christ.

Look up the following texts: **Matthew 26:28, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 9:14, and 1 Peter 1:19.** **What do they tell us about the blood? What role, then, does blood play in the plan of salvation?**

“It is not God’s will that you should be distrustful, and torture your soul with the fear that God will not accept you because you are sinful and unworthy. . . . You can say: ‘I know I am a sinner, and that is the reason I need a Saviour. . . . I have no merit or goodness whereby I may claim salvation, but I present before God the all-atoning blood of the spotless Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is my only plea.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 100.

Dwell upon the Ellen White statement given above. Rewrite it in your own words. Make it personal. Put your own fears and pain in there, and then write down what the promises contained there give to you. What hope do you have because of the blood of the new covenant?

The New Covenant High Priest

The earthly sanctuary, where God chose to dwell with His people, centered on the sacrifice of the animals. Yet, the service did not end with the death of these creatures. The priest ministered the blood in the sanctuary on behalf of the sinner *after the sacrifice itself was killed*.

This whole service, however, was only a shadow, a symbol, of what Christ would do for the world. Thus, just as the symbols (the sanctuary service) did not end with the death of the animal, Christ's work for us did not end with His death on the cross, either.

Study for today Hebrews 8:1–6. Pray over the verses. Ask the Lord to help you understand what is being said here and why it is important for us to know it. After you are done, write down in your own words what you think the Lord's message is to us in these verses. Ask yourself: How do these texts help us understand the new covenant?

Just as there was an earthly sanctuary, priesthood, and ministry under the old covenant, so there is a heavenly sanctuary, a heavenly priesthood, and heavenly ministry under the new covenant. However, what were only symbols, images, and a shadow (*Heb. 8:5*) in the old covenant became a reality in the new.

Also, rather than an amoral animal as our substitute, we have the sinless Jesus; rather than animal blood, we have the blood of Christ; rather than a man-made sanctuary, we have the "true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (*Heb. 8:2*); and rather than a sinful, erring human priest, we have Jesus as our High Priest ministering in our behalf. With all this in mind, think about Paul's words: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great [a] salvation . . . ?" (*Heb. 2:3*).

Think about it: Jesus lived a sinless life on your behalf, died on your behalf, and is now in heaven, ministering in the sanctuary on your behalf. All this was done in order to save you from the terrible, final results of sin. Plan in the next day or so to talk to someone about this wonderful news, someone who you think needs to hear it. Work out beforehand, based on today's study, what you will say.

Heavenly Ministry *(Heb. 9:24)*

Study Hebrews 9:24, particularly the context in which it is given, that of explaining Christ's ministry in heaven for us after His sacrificial death on our behalf. Though much can be said, we want to focus on one point: the phrase at the end, which says that Christ now appears in the presence of God for us.

Think about what that means. We, sinful, fallen humanity; we, who would be consumed by the brightness of God's glory if we faced it now; we, no matter how bad we have been or how blatantly we have violated God's holy law, have Someone who appears in the presence of God *for us*. We have a Representative standing before the Father on our behalf. Think of how loving, forgiving, and accepting Christ was when here on earth. *This same Person is now our Mediator in heaven!*

This is the other part of the good news. Not only did Jesus pay the penalty for our sins, having taken them upon Himself at the cross (*1 Pet. 2:24*), but now He also stands in the presence of God, a Mediator between heaven and earth, between humanity and Divinity.

This makes perfect sense. Jesus, as both God and Man (a sinless, perfect Man) is the only One who could bridge the gap caused by sin between humanity and God. The crucial point to remember in all this (though there are many) is that there is now a Man, a human being, who can relate to all our trials, pains, and temptations (*Heb. 4:14, 15*), representing us before the Father.

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (*1 Tim. 2:5, 6*).

What two roles does this text put Jesus in, and how were these roles prefigured in the earthly sanctuary service?

