

# “Heaven” on Earth



## SABBATH—OCTOBER 5

**READ FOR THIS WEEK’S LESSON:** Genesis 1:31–2:3; Exodus 39:32, 43; Exodus 25:9; Hebrews 8:5; John 2:19–21; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Revelation 21:1–22.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “They serve at a sacred [holy] tent. But it is only a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. That’s [that is] why God warned Moses when he was about to build the holy tent. God said, ‘Be sure to make everything just like the pattern I showed you on the mountain’ ” (Hebrews 8:5, NIV).

**THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY<sup>1</sup> IS THE ORIGINAL SANCTUARY.** But through the sanctuary on earth, the Lord has shown us truths about the heavenly sanctuary in different ways.

God created the Garden of Eden as a symbol of the sanctuary. In turn, the earthly sanctuary,<sup>2</sup> and later Solomon’s and Herod’s temples, represented the heavenly sanctuary in its work in saving humans.

But Jesus, as Savior of all people, was the “Living Temple.” And, finally, the heavenly temple will come down to the new earth.

As we will see, God has taught lessons from the heavenly sanctuary to show certain truths. This week we will study some of those lessons.

1. heavenly sanctuary—the place in heaven where Jesus works as our High Priest before the throne of God.

2. earthly sanctuary—the home of God on earth in early Bible times. Here the high priest offered prayers and the blood of animals to God for the sins of the people of Israel.

**SUNDAY—OCTOBER 6****THE FIRST EARTHLY  
"SANCTUARY" (Genesis 1:31–2:3)**

Bible students have noted that the Garden of Eden teaches many of the same lessons that are taught by the later sanctuaries in Israel. This shows that Eden was the first "temple" to be used as a symbol on earth. Some similar teachings from Eden and the sanctuary include:

1. The end of the Creation story and the report about the building of the wilderness tabernacle have the same three parts. They are: (1) approval (acceptance), (2) completion, and (3) blessing. They show the same key words (compare<sup>3</sup> "all," "finish," and "bless" in Genesis 1:31–2:3 with Exodus 39:32, 43 and Exodus 40:33).

2. Just as God was "walking in the Garden" (Genesis 3:8, NASB), so He was with His people in the sanctuary (2 Samuel 7:6, 7).

3. Adam was to "tend [care for]" and "keep" the Garden (Genesis 2:15, NKJV). The same two verbs are used for the service of the Levites in the tabernacle (Numbers 3:7, 8).

4. Garden-like symbols are used throughout the sanctuary (Exodus 25:31–36; 1 Kings 6:18).

5. Cherubim (angels) guarded the Garden (Genesis 3:24). Two cherubim were placed as guards in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 25:18–22).

6. Creation took six days, each day

beginning with "God said," and at the end of the six days is the Sabbath. Similarly, there are six "the LORD spoke to Moses" sections. These sections deal with the tabernacle (Exodus 25:1; Exodus 30:11, 17, 22, 34; Exodus 31:1) and are followed by a seventh section about the Sabbath (Exodus 31:12–17).

7. The sanctuary was finished on the first day of the first month (Exodus 40:17). This day is the Hebrew New Year's Day, which reminds us of the completion of the world at Creation.

Genesis 2, in which the Garden of Eden is described, did not need to explain these comparisons in great detail. The Jews of long ago understood them. For example, a Jewish writing of the second century B.C. claims that "the garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling [home] of the Lord."

We must remember, too, that the Garden of Eden also is called the "garden of God" (Ezekiel 28:13; Ezekiel 31:9) or the "garden of the LORD" (Isaiah 51:3). It was God's dwelling (home) on earth. It was the place where our first parents could worship and talk with Him. So, the greatest loss of the Fall was not the fact that Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden. The greatest loss was their ability to talk face-to-face with God.

**Think deeply about the word *sanctuary*. What comes to your mind? What things make some-**

3. compare—to show how two or more things are the same or different.

place a "sanctuary" for you now? How does your understanding of these sanctuaries on earth help you to understand better what God's sanctuary in heaven gives us?



The Garden of Eden was the first "temple" on the earth.

## MONDAY—OCTOBER 7

### COPY OF THE PATTERN (Exodus 25:9, 40)

**What is the relationship between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries in Exodus 25:9, 40; Hebrews 8:5; and Hebrews 9:23, 24?**

The Bible clearly teaches that Moses did not invent the tabernacle. Instead he built it with God's instruction that he received on the mountain (Exodus 26:30; Exodus 27:8; and Numbers 8:4). The earthly sanctuary was to be built after the "pattern" (Exodus 25:9, 40). The Hebrew word for "pattern" (*tabnit*) describes the idea of a model or copy. So, we can guess

that Moses saw some kind of small model that looked like the heavenly sanctuary. And this model served as the pattern for the earthly sanctuary.

