

Wisdom From God’s Temple in Heaven



SABBATH—MAY 18

READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON: Exodus 25:8, 9, 40; *The Great Controversy*, chapters 22–24, 28.

MEMORY VERSE: “We do have a high priest [top spiritual leader] who sits on the right side of God’s throne in heaven. Our high priest serves in the Most Holy Place. He serves in the true [real] place of worship that was made by God, not by men” (Hebrews 8:1, 2, ICB).

WILLIAM MILLER preached that Jesus was coming on October 22, 1844. When Jesus didn’t come, some Millerites studied the 2,300 days again to understand their mistake. They discovered the 2,300 days was the time when Jesus came to heaven’s temple to clean it from sin. The Book of Leviticus talks about how God’s Holy Tent on earth was cleaned each year. Daniel 7 and 8 tell us that Jesus would clean the temple in heaven after the last of four kingdoms came to an end:

Daniel 7	Daniel 8
Babylon	-----
Media-Persia	Media-Persia
Greece	Greece
Rome	Rome
God’s work as Judge	Jesus cleans the temple

Daniel 7 and 8 show that Jesus’ work in the temple is the same as God’s final work as Judge. This week, we’ll look at Jesus’ work in heaven’s temple during the end times.

The 2,300 days was the time when Jesus came to heaven’s temple to clean it from sin.

GOD'S TEMPLE IN HEAVEN (Exodus 25:8, 9, 40)

Read Exodus 25:8, 9, 40 and Hebrews 8:1–6. What two Holy Tents do these verses talk about?

The first Adventists believed the Bible taught that Jesus would come back in 1844. When Jesus didn't come back, that time was named the Big Disappointment. Adventists studied the Bible to discover the reason for their mistake. As they studied, they learned that the Bible talks about two Holy Tents: the one Moses built, and the one in heaven. The Holy Tent that Moses built was a copy of the one in heaven. The work that the priests or spiritual leaders did in the Holy Tent on earth helped God's people understand the work that Jesus did in heaven to save us from sin. When Jesus died, the work in the temple on earth was no longer needed. After Jesus' death, God's New Promise with His people started in His temple in heaven. The temple in Daniel 8:14 shows us God's work for us in His temple in the end times. So, the temple in Daniel 8:14 also must be the temple in heaven.

"When the 2,300 days ended, in 1844, no Holy Tent or temple had been on the earth for many hundreds of years. So, the 2,300-day time message must be about the temple in heaven."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 417, adapted.

The Holy Tent in the desert was a model, or a small copy, of the temple in heaven. The work done in the Holy Tent on earth showed God's plan to save us. Every animal offered as a gift showed Jesus' death for us on the cross of Calvary (John 1:29). Jesus' offering for our sins makes us free from the punishment of sin. Because of Jesus, God forgives us. Our guilt is gone when we accept Jesus' offering for us and confess our sins (1 John 1:9). Jesus is the Lamb who died for us. He is also the Priest, or Holy Leader, who lives to save us.

Hebrews 7:25 explains: "So Christ [Jesus] can save those [people] who come to God through [because of their faith in] him. Christ can do this forever, because he always lives and is ready to help people when they come before God" (ERV). Jesus removes our guilt and saves us from sin (Romans 8:1–4; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus works in heaven's temple for us. He is our Helper. He breaks sin's control over our lives. We no longer are slaves to sin. Jesus makes us free: free from sin's penalty and control. When we hold onto Jesus, He will save us.



The work that the priests or spiritual leaders did in the Holy Tent on earth helped God's people understand the work that Jesus did in heaven to save us from sin.

IN THE MOST HOLY PLACE (Leviticus 16:21, 29–34)

Read Leviticus 16:21, 29–34; Leviticus 23:26–32; and Hebrews 9:23–28. Why was the Day of Atonement important to Israel during Old Testament times? The Day of Atonement was the Day When God Removes All Sin. This day is also named the Day of Judgment.



In 1844, Jesus left the Holy Room and went into the Most Holy Room in God's temple to finish His work for us.