The great news of the new covenant is that now, because of Jesus, repentant sinners have Someone representing them in heaven before the Father, Someone who earned for them what they could never earn for themselves, and that is perfect righteousness, the only righteousness that can stand in the presence of God. Jesus, with that perfect righteousness wrought out in His life through suffering (*Heb. 2:10*), stands before God, claiming for us forgiveness from sin and power over sin, because without these we would have no hope, not now and certainly not in the judgment.

Pray and meditate over the idea of a human being, Someone who has experienced temptation to sin, standing before God in heaven. What does that mean to you personally? What kind of hope and encouragement does that bring?

Further Thought: “The highest angel in heaven had not the power to pay the ransom for one lost soul. Cherubim and seraphim have only the glory with which they are endowed by the Creator as His creatures, and the reconciliation of man to God could be accomplished only through a mediator who was equal with God, possessed of attributes that would dignify, and declare him worthy to treat with the infinite God in man’s behalf, and also represent God to a fallen world. Man’s substitute and surety must have man’s nature, a connection with the human family whom he was to represent, and, as God’s ambassador, he must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 257.

“Jesus continues: As you confess Me before men, so I will confess you before God and the holy angels. You are to be My witnesses upon earth, channels through which My grace can flow for the healing of the world. So I will be your representative in heaven. The Father beholds not your faulty character, but He sees you as clothed in My perfection. I am the medium through which Heaven’s blessings shall come to you. And everyone who confesses Me by sharing My sacrifice for the lost shall be confessed as a sharer in the glory and joy of the redeemed.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 357.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 Read Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18, and Ephesians 3:12. What are they saying that helps us understand our access to the Father through Jesus?
- 2 Look at the second Ellen G. White statement given above. Notice how she explains the role of mediator. When the Father looks at us, He does not see our faulty character but Christ’s perfection instead. Dwell on what that means, and discuss it with the class.
- 3 Looking at what we have studied this week, ask yourself how you would answer this question: “OK, so Christ is in the sanctuary in heaven. So what? What does that mean on a daily, practical level?”

Summary: The old covenant sacrificial system was replaced by the new; instead of animals being sacrificed by sinful priests in an earthly sanctuary, we now have Jesus, our perfect Sacrifice. He represents us before the Father in the sanctuary in heaven, which forms the basis of the new covenant and its promises.

Boy Revives Dying Church

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, Adventist Mission

A Seventh-day Adventist church elder asked Alejandro to preach his first evangelistic series at the age of eight. “We want to plant seeds, not to harvest,” the elder told Alejandro’s mother.

The church was dying on Tierra Bomba, an island off Colombia’s coast in the Caribbean Sea. Its head elder had resigned from the pulpit and left the church on the last day of the evangelistic meetings that he was leading. Church members were discouraged, and many had stopped worshipping on Sabbath.

Alejandro, who had preached since he was four, was scared to speak at the first meeting. But Mother gave him a big hug, and they prayed together.

People packed the yard of a church member’s house to hear the boy speak.

Hoping to disrupt the weeklong meetings, the former head elder organized his own meetings in his home across the street from Alejandro’s site. He invited current and former church members to attend his daily meetings.

People walking to his house saw the boy speaking as they passed by and stopped. “Who is the child preacher?” they wondered. Many stayed to listen.

The former elder was upset to see people going to Alejandro’s meeting, and he marched over to demand that they come to his house.

“Come on!” he told people, grabbing them by the arm. “Let’s go!”

Some people went with him, but when he wasn’t paying attention, they snuck back to listen to Alejandro preach.

This went on for several days. Then church members invited the former elder to the evangelistic meetings—and he came.

As part of the meetings, Alejandro visited homes of people who had responded to his appeals for baptism. During the first round of visitations, three people confirmed their desire for baptism. During a second round, an unmarried couple asked for baptism. Alejandro’s mother helped them complete the paperwork so they could be married. A total of seven people were baptized at the end of the weeklong meetings.

Alejandro left Tierra Bomba happy. The church members also were happy. The church was strong and growing.