Therefore, the heavenly temple is the original temple. It is the model for the Israelite sanctuaries. However, we clearly cannot say that the sanctuary in heaven is heaven itself. The heavenly temple is "*in heaven*" (Revelation 11:19; Revelation 14:17; Revelation 15:5; emphasis added). But the two are not the same.

The book of Hebrews explains very clearly that the heavenly sanctuary is real. For example, the sanctuary in heaven is called "the true tabernacle" (Hebrews 8:2, NKJV). It is also called "the greater and more perfect tabernacle" (Hebrews 9:11, NKJV). The earthly sanctuary is just a "copy and shadow of the heavenly" one (Hebrews 8:5, NKJV). But a shadow is always an example of something real. It is really an imperfect and weak example, but the earthly sanctuary is still a symbol of the heavenly sanctuary. In other words, the earthly sanctuary may have its limitations, but it does show that the heavenly sanctuary is real in important ways.

The relationship between the two is called typology.<sup>4</sup> Typology involves a comparison between two historical events. These are called type (original) and antitype (copy). Because of the close relationship between the type (original) and the antitype (copy), we can see in Hebrews that the heavenly model that Moses had

4. typology—a study of people, events, or organizations serving as examples or symbols.

seen is a "type" or "pattern" (Hebrews 8:5). And the earthly sanctuary is an antitype or "copy" (Hebrews 9:24). This truth gives more proof that the heavenly sanctuary came before the earthly sanctuary. As Seventh-day Adventists, we are on solid biblical ground when we argue that the heavenly sanctuary is real.

## TUESDAY—OCTOBER 8

### JESUS AS THE SANCTUARY (John 2:19–21)

**Read John 2:19–21. Why is Jesus' body compared to the temple? Read also John 1:14.**

One of the themes in the Gospel of John is that, with Jesus, the better "temple" has come. Jesus is the Word who "dwelt [lived]" among men, and they saw His "glory [power]" (John 1:14). The Greek word used for "to dwell [live]" (*skenoō*) is the verbal form of the Greek noun for "tabernacle" (*skene*). So, one could translate verse 14 as the Word "tabernacled [lived as a human] among us." The word *glory* should remind us of the glory of God that filled the wilderness tabernacle (Exodus 40:34, 35) as well as Solomon's temple at its opening ceremony (2 Chronicles 7:1–3). So, when Christ came to earth as a human, He fulfilled (completed) God's temple promise to dwell among His people.

As the verses show, Jesus announced Himself as the Temple. This shows the end of the importance of

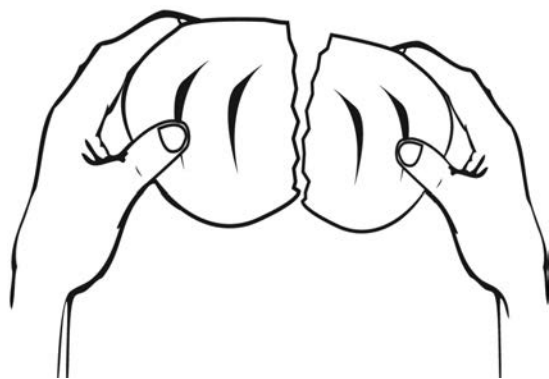


Jesus fulfilled God's temple promise to live among us.

the earthly temple after Jesus' death (John 2:19–21; Matthew 27:51). Jesus also said that He is the Bread of Life (John 6:35) and the Light of the world (John 8:12). In saying this, Jesus might have been pointing beyond the manna on the table to the Bread of the Presence and the lampstand. After all, they are parts of the furniture in the earthly sanctuary. And Jesus is also the sacrificial "Lamb of God" who will bear (suffer) the sin of the world (John 1:29).

"All who did service in connection with the sanctuary were trained to understand the idea of Christ's dying for our sins. This service was designed to create in every heart a love for the law of God as the law of His kingdom. The sacrifice of Christ was to be a lesson to show the love of God, who accepted the sin of man. In other words, the innocent was being made sin for us."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 233.

Because of our sinful natures, it is so easy to think that God is angry with us. How does the example of God's love help each of us to understand that God loves us as weak sinners? In what ways should this understanding encourage us to gain victory over self?



The manna points to Jesus as the Bread of Life.

### WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 9

#### THE CHURCH AS THE SANCTUARY (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17)

Christ went to heaven to begin His work as High Priest in the sanctuary there. Afterward, the temple on earth no longer had any real meaning in the plan of salvation (read Matthew 27:50, 51). But God still desires to live among His people on earth. This is now possible through the Holy Spirit. The apostles (teachers and leaders) use this temple symbol to teach this truth.