Israel's priests, or holy leaders, worked for God every day of the year. But on the Day When God Removes All Sin, the priests did very special work in the Holy Tent or Tent of Meeting. Leviticus 16 and 23 tell us about this special work. On the Day When God Removes All Sin, no one did any work. They ate no food. The High Priest, or Top Spiritual Leader, went into the Most Holy Room in the Tent of Meeting. There, he met with God for the people. While the High Priest met with God, the people emptied their hearts of pride. They came to God and confessed their sins.

What if someone refused to empty his heart of all pride and ate food on that day? Anyone who ate food on that day or had any pride in his heart would "be separated" from his people (Leviticus 23:29, ERV; also read verse 27). He would no longer be part of God's chosen people. On the Day When God Removes All Sin, the high priest took the blood from the Lord's goat into the Holy Tent. First, the high priest sprinkled the goat's blood on the mercy seat. The mercy seat was the special piece of furniture in the Most Holy Room of the Tent of Meeting. The mercy seat rested on top of the Ark of God's Promise. Inside the ark was God's law. God came and stood in a cloud of perfume above the mercy seat. There, God met with the high priest. The cloud of perfume hid God from the priest so that God's shining beauty didn't kill the priest.

The high priest also put blood on the horns of the gold altar and on the brass altar. When the priest finished this work, he put his hands on the living goat and confessed Israel's sins. Then a man led the goat into the desert where it was separated from the camp of Israel forever (Leviticus 16:20–22). The priest took the goat's blood into the Holy Tent to show that God recorded His people's sins (Jeremiah 17:1) and removed all their sin Himself. The goat was led far away into the desert to show that God had a clean Holy Tent and a clean people. These symbols show us the work Jesus has done for us since 1844. At that time, Jesus left the Holy Room and went into the Most Holy Room in God's temple to finish His work for us.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR GOD TO JUDGE
(Daniel 7:9, 10)

Compare Daniel 7:9, 10 with Revelation 14:6, 7. What same thing do these verses talk about?

God's work as Judge is important in the Bible. "God knows everything people do, even [including] the things done in secret. He knows all the good and all the bad. He will judge everything people do" (Ecclesiastes 12:14, ICB). Jesus talked about a future time when "people will have to explain about every careless thing they have said. This [explanation] will happen on the Judgment Day [the time when God will judge all people]" (Matthew 12:36, ICB). Paul adds, God "will bring into the light the things that are hidden in men's hearts. He will show why men have done these things" (1 Corinthians 4:5, NLV). In John's dream about the end times, an angel announces, " 'The time has come for God to judge all people' " (Revelation 14:7, ERV).

Read what the angel told John in Revelation 22:10–12. When Jesus comes back, what will happen to all humans?

When Jesus comes back, He will give out His final rewards. First, Jesus must judge us. His work as judge will show who will get a reward or punishment at His coming. When Jesus comes back, we get no second chances. Before He comes, everyone will get a fair chance and enough information to make a final decision for or against Jesus.

Read Matthew 25:1–13. What does Jesus say to the two groups in these verses? Why is Jesus' answer to the first group so different from His answer to the second group?

"God will examine the life record of every person who has lived and followed Jesus. After God decides the case of every person, He will finish His work as Judge. Then no one else can be saved after that. Jesus said, 'The girls who were ready went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast. Then the door was closed and locked.' [Matthew 25:10, ERV]. In this one short verse, Jesus tells us about the time when His work to save us will be finished."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 428, adapted.

We do not need to fear God's work as Judge. Jesus loves and forgives us. He removes our guilt. He makes us holy. Jesus helps us win the fight against sin.



**Jesus' work as judge
will show who will get
a reward or punishment
at His coming.**

THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT THE MOST HOLY PLACE (Hebrews 4:14–16)



We can meet with God only if Jesus pardons us and removes our sins with His blood.

Read Hebrews 4:14–16 and Hebrews 10:19–22. In these verses, what invitation and hope does God give to each one of us?

