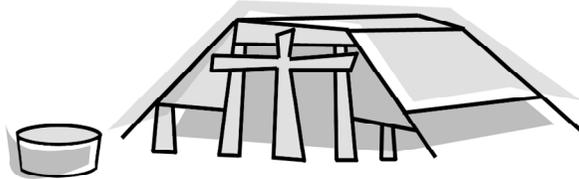


Jesus and the Sanctuary



SABBATH Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: *Exod. 24:5-8, 25:8, 29:12, 30:10, Lev. 10:18, Isaiah 53.*

Memory Text: “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (*Isaiah 53:11*).

In the context of war and devastation, the poet W. H. Auden wrote that humans were like children “lost in a haunted wood,” afraid of the night, and who “have never been happy or good.”

This depressing verse captures the human situation. Fortunately, God wants to lead us out of this moral and physical morass. Ellen White has said that the moment there was sin there was a Savior. Through the ages the Savior has revealed Himself and salvation, hope, and eternal life for lost and fearful beings who are neither very happy nor very good.

For centuries, the main way that He has revealed Himself and His thoughts was through the earthly-sanctuary service, which provided a model for the plan of salvation.

This week we look at that service and what the Lord was telling His people through it. This way, we can claim the hope that God graciously offers to us—we who, to some degree, are reflected in Auden's verse.

The Week at a Glance: What was the meaning of those sacrifices? What was the purpose of the Old Testament sanctuary? How was Christ prefigured in the sacrificial rituals? Why was blood so central to the whole process?

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

The Pre-Sanctuary Sacrifices

Last week’s lesson sketched some of the earliest examples of sacrifice mentioned in the Old Testament. Interestingly enough (and perhaps you noticed), no real explanation of the origin or purpose of the sacrifices is given in the texts. The Bible just tells about them being offered.

No matter the different circumstances surrounding each account, the Cain and Abel story (*Gen. 4:4*), the Flood story (*Genesis 6–8*), and the account of Abraham and Isaac (*Gen. 22:13*), all have one crucial thing in common: What is it, and why is it so important?

In all these presanctuary accounts, the worship centered on sacrifice, on blood, on the death of an *innocent* animal. Though the texts themselves say little about the purpose of the sacrifices, the death of the animal was still central. There was something about these deaths that made the act itself acceptable to God (contrast the Lord’s reaction to Cain’s offering with His response to Abel’s). This is seen also in Noah’s sacrifice right after exiting the ark.

Read Genesis 8:21, 22. Notice the link between the sacrifices Noah offered and the Lord’s intent never to “curse the ground any more for man’s sake” (*see also Gen. 9:8-17*). What’s implied in these texts, if not explicitly stated? How do we see the plan of salvation foreshadowed here?

Even here, long before the Cross, we are given a glimpse of the great plan of salvation, of God willing to forgive us, but only because of a sacrifice offered in our stead. God accepted—in behalf of the world—the sacrifice that Noah offered, even though “the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.”

The Bible records Noah’s first act after getting off the ark as one of building an altar and offering sacrifices to the Lord. What should that tell us about the importance of keeping the Lord first in our lives, not just in words but in concrete acts of worship, thanksgiving, and praise?

Key Text: *Hebrews 9:28.*

Teachers Aims:

1. To remind the class that the moment there was sin there was a Savior.
2. To present the sanctuary service as a parable of salvation history.
3. To invite the class members to accept atonement through the blood.

Lesson Outline:

I. God Comes in Search of His Lost Children (*1 Pet. 2:24*).

- A. Our God wants to lead us out of sin and into salvation.
- B. Even before the earthly sanctuary was built, sacrifices were offered as an example of the price of, and antidote for, the sin problem.
- C. God is willing to forgive us through the sacrifice of Christ offered in our stead.

II. The Earthly Sanctuary Illustrates Hope in Action (*Exod. 25:8*).

- A. The sanctuary functioned as the meeting place between God and His people.
- B. The death of each sacrifice pointed to the death of Jesus.
- C. God was able to model His will for His people through the sanctuary services.

III. The Blood Cleanses and Saves (*Lev. 17:11*).

- A. The offering of innocent blood was central to the sanctuary paradigm of salvation.
- B. As sinners, we should be destroyed, but God provides a way of escape.
- C. Jesus became our Sin Bearer, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Summary: Even before the sanctuary services were instituted, the sacrifice of an innocent victim encapsulated the gospel story. Later, the sanctuary services modeled God's desire to meet with, rescue, and restore His people to face-to-face communion with Him. In every bleeding sacrifice was typified "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (*John 1:29*). "Liberty is given to all to go directly to God through a personal Saviour."—Ellen G. White, *God's Amazing Grace*, p. 155.

