

Jesus and the Sanctuary



SABBATH—JANUARY 8

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 24:5-8; Exodus 25:8; Exodus 29:12; Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 10:18; Isaiah 53.

MEMORY VERSE: “By his [Jesus] knowledge shall my [God's] righteous [holy] servant [Jesus] justify [forgive] many; for he [Jesus] shall bear [accept] their iniquities [sins]” (Isaiah 53:11).

IN TALKING ABOUT WAR AND DESTRUCTION, the poet W. H. Auden wrote that humans were like children “in a haunted wood.” They were lost, afraid of the night, and “have never been happy or good.” This sad poem describes the human situation. Fortunately, God wants to lead us out of this situation. As Ellen White said, “As soon as there was sin, there was a Savior.”—adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 210. Throughout history, the Savior has shown Himself and the thoughts He has toward us. They are thoughts of salvation, hope, and eternal¹ life. For many hundreds of years, He has shown Himself and His thoughts through the sanctuary services on earth. The sanctuary services were a model for the plan of salvation.

This week, we will look at the sanctuary services and what God was telling His people through them. In this way we can claim the hope that God offers to us.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON: What was the meaning of the sanctuary sacrifices? What was the purpose of the Old Testament sanctuary? What symbols (examples) of Jesus were in the sanctuary? Why was blood a very important part of the sanctuary services?

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 15.

¹eternal—forever; without beginning or end.

SUNDAY—JANUARY 9

SACRIFICES BEFORE THE SANCTUARY (Genesis 6–8).

Last week's lesson showed some of the earliest examples of sacrifices in the Old Testament. No real explanation of the beginning or purpose of the sacrifices was given in the verses we studied. The Bible just tells about these sacrifices.

We studied the Cain and Abel story (Genesis 4:4), and the story of Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22:13). These stories are different, but they are the same in one important way. In what way are they the same? Why is that way so important?

In all these stories, worship focused on sacrifice, blood, and the death of an “innocent” animal. The verses say little about the reason for the sacrifices. But the death of the animal was still the important part of each sacrifice. There must be something about these deaths that made the sacrifices acceptable to God. Contrast² the difference between Cain's sacrifice and Abel's sacrifice. Also think about Noah's sacrifice right after he came out of the ark.

²contrast—show how things are different.

In Genesis 8:21, 22, what is the connection between the sacrifices Noah offered and God's plan never to “curse the ground any more for man's sake”? (Read also Genesis 9:8-17.) How do we see the plan of salvation used as a symbol (example) in Genesis 8:21, 22?

Long before the Cross, we have a quick look at the great plan of salvation. This look shows that God is willing to forgive us, because of a sacrifice offered in our place. For the world, God accepted the sacrifice Noah offered. God accepted Noah's sacrifice even though “the thoughts of his [man's] heart were always directed only toward what was evil” (Genesis 6:5, NIV).



After getting off the ark, Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices to God. What should that tell us about how important it is to keep God first in our lives?

MONDAY—JANUARY 10

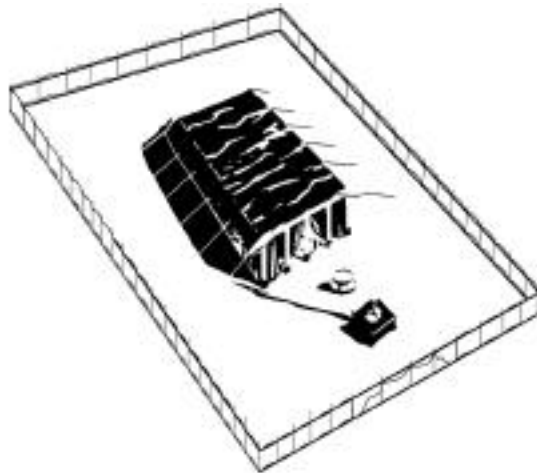
THE SANCTUARY ON THE EARTH (Exodus 25:8).

Since Adam and Eve's fall, we can see how sin has led to separation between humanity³ and God. God is holy. Humanity is unholy. The question is, How can a holy God come close to unholy people? The sanctuary services on earth help provide an answer.