**Read 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 2 Corinthians**

**6:16; and Ephesians 2:19–22. Notice the sanctuary symbol in these verses. What truth does the Bible teach us here?**

Paul speaks to the church as a united (joined as one) group in 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. Paul teaches them the temple themes of ownership (1 Corinthians 3:16) and of holiness (1 Corinthians 3:17). He uses the same principles (important rules) in 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20 for each believer as a person. In other words, as a temple, the believer is also holy territory. This means that the believer is responsible for living in a holy way. Paul uses the temple example to point to pure and holy living. Paul also points to sexual purity as part of holy living (1 Corinthians 6:15–18). So, Paul's last example of the church as a holy sanctuary fits into this pattern. There is no similarity between believers and unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1). This is because the church is in a covenant (having to do with an agreement) relationship with God. So, the church belongs to God (2 Corinthians 6:18).

At the same time, the church is not only God's temple. The church is also a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9). No doubt we as members have important responsibilities to follow. So, it is very important that we surrender our lives in faith, and obey the Lord who has given us so much and who also asks much of us in return.

**Of course, we are saved by Christ's righteousness (holy life),**



which covers us completely. But what does God ask us in return for Christ's grace?<sup>5</sup> And how can we best do what He asks of us?



As a temple, the believer is holy territory.

## THURSDAY—OCTOBER 10

### NEW CREATION (Revelation 7:15–17)

**Read Revelation 7:15–17. Where are the saved? And how do these verses picture them?**

These verses describe the saved as kings and priests who serve in God's palace and temple (Revelation 1:6; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:6). The promise that "He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them" (Revelation 7:15, NASB) suggests that God was in the wilderness sanctuary, the same place in which He lived among Israel as its Leader. This means that on the new earth, the sanctuary once more becomes the perfect place of rela-

tionship where God and His saved people meet. After all, it guarantees shelter, protection, and a full life in the presence of God and His Christ. And Christ, who once tabernacled (lived) among men (John 1:14), now spreads the tabernacle (protecting watchcare) over His saints so that they may "tabernacle" (live safely) in His place.

**Read Revelation 21:1–22. How is the New Jerusalem described? What comparisons do you find between the Holy City and the sanctuary in these verses?**

John does not see a temple in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:22). But this does not mean that there is no temple. Rather, the New Jerusalem itself is the temple and the "tabernacle of God" (Revelation 21:3, NKJV). Many similar things about the sanctuary are found in the New Jerusalem. For example, the city is "holy" and comes from heaven (Revelation 21:2, 10). It has the same shape as the Most Holy Place (Revelation 21:16; 1 Kings 6:20). Also, as in the temple area, "nothing unclean" is permitted in the city (Revelation 21:27, NASB). And most important of all, God is present. In the sanctuary of God, we can live with Him in the closest relationship possible (Revelation 21:3, 7). This is the goal of salvation.

**An eternity in a close relationship with God? So, why is it so**

5. grace—God's gift of mercy and forgiveness that He freely gives us to take away our sins.

important for us to walk closely with God now?

### FRIDAY—OCTOBER 11

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, “The School of the Hereafter,” pages 301–309, in *Education*; “The Controversy [War Between Christ and Satan] Ended,” pages 673–678, in *The Great Controversy*.

“A fear of making the future inheritance seem too earthly has led many to think that heaven is too far away for us to look upon it as our home. Christ promised His disciples that He went to prepare homes for them in the Father’s house. Those who accept the teachings of God’s Word will not fail to know about the heavenly home. But ‘it is written, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has known what God has prepared for those who love him.” ’ 1 Corinthians 2:9 [Nlrv]. In other words, human language cannot describe the reward of the saved. It will be known only to those who do see it. No limited human mind can understand the glory of God’s heaven.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pages 674, 675.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why do you think it is important for us to understand that God’s heavenly sanctuary is a real place? At the same time, why must we not make too careful a comparison between the earthly temple and the heavenly temple?
- ② In class, think more about the idea of the church as a “sanctuary.” How do you understand this truth? Also, how can we as a church better show this important teaching?
- ③ “Don’t [do not] you know that you yourselves are God’s temple? God’s Spirit lives in you. If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. God’s temple is holy. And you are that temple” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17, Nlrv). What do these verses teach us? And how can we use their teachings in the way that we live?
- ④ Think more deeply about this idea that we are “priests” now and that we will work as priests after the Second Coming. What is it like for us now? And what will it be like for us after Jesus returns? How does the word *priests* suggest to us that the sanctuary is important to the plan of salvation?