COMMENTARY

Jesus and the Sanctuary.

Introduction. God designed ancient Israel's sanctuary services, with its system of types and ordinances, to illuminate the hearts of His people with the gospel and keep alive their faith in the coming Messiah. Given for the same purpose, the prophecies delineated with photographic accuracy the leading events in the incarnate life

The Earthly Sanctuary

From the start, with the fall of Adam and Eve, we can see how one result of sin is separation between humanity and God. God is holy, humanity is unholy, and the question remains, How can a holy God come close to an unholy race? The earthly-sanctuary service helps provide an answer.

Read Exodus 25:8. Why does God ask the Hebrews to make a sanctuary?

The sanctuary functions as a meeting place between God and His people. The name of the sanctuary itself, the “tent of meeting” (often translated as “tent of the congregation”), carries this idea: The sanctuary was a place for the Lord, a holy God, to meet with sinful, fallen humanity. It was through the medium of the sanctuary that the Lord, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, interacted with His covenant people on a daily basis. Here is the place in which He issued judgments (*Exodus 16*), forgave sin (*Leviticus 4*), guided their journeying (*Num. 9:15-21*), cleansed them from impurity (*Lev. 14:31*), and communed with them (*Exod. 25:22*). It was the center of their worship, the center of divine revelation, and the place where the people came to in order to enjoy the benefits of this covenant relationship with God.

Was the sanctuary the only place in which God had interacted with His people in a special way? How do Exodus 12 and Exodus 20 help answer that question?

Of course, the Lord was not limited to interacting with His people via the sanctuary; nevertheless, that was the chosen means through which He tabernacled and communicated and interacted with them. Why He did it this specific way, Scripture doesn’t say: The crucial thing is that, through this medium, He, a holy God, was able to manifest Himself to the people in order that they would be able to meet and commune with Him in a manner that allowed them to understand His will for their lives.

Review the things that God did for His people by dwelling with them in the sanctuary. In what ways does Jesus, by having dwelt with us in the flesh (*John 1:14*), do the same things for us now?

of the Messiah from His birth to His sacrifice on the cross and His subsequent glory.

I. The Pre-Sanctuary Services.

Scripture characterizes the gospel as “everlasting” (*Rev. 14:6*). Long before Calvary, Christ, as the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (*Rev. 13:8*) and the true Light that lightens everyone who comes into the world (*see John 1:9*), was mediating insight into His atonement, through the sacrifices He commanded to be given in worshiping God (*see Gen. 8:20, 15:8-17, John 3:14-16*).

II. The Earthly Sanctuary.

Every aspect of the sanctuary services presented the gospel in a tapestry of living metaphor. “In His temple, every whit of it uttereth, Glory” (*Ps. 29:9, KJV, margin*). To illustrate how sin was pardoned and removed from the life and thus restore the broken connection between sinners and God—this was the central aim of the sanctuary services (*see Exod. 25:8, Lev. 26:11-13*).

God gave directions for the sanctuary to be built after a distinct pattern He revealed to Moses (*see Exod. 25:9, 21, 22, 40; Heb. 8:1-5*). The lessons taught through the sanctuary were so vital to human development and destiny that nothing could be left to chance or the truth-beclouding effects of human imagination. It is only true worship that points the way back to God, not a hybrid of human and divine ideas. All the lessons taught in the sanctuary services on earth mirrored on a smaller scale the sanctuary in heaven, which the Lord pitched and not people.

III. The Blood and the Sanctuary.

To symbolize the centrality of the merits of the blood, God directed Moses to sprinkle blood on the altar of sacrifice, on the book of the covenant, and on the people themselves (*Exod. 24:3-8*). The tabernacle and priests were also consecrated to their functions with blood (*Lev. 8:1-30*). It was the *application* of blood that made atonement for the soul, and without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins (*see Lev. 17:11, Heb. 9:22*). This profusion of blood is fully explained in the New Testament as symbolizing the outflow of Christ’s sacrifice for our salvation (*see Matt. 26:28; 27:4, 6, 8, 24, 25; Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Col. 1:14, 20; Heb. 9:12, 14; 1 Pet. 1:2, 19; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14*).