Why did God ask the children of Israel to make a sanctuary? Exodus 25:8.

The sanctuary was a meeting place between God and His people. The name of the sanctuary means the "tent of meeting" or "tent of the congregation [church group]." The sanctuary was a place for a holy God to meet with sinful, fallen people. The sanctuary helped the Creator of the heavens and the earth to be with His people daily. Here is where God gave judgments (Leviticus 16). Here He forgave sin (Leviticus 4). He guided their trip to Canaan from the sanctuary (Numbers 9:15-21). He cleansed them (Leviticus 14:31). And He communicated with them (Exodus 25:22). The sanctuary was the center of the people's worship and God's guidance. It was the place

where the people came to enjoy their relationship with God in a special way.



The sanctuary.

Was the sanctuary the only place in which God had fellowship with His people in a special way? Exodus 12; Exodus 20.

Of course, God was not limited to fellowshiping with His people through the sanctuary. But that was His chosen way of living, communicating, and fellowshiping with them. Why did He choose this special way? The Bible does not say why. The important thing is that, through the sanctuary, He was able to show Himself as a holy God to His people. In the sanctuary, they could meet and fellowship with Him in a way that let them understand His will for their lives.

³humanity—all the people of the world.

Review the things God did for His people by living with them in the sanctuary. In what ways does Jesus do the same things for us now (John 1:14)?

TUESDAY—JANUARY 11

**BLOOD AND THE SANCTUARY
(Leviticus 17:11).**

Yesterday's lesson showed how God could live among sinners and fellowship with them through the sanctuary. But the sanctuary did not provide something special that would help the people worship and fellowship with God. Something else was involved. It was something a building itself could never give.

What was the important part of the sanctuary? Why is it so important to let sinful people fellowship with a holy God?

What point do the following verses share? Exodus 24:5-8; Exodus 29:12; Exodus 30:10; Leviticus 4:17; Leviticus 10:18.

Even a quick reading of the Old Testament sanctuary services shows that blood is the most important part of the service. Innocent animals—lambs, bulls, and goats—were killed in different services (Leviticus 4:3-7; Leviticus 15:25-30). As sinners, we

should be destroyed. This is because sin leads to death. But God has offered a way of escape. Jesus Himself would lose His life. He would spill His blood so we could be forgiven (Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:19). Blood means life. So spilled blood means death. The death of each sacrifice in the sanctuary pointed to Jesus' death. Jesus' death is the only way sinful people can be brought back to God.



The lamb's blood symbolized Jesus' blood spilled for us on the cross.

The sacrifice of innocent animals is cruel. What should the sacrifice of innocent animals tell us about how bad sin is?

WEDNESDAY—JANUARY 12

**THE SANCTUARY AND SIN
(Leviticus 5:1).**

Through its service of sacrifices,

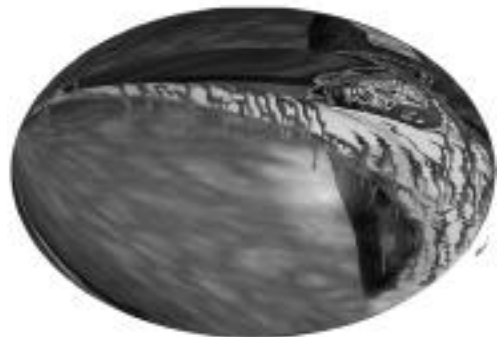
the sanctuary on earth made a way for God's people to reach Him. How did these sacrifices make it possible for people to reach God? How did the sacrifices shows us what Jesus did for us?

What basic idea do we read about in Leviticus 5:1, 17; Leviticus 17:16; Leviticus 19:17; Leviticus 20:17, 20?

The basic idea in these verses is that people are responsible for their own sins. God called His people into a relationship with Him. He let them take part in His holiness (Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 19:2; Leviticus 20:7). The people could take part in God's holiness by living in faith and obedience to Him (Leviticus 20:8). Sin could break up this relationship. If the sin problem were not solved, God's people would be punished. But God offered them a way of receiving forgiveness and cleansing from their sin. The sacrifices in the sanctuary pointed to this way.