In these verses, Paul tells us to “hold on to the things we believe” (Hebrews 4:14, WE). He adds, “Let us go with complete [filled with] trust to the throne of God” (Hebrews 4:16, NLV). Paul also says, “Let us come near to God with a true [clean and honest] heart full of faith” (Hebrews 10:22, NLV). Jesus gives us everything we need. Jesus made a “new and living way” for us to come to God in His temple in heaven (Hebrews 10:20, NLV).

What do we see when we look inside the walls around the temple? We see the brass altar, with its horns. We see blood on the horns. In the Holy Room, we see blood on the gold horns of the altar where sweet-smelling perfume is burned. We see sprinkled blood on the curtain that is in front of the mercy seat. We see blood everywhere.

What does the blood teach us? The blood is a word picture for Jesus’ blood. We see Jesus’ blood at every step we take along the way to God. Jesus’ blood gives us hope. We can meet with God only if Jesus pardons us and removes our sins with His blood. God’s mercy never fails. His fair ways also never fail. Because God is fair, He can’t accept Jesus’ death for our sin until Jesus forgives our sins and removes them.

Read about the ark in Revelation 11:19. Why is this dream that John has about the ark of God’s Promise so important? How are the law and the Good News connected?

In his dream, John sees the Ark of God’s Promise in the Most Holy Room of God’s Temple in heaven. In the ark is God’s law. Hebrews 8:10 says, “In the future I will make this agreement with the people of Israel, says the Lord. I will put my teachings in their minds. And I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people” (Hebrews 8:10, ICB). Because of our faith in Jesus, we can enter God’s temple. Inside, Jesus forgives our past sins. He also gives us strength to obey God’s law. Anyone can come to Jesus. He can “save them completely [fully] and for all time” (Hebrews 7:25, NIV).

JESUS, OUR LAWYER (Hebrews 10:9–14)

Read Hebrews 10:9–14. What do these verses teach us about the priest’s work in the Tent of Meeting on earth? As we saw, a priest was a Jewish spiritual leader. What do these verses teach us about Jesus’ work as our High Priest or Top Spiritual Leader in the temple in heaven? How is the work of the priest different from Jesus’ work in heaven?

Jesus died one time for everyone. His death on the cross was the perfect offering for sin. Now Jesus works as our High Priest in heaven’s temple. There, He works to make us holy. Jesus entered the Most Holy Room in 1844. Now Jesus stands as our Lawyer in front of God, our Judge (1 John 2:1). Jesus “gave Himself once [only one time] to take away the sins of many [people]. When He comes the second time, He will not need to give Himself again for sin. He will save all those [people] who are waiting for Him” (Hebrews 9:28, NLV). Jesus’ death on the cross and His work for us in heaven solve the sin problem. When He comes a second time, He will give a reward to everyone who is “looking forward to his coming” (2 Timothy 4:8, ERV).

Why does Jesus invite us to follow Him? What do we discover when we do? Read Hebrews 6:19, 20 for the answers.

“Jesus goes to God to get help for us. This work is a necessary part of God’s plan to save us. We need this work as much as we need Jesus’ death on the cross. When Jesus died, He started the work that He would finish when He went to heaven. We must enter with faith into the Most Holy Room. ‘Jesus has already entered there and opened the way for us.’ Hebrews 6:20 [ERV]. There, we will understand more about what happened for us at Calvary. We will understand better God’s plan to save us with His blood. Saving us was expensive. God paid a very high price: His son had to die because we broke His law. Jesus opened the way to the Father’s throne. Jesus goes to God for us to ask Him for the things that we need. We must come to Jesus and ask for these things in faith.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 489, adapted.

God’s plan to save sinners is a complete plan. God’s plan solves both the worldwide war between good and evil and saves us from sin and Satan. When we come to Jesus with faith, He makes us clean and holy.