IV. The Sanctuary and Sin.

Notice that the *repentant* sinner brought a lamb or kid for a sin offering, but always under conviction rather than duress. By this action, the supplicant signified his faith in the atoning virtue of the coming Messiah’s sacrifice and his personal appropriation of the benefit. Before taking the life of the lamb, he confessed his sins

Blood and the Sanctuary

Yesterday's study shows how the sanctuary was the means through which a holy God could dwell among and interact with sinners. Yet, it wasn't as though the building itself provided some kind of special filter that enabled the people to approach, worship, and have fellowship with the Lord. Something else was involved, something that a building itself could never provide.

Read Leviticus 17:11. What is the crucial element here, and why is it so important in allowing sinful humanity to approach a holy God?

Look up Exodus 24:5-8, 29:12, 30:10, Leviticus 4:17, and 10:18. What's the one point all have in common?

Even the most cursory reading of the Old Testament—sanctuary ritual reveals the centrality of blood to the entire ritual. Innocent animals—lamb, bulls, goats—were slain in various services, everything from first ratifying the covenant between the people and God (*Exod. 24:5-8*) to making atonement for a priest who sins (*Lev. 4:3-7*) to purification rituals (*Lev. 15:25-30*), even to the communal offering on the Day of Atonement (*Leviticus 16*). What all this shows is how pivotal the sacrifices and blood were to the function of the earthly sanctuary. Whatever spiritual lessons were to be taught through the tabernacle service, the sacrifice of these animals, the spilling of their blood, was central to the whole process.

This shouldn't be surprising. As sinners, we should be destroyed, because sin leads to death. Yet God, in His grace, has provided a way of escape: the innocent dying for the guilty (*Rom. 5:8*). Jesus Himself would lose His life; that is, spill His blood, in order that we, as sinners, could stand forgiven (*Gal. 1:4, 1 Pet. 1:19*). Because blood represented life, spilled blood represented death, and the death of each sacrifice pointed to the death of Jesus, the means by which sinful humanity could be restored, in full, with the Creator.

The sacrifice of innocent animals appears cruel, even crude. And maybe it's supposed to appear that way. What should this tell us about how bad sin is, that it takes something so hard and harsh in order to deal with it?

over the spotless, innocent creature. It was not the penitent sinner but the priest who made atonement for the sins confessed. Both the sacrifice and the priest stood for the Messiah (*Heb. 7:24-28, 8:4-8, 9:20-28; Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 340–344).

V. The Supreme Sin Offering.

Isaiah 53 blazes as a star of the first magnitude in Hebrew prophecy to exalt the Messiah's mission and triumphant self-sacrifice. For the sake of those who do accept the Messiah's salvation and appreciate the object of His unparalleled sufferings, He deems it worthwhile to endure the anguish of the cross (*see Isa. 53:11, 1 Thess. 2:19, Heb. 12:2*). While Isaiah 53 clearly envisages the Messiah's future trials, the prophecy conveys not the least hint of self-pity or resentment on God's part. What a lesson for those who must endure sacrifice and injustice for Christ's sake! (*See 1 Pet. 2:21-24, Phil. 1:29, 2 Tim. 1:12, 2:9-12.*)

Consider how Isaiah's steadily developed theme of the expiatory

Inductive Bible Study

Text for Discovery: *Isaiah 53.*

- ① When your car breaks down, have you ever wished you knew ahead of time it would happen? If a tow truck were already on the way to meet you when help was most needed, you definitely would be spared a lot of frustration. Ellen G. White tells us "as soon as there was sin, there was a Saviour."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 210. Discuss how this assurance might make your life more secure. Share a time when God met your need in a very personal and timely way.
- ② In the narratives about Cain and Abel, the account of the Flood, and the history of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah, we find hints of a sacrificial system. Worship centers around the death of an innocent animal. We live in an age in which the sacrifices of the earthly-sanctuary system met their fulfillment in the Cross. Discuss the elements of the worship services at your church. How could the worship service at your church better reflect an understanding of the plan of salvation, illuminated by the Cross?
- ③ When God met with the Israelites at the sanctuary, He interacted with them on many levels. It was a daily time of meeting with many purposes. He issued judgments, guided their journeys, cleansed them from sin, and communed with His covenant people. How has your daily devotional time allowed God to reveal Himself to you?