To receive forgiveness, people were to bring a sacrifice to God (Leviticus 5:5, 6). The exact kind of animal or service depended upon many different things. But the basic idea was the same: The sins of a person were put on an innocent animal. Then the animal suffered the death that should have been the sinner's death. This is called atonement.⁴

What is "atonement" an example of in the following verses? Leviticus 4:20; Leviticus 6:7; Leviticus 19:22; Numbers 15:25. How do the following verses help us understand what we can receive through Jesus? Psalm 130:3, 4; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 1:14. How have you experienced the promise of these verses in your life?



Our sins are forgiven through Jesus' blood.

THURSDAY—JANUARY 13

THE SUPREME (GREATEST) SIN OFFERING (Isaiah 53).

Yesterday's lesson showed how sins being put on the innocent animal pointed to God's way of forgiving the sinner. The animal pointed to Jesus. Jesus' death is God's way of forgiving the sinner. What do the following verses tell us about Jesus? Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 9:28.

⁴atonement—Jesus dying for us on the cross. The animal that was sacrificed symbolized Jesus.

Jesus took our sins upon Himself and received punishment for them. This is the only way sinful humans can receive salvation and forgiveness. This is how the sanctuary services taught salvation in Jesus.

What does Isaiah 53 teach us about the idea of Jesus as our Substitute⁵ in death?

Isaiah 52:7-9 and Isaiah 53 summarize the gospel. Isaiah's beautiful description of the Savior and His work for us is set against the background of human selfishness. These verses describe a very clear picture of Jesus' sacrifice as our Substitute. The sacrifices in the sanctuary are examples of Jesus' sacrifice. "We should study Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 pictures Jesus as the Lamb of God. People who are proud and vain should look upon this picture of their Savior. They should humble themselves in the dust. People should memorize Isaiah 53. Its influence will humble people who are proud and vain."—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1147.

What picture does Isaiah 53 give of humanity? In what ways do you see yourself in Isaiah 53? At the same time, what hope does Isaiah give you?

FRIDAY—JANUARY 14

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White Comments, *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1147, 1148; Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 78, 458; *Evangelism*,⁶ p. 612; *The Great Controversy [War]*, pp. 358, 359; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 690–692.

"To many people, the mystery has been why there were so many sacrifices in the sanctuary on earth? Why were so many bleeding victims (lambs) led to the altar? But these sacrifices reminded the people of the Savior and left a deep impression on their minds and hearts. These sacrifices reminded them that 'without the spilling of blood, no one can be forgiven' (Hebrews 9:22, NIV). Every bleeding lamb pointed to 'the Lamb of God [Jesus]! He takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29, NIV).

"Jesus began the sanctuary services of worship. In this system, the services pointed to spiritual and heavenly things. . . .

"There was a lesson in every sacrifice. There was a lesson in every service. The lesson was preached by the priest in his holy work. The lesson is that only through Jesus' blood can we find forgiveness of sins.

"Believers in the Old Testament were saved by the same Savior we are saved by. But they saw God's

⁵substitute—a person who takes the place of another person. Jesus took our place on the cross.

⁶evangelism—the spreading of the gospel to the world.

mercy⁷ in symbols (examples). . . . Jesus' sacrifice is the glorious fulfillment of the sanctuary sacrifice. . . . All people can now reach God through Jesus. . . . They do not depend on priests or sanctuary sacrifices. Liberty is given to all people to go directly to God through Jesus.

"The whole mind, the whole soul, the whole heart, and the whole strength are saved by the blood of Jesus."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 155.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what important ways did the

services of the sanctuary on earth and, later, the temple at Jerusalem, *prophetically* show the gospel?

2. The death of the animal was not the only thing important to the sanctuary services on earth. The priests also worked with the people in the sanctuary after the sacrifice had been offered. Discuss what this work after the sacrifice had been offered means to our understanding of Jesus as our High Priest in the sanctuary in heaven.

⁷mercy—kindness we do not deserve.