“Jesus triumphed,” Alejandro said.



Alejandro, a 10-year-old child preacher in Cartagena, Colombia, has led 18 people, including his parents and older brother, to baptism since he was four. Read more in this quarter’s Children’s Mission, downloadable at bit.ly/childrensmision. This quarter’s Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will help open a Better Life center to train missionaries at Colombia Adventist University in Alejandro’s homeland, Colombia.

Study Focus: *Hebrews 9:15, RSV*

Part I: Overview

The earthly sanctuary symbolizes the work of salvation that still goes on today. Christ stands in the role of our High Priest, mediating before God in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary. His purity stands worthy before God in place of our unworthy sinful natures.

Part II: Commentary

Through the sanctuary system, Israel's new relationship with Yahweh was indicative of how Calvary would become a crimson cushion of grace that would counterbalance the stealthy intrusion of human sin. This new relationship would center in blood-sprinkled ceremonial rituals, which became the redemptive portal out of which self could be snatched off its throne and crucified. This is the plan of salvation.

Relationships

When Christ died on the cross, sin was conquered in our behalf. For us, then, to live in that victory we must die, in a sense, as well. Dead to self and alive to God. When called by God to Christ, we really are called to "come and die."

Of course, dying is deemed bad, but in this case, it's death to all that is bad in our souls and characters, all that would keep us from a close covenantal relationship with Jesus.

We could say, then, that every sacrifice offered in the sanctuary service pointed to death. Yes, of course, it was Christ's death for us. But by participating in that ritual, the penitent sinner accepted the sacrifice in his behalf and implicit in that was his acceptance of the covenantal promises offered by God to His people. And that covenantal promise, too, included the necessary death to self that repentance and sorrow for sin implied. All this is revealed, at least reflected, in the sanctuary service, whose fuller meaning was seen in the New Testament and in the new covenant.

Sin, Sacrifice, and Acceptance

"The sinner then tied the animal's front legs, and placing a slip-knot around its back legs drew all four together. Thus secured, the creature fell on its side, and its face was turned toward the most holy place.

"The worshiper next 'put' 'both' his hands . . . upon its head to signal

the transference of his sins to his representative. The verb pictures his leaning his entire weight upon the creature. . . .

“With hands pressing his guilt upon the victim’s head, and face turned toward the most holy place, the penitent silently confessed his sins to God, and pledged amendment in the ancient Hebrew prayer which concluded with the words, ‘I return in repentance, and let this be for my atonement [literally, covering].’ . . .

“The sinner then grasped the knife and deliberately slit his victim’s throat (Lev 1:5, 11). By this personal act he acknowledged that his sin was the cause of his proxy’s death. . . . His compliance in the rite showed that he had accepted the claim of God’s unchangeable law, agreed that death was the result of his transgression, and affirmed that his only escape was through the vicarious death of the One Who would take his place.”—Leslie Hardinge, *With Jesus in His Sanctuary: A Walk Through the Tabernacle Along His Way*, pp. 371, 372.

The Substitution

“Christ is our righteous substitute.

“The plan to send a second Adam, a substitute, was not formulated at the time of the first transgression. It was a provision ‘foreordained before the foundation of the world’ (1 Peter 1:20).

“The Substitute was to succeed where Adam had failed. He was to prove that Adam did not have to sin, that Adam could have prevailed over temptation, that the commandments are both possible to obey and profitable for the human race. . . .

“Adam fell in a perfect Eden—Jesus succeeded in a wicked Nazareth. Bearing the burdens of His Father’s honor and His people’s redemption, Christ fought the battle of sin in our inadequate armor, these weak human bodies.

“And He won! *The Lamb prevailed!*”—Calvin Rock, *Seeing Christ: Windows on His Saving Grace* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1994), pp. 65–67.