The Sanctuary and Sin

Through the sacrificial ritual, the sanctuary provided a means through which God's covenant people could enter into His divine presence. Yet, the questions are: What were those sacrifices all about that allowed people this access to God? and How is all this a prefiguring of what Christ has done for us?

Read the following texts: **Leviticus 5:1, 17; 17:16; 19:17; 20:17, 20.** **From the immediate context of these texts, what do you think the phrase about people or the individual “bearing . . . iniquity” means?**

The basic idea presented here is that people are responsible for their own sin and iniquity. Excuses aren't allowed. God called His people into a covenant relationship with Him; He has allowed them to participate in His holiness (*Exod. 19:6, Lev. 19:2, 20:7*), and they could do this by living in faith and obedience to Him (*Lev. 20:8*). Sin and impurity, violations of the covenant law, could disrupt this covenant relationship. Unless sin were dealt with, His people would be punished, for they would be left to bear their own iniquity. The Lord, however, through His grace, offered them a way of being forgiven iniquity and a way to be cleansed from it. This provision was at the heart of the sacrificial system that centered on the sanctuary.

In order to be forgiven, those who were bearing their own sin brought a sacrifice to the Lord (*Lev. 5:5, 6*). The exact type of animal or ritual depended upon numerous factors, but the basic idea was the same: The sin and iniquity that a person was bearing were transferred to the innocent animal, and the animal itself suffered the death that, otherwise, would have been the sinner's. This is part of the process that's called atonement.

What is *atonement* equated with in these texts? *Lev. 4:20, 6:7, 19:22, Num. 15:25*. How do the following texts help us understand what we have been offered through Jesus? *Pss. 130:3, 4; Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14*. How have you experienced for yourself the reality of this wonderful promise?

and substitutionary nature of Christ's sacrifice for humanity undergirds the gospel lessons of chapter 53 (see *Isa. 26:12, 13; 27:2-6; 40:1-11; 45:22-25; 54:11-17; 61:1-3, 10, 11; 63:7-9; 64:4-8*).

The Father declared, "By His knowledge shall My righteous

Witnessing

On September 11, 2001, following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., people in each city stood in line for hours in order to give blood. In the early aftermath of the attacks, hope still remained that hundreds, if not thousands, of innocent people would be rescued and, in the process, would require life-saving units of blood in order to survive. In cities all around the country, people volunteered blood in an outpouring of compassion. Giving blood symbolized the desire to save life. Though it became painfully clear, as the days wore on, there would be few survivors to accept their gifts of blood, those who so generously gave the gift of life had no regrets they made the offer.

As moving as this moment was, it does not compare to Christ's offer of the gift of life. The Perfect One, God's Holy Son, willingly offered His own precious blood in order to redeem sinful human beings. How is it possible that we sometimes ignore or minimize this incredible expression of supreme love? How is it possible we sometimes fail to share the full impact of this gift with others? What does it tell us about the vast magnitude of the Father's love for His lost children that He would allow such an offering to be made by His own Son?

A loving parent is quick to offer his or her own life in order to preserve the life of a child. What loving parents would not willingly expose themselves to physical danger in an effort to shield a child? The parent who acts as a shield to his or her child, in a sense, substitutes himself or herself in the child's place.

Jesus has offered Himself as our Substitute; He has paid the penalty of sin for us. All He needs from us is our acceptance. Our hearts should sing with this knowledge; when it does, others with whom we come in contact cannot help asking us what it is that lights us from within. If we *truly* believe and if we sincerely accept Christ's gift of salvation, we will not be able to keep it secret. Our witnessing to others will be as natural as breathing in and breathing out.

Invite a co-worker, neighbor, or friend to join you in church this week. Explain that you want him or her to share in the blessings that are a direct result of Christ's substitution for our sins. Help this person to understand how this is the most precious gift of life any person ever will be offered.

The Supreme Sin Offering

In light of yesterday’s study, where we looked at the idea of sin and iniquity transferred to the innocent animal as a means of forgiving the sinner, what are the following texts telling us about Jesus? *Isa. 53:11, Heb. 9:28, 1 Pet. 2:2.*

The message is clear: Jesus became our Sin Bearer, taking upon Himself our sins and being punished for them, the only means of salvation and forgiveness for fallen humanity. This is, in many ways, the great truth foreshadowed in the earthly-sanctuary service.

Read Isaiah 53. How does this chapter, in its own unique way, teach us the idea of Christ’s substitutionary death in our stead?