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“Jesus defends us with His own perfect life, and not with anything good we have done.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Notice what Ellen G. White says about Jesus’ work for us during the time when God judges us: “Jesus does not excuse our sins. He shows His Father that we are sorry for our sins. Jesus also shows God our faith. Jesus asks God to forgive us. Jesus lifts His scarred hands for the Father and the holy angels to see. Then Jesus says, ‘I know the names of each one of my children. I got these scars because of my love for them.’ ‘The sacrifice [offering] God wants is a willing spirit. God, you will not reject a heart that is broken and sorry for its sin.’ Psalm 51:17 [ICB]. Satan accuses God’s people of guilt. Jesus announces to Satan: ‘The LORD says that you are wrong, and he will continue to correct you! The LORD has chosen Jerusalem to be his special city.’ [Zechariah 3:2, ERV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 484, adapted.

“In a dream, Zechariah sees God’s people standing in front of the Lord. The people wear dirty rags. [The dirty rags are a word picture for our own good behavior.] The dirty rags should cause us to have no pride in our hearts. We should search our hearts very carefully. We make our hearts clean when we obey Bible truth. This work will cause us to empty our hearts of all pride. The more we look at Jesus and His perfect life, the more we will want to be the same as He is in our hearts. We will see less and less beauty in our own hearts. We must see that we are sinners. At the same time, we must depend only on Jesus to save us and make us holy. We can’t defend ourselves against Satan or the things he accuses us of doing wrong. Only Jesus can defend us. Jesus can stop Satan from blaming us. Jesus defends us with His own perfect life, and not with anything good we have done.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, pages 472, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 Think about Jesus lifting His scarred hands for us in front of the Father. How does this picture make you feel? Why is Jesus our only hope during the time when God judges all people?
- 2 Ellen G. White wrote: “Only Jesus can defend us. Jesus can stop Satan from blaming us. Jesus defends us with His own perfect life, and not with anything good we have done.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, pages 471, 472, adapted. How do these words give you hope?

RUNNING FROM CHURCH, PART 1

Church was the last place that Aneliya wanted to go. Aneliya grew up in a non-Christian religion. So, Aneliya was surprised when her husband and their 20-year-old son, Rosen, accepted a Bible from a stranger on the street.

The stranger told them, “Take this Bible and come to our meeting this evening at my church. We’re serving food, too.”

Aneliya didn’t want to accept the invitation to go to church. She asked her husband and son, “What are we going to do there? I don’t want to go. I belong to another religion.”

But Rosen wanted to go to church. Rosen said to his mother, “Come. We’ll eat and hear a few things.”

All five members of the family went to the meeting in the European city where they lived. Aneliya and her family came to this city for safety after having to leave their country. At the church, church members greeted Aneliya and her family. Then they drank tea and ate cake together. During the church program, Aneliya heard people talking about Jesus, but she had a hard time understanding what they meant.

Aneliya wondered, “What are they talking about?” This was the first time she heard people talk about the Bible.

Rosen loved the meeting. Afterward, he started Bible studies with Paul, the man who gave him the Bible on the street.

Not long after, Rosen asked his mother to come to church for his baptism. Aneliya said, “What is baptism? I don’t understand what that is. I won’t go.” When Rosen was baptized, his mother wasn’t there.

Then Aneliya and her family were forced to leave the apartment they rented. They had money. But no one would rent an apartment to them. Church members invited the family to stay for a while in the children’s Sabbath School classroom.

Church was the last place Aneliya wanted to go. But she had no choice. She and her family lived in the church for seven months. During that time, Paul visited the family and read to them from the Bible. Aneliya wondered why Paul read the Bible. She was convinced that only her religion’s holy writings were truth. Aneliya wondered, “How will this Bible help me get an apartment? Why can’t we find one?”

On Sabbaths, Paul invited the family to come to church. Aneliya and her family were staying in the church at this time. As soon as Aneliya saw the meetings start, she ran out the door of the church. But the sermons touched the heart of her 22-year-old son, Sergei. Sergei got baptized.

After the family found a home, both of Aneliya’s sons asked their mother to accept Jesus.

The story finishes next week.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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