New Covenant High Priest

“When one speaks of Christ as a . . . high priest it is not inappropriate to add that He is our only priest. He has an exclusive relationship to God: He and no other can represent us. The priests of OT times served as types of the coming true Priest. The apostles and ministers of NT times are never called priests, nor do they perform the functions of priests. There is but one Mediator between God and men.

“The first major function of a priest was to offer sacrifices, ‘to make expiation for the sins of the people’ (Heb 2:17). . . . The one perfect Sacrifice that [God] offered was Himself.

“His offering of Himself was a voluntary act. He lay down His life of His own free will . . . (Jn 10:18). He became ‘the Lamb of God, who

takes away the sin of the world!’ (Jn 1:29), a lamb ‘without blemish or spot’ (1 Pe 1:19). He made Himself ‘an offering for sin’ (Is 53:10). . . .

“Christ then occupied the double role of offerer and offering, of priest and oblation. This sacrificial offering of Himself as a victim upon the altar was a single once-for-all act ‘for all time’ (Heb 10:10, 12; 9:26).”—Walter F. Specht, “Christ’s Session, Enthronement, and Mediatorial and Intercessory Ministry,” *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, eds. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1981), pp. 344, 345.

Heavenly Ministry

“In the epistle to the Hebrews, in particular, the writer is trying to turn the eyes of the Jewish Christians away from the ministry in the earthly sanctuary/temple to a heavenly sanctuary with a more perfect ministry by their own resurrected and ascended Lord and Saviour.”—Arnold V. Wallenkampf, “A Brief Review of Some of the Internal and External Challengers to the Seventh-day Adventist Teachings on the Sanctuary and the Atonement,” *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 582.

Part III: Life Application

For Reflection: It’s amazing how graphically and unambiguously the New Testament, particularly the book of Hebrews (and even Revelation), teaches about the heavenly sanctuary and its central place in the plan of salvation. It is, in a sense, the plan of salvation, the gospel, and covenant writ large. One cannot truly understand what the covenant is all about apart from some knowledge of the sanctuary service and what it means.

1. Using Hebrews 8, encourage your class to discover the following points regarding the Mediator:
 - A. Position of the Mediator (*Heb. 8:1, 2*)
 - B. Performance of the Mediator (*Heb. 8:3–6*)
 - C. Promise of the Mediator (*Heb. 8:6–9*)
 - D. Productions of the Mediator (*Heb. 8:10–12*)

For each point, have them identify the difference between the old and the new covenants.

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2. How specifically does Christ make the new covenant more realistic in your life? How different would your life be if the new covenant did not exist?

3. A promise is as good as the person making it. When God makes a promise, it is even more solid than historical facts. Why, then, is it easier to question God's will than it is to blindly go where He leads? What lessons can we learn from biblical characters who chose to question rather than obey?

4. Hebrews 8:10 says that Christ the Mediator places God's law in our hearts. How is this act part of our spiritual experience? Explain how our having God's law in our hearts enables us to know Him more intimately.

5. Through Christ, the new covenant supersedes the old covenant. Through Christ, God's law is draped with grace and love. Why, then, do we let legalism get in the way of our spiritual growth? Based on the new covenant, what specific things can you do to develop or strengthen your relationship with God but without the stranglehold of legalism?

6. Although the New Testament instructs us that the animal sacrifices, et cetera, of the Old Testament period were not effective in erasing sin, it is clear that they were effective in enabling an individual to continue in fellowship with God's people. Why would they have been effective in this way, though they did not possess any intrinsic power? What does this teach us about the power and importance of rituals?

7. The idea of an atonement is central to the New Testament. Why might it be necessary for an innocent Being to die in order for a guilty person to be rescued from the consequences of sin? How might the death of this innocent Person accomplish this atonement? Is it strictly a legal transaction? Explain.

8. At present, Jesus represents us before God because we are incapable of facing God ourselves, much less defending ourselves in front of Him. Does this suggest that at some future point we may be capable of appearing before God without a Mediator? Why, or why not? What are the various views on this idea? What would it mean to stand before God without a Mediator?