Isaiah 53, linked with the last three verses of the fifty-second chapter, encapsulates the gospel. Isaiah’s beautiful presentation of the Savior and of His redeeming work is set against the backdrop of humankind’s ingratitude. Woven through these verses is a very clear and unmistakable presentation of the substitutionary nature of Christ’s sacrifice, as prefigured in the earthly-sanctuary service: “This chapter [Isaiah 53] should be studied. It presents Christ as the Lamb of God. Those who are lifted up with pride, whose souls are filled with vanity, should look upon this picture of their Redeemer, and humble themselves in the dust. The entire chapter should be committed to memory. Its influence will subdue and humble the soul defiled by sin and uplifted by self-exaltation.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1147.

Read again Isaiah 53 and write down every place it talks about humanity. What kind of picture does it present? How accurate of a portrayal is it? In what ways do you see yourself reflected in there? At the same time, what hope is offered there for fallen beings such as ourselves?

servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities” and make “intercession for the transgressors” (*Isa. 53:11, 12*). Think what sort of “knowledge” is required to justify humans who, through sin, are in a naturally unjustified state. What must God be like to use His infinite knowledge for our salvation at such a high cost to Himself! For further insight, read Romans 4, 5.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: If you could erase one event, what would it be? (This question is deliberately vague. Let your class members define *erase* and *event*.)

Verses for Group Focus: *Isaiah 53:4-12*.

Thought Questions:

- ① *Isaiah 53:10, 11 (NIV)* speaks of the life of the “servant” as a “guilt offering.” *Leviticus 5:14–6:7* describes this offering. What relationship is there between the offering described in *Leviticus* and the allusion to it in *Isaiah*?
- ② List the words in *Isaiah 53:4-12* that describe the human condition. How does God deal with the worst of human behavior and attitudes?
- ③ How does the New Testament interpret *Isaiah 53*? *Matt. 27:38, 57-60; John 1:29; Acts 8:32-34; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24*.
- ④ *Isaiah 53:11* says the Suffering Servant will “justify many” (*NIV*). How does this justification occur? *Rom. 10:9, 2 Cor. 5:21, Eph. 4:22-24*.

Application Questions:

- ① *Isaiah* identifies himself with those whose sins are placed on the Servant. He uses the inclusive pronouns *we* and *our*. How can we identify with the Suffering Servant of *Isaiah 53*? What does this tell us about what Jesus has done for us?
- ② *Isaiah 53:6* says we are all like sheep who have gone astray. In what ways do people today, whether they are Christians or not, wander away from the divine Shepherd? How can we find our way back to Him?
- ③ In verses 7-12, we read how Jesus suffered for our sakes and bore our sins so we could be made acceptable to God. In practical terms, how should we respond to such love?

Further Study: See also Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 1147, 1148; Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 78, 458; *Evangelism*, p. 612; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 358, 359; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 690–692.

“To many it has been a mystery why so many sacrificial offerings were required in the old dispensation, why so many bleeding victims were led to the altar. But the great truth that was kept before men, and imprinted upon mind and heart, was this, ‘Without shedding of blood is no remission’ (Heb. 9:22). In every bleeding sacrifice was typified ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29).

“Christ Himself was the originator of the Jewish system of worship, in which, by types and symbols, were shadowed forth spiritual and heavenly things. . . .

“A lesson was embodied in every sacrifice, impressed in every ceremony, solemnly preached by the priest in his holy office, and inculcated by God Himself—that through the blood of Christ alone is there forgiveness of sins.

“Anciently believers were saved by the same Saviour as now, but it was a God veiled. They saw God’s mercy in figures. . . . Christ’s sacrifice is the glorious fulfillment of the whole Jewish economy. . . . All can now approach God through the merits of Christ. . . . They need not depend on priest or ceremonial sacrifice. Liberty is given to all to go directly to God through a personal Saviour.

“The whole mind, the whole soul, the whole heart, and the whole strength are purchased by the blood of the Son of God.”—Ellen G. White, *God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 155.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ In what essential ways did the services of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and afterward, in the temple at Jerusalem, prophetically symbolize the gospel?
- ❷ As Christians, we see the death of Christ foreshadowed in the earthly-sanctuary service. Yet, the earthly service was not limited merely to the death of the animal. The priests also ministered in behalf of the people in the earthly sanctuary after the sacrifice had already been offered. Discuss the implications of that important fact in light of our understanding of Christ as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.