

# What Is Jesus Doing Right Now in Heaven?



## SABBATH—APRIL 28

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Romans 8:3; John 1:29; Revelation 5:12; Hebrews 7:1–28; Hebrews 9:11–15.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “God lifted Jesus high above everything else. He gave Him a name that is greater [above; more important] than any other name. So when the name of Jesus is spoken, everyone in heaven and on earth and under the earth will bow down before Him” (Philippians 2:9, 10, NLV).



Jesus became our High Priest after He finished His work for us on earth.

**THE BOOK OF HEBREWS** talks about Jesus' work in God's sanctuary. God's sanctuary is the place in heaven where God is worshiped and where His throne is. “That is where Jesus has gone” (Hebrews 6:20, NIV). “He has become our Religious Leader forever and has made the way for man to go to God” (Hebrews 6:20, NLV). The Bible shows Jesus as our High Priest. A high priest is someone who works to save his people. Jesus became our High Priest after He finished His work for us on earth (read Hebrews 10:12).

This week, we will learn about Jesus' work as our High Priest. We will look at the work He does to help His people get ready for the last days. Ellen G. White writes: “What if God's people do not understand Jesus' work as their High Priest in the sanctuary? Then they will not be able to have the faith they need at this time. They will not be able to do the work God gave them to do.”—*The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 488; adapted.

What is Jesus doing for us right now in the sanctuary in heaven? And why is knowing about Jesus' work there so important for us to understand in these last days?

**GOD’S BEST GIFT TO HUMANS (Romans 8:3)**

We must study all about Jesus’ death for us. Studying about Jesus’ death will help get us ready for the Second Coming. Often humans look ahead to see how their plans will work out. That makes sense. But it also is good to understand that, as Christians, we need to look “behind” us too. We need to look behind us at the Cross. Jesus’ victory there for us can never be taken away from us. His victory helps us to be sure about our faith as we face what is ahead of us too.

**Read Romans 8:3; 1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 Corinthians 15:33. Why did God send His Son to die?**

God sent Jesus to us to die for our sins. God sent Jesus in a human body to judge against sin. What does that mean? It means that Jesus had to become a human to save us. As God, Jesus could not die. So, He was born in a body the same as ours. The human body can die. So, Jesus became human so that He could win the war over sin for us and die in our place on the cross.

True, Jesus has always been God. He continued to be God, even after He “was born as a man” (Philippians 2:7, ICB). He “gave up His important place and obeyed by dying on a cross” (Philippians 2:8, NLV). How did that part of Jesus that was God *not* die when Jesus’ body died on the cross? The answer to that question is a mystery. Only God knows the answer. We also do not understand how that part of Jesus that was God stayed quiet during the nine months Jesus spent in Mary’s womb. The womb is the part of a woman’s body where her baby grows inside her until it is ready to be born. Here is something else about Jesus that is amazing: Jesus never used His power as God to help Him do His work when He lived as a Human on this earth.

**Read Luke 9:22. What does this verse tell us about why Jesus died for us?**

Jesus was born to die. His death for us comes from a love no other love can match. No one in heaven saw anything to match it. Even now, no one fully understands this love.

**What does the Cross tell us about how our own good works can never be good enough to save us?**



**Often humans look ahead to see how their plans will work out. But as Christians, we also need to look “behind” us at the Cross.**

## THE LAMB OF GOD (John 1:29)

**Read John 1:29; Revelation 5:12; and Revelation 13:8. What word picture do we find in these verses? How does this word picture help us to understand God’s plan to save us?**

John the Baptist named Jesus the Lamb of God. This name points to the Hebrew sanctuary. The Hebrew sanctuary was the place where God was worshiped in Old Testament times. John also used the name “Lamb of God” to point the minds of God’s people to Jesus’ death for their sins. All the lambs and animals ever killed in the Hebrew plan of worship pointed to Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus’ death was a perfect gift. It offered God everything He needed to forgive us for breaking His law and to accept us again as His children. We can read the story about how Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away our sins. This story is found in the Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

But Jesus’ story and His work to save us do not end in the Gospels. Jesus’ story does not end with His death and His coming back to life, either. We can read more about Jesus’ story in the book of Hebrews.

The book of Hebrews talks about the work Jesus does as our High Priest (Hebrews 1:3). A high priest is someone who works to save his people. As our High Priest, Jesus works to save us. Jesus became our High Priest after He took our place on the cross and died for our sins. Jesus was the Lamb that God offered on the cross for our sins. Then Jesus woke up from the dead. He went to heaven and entered the sanctuary. The sanctuary is the place in heaven where God is worshiped and where His throne is. There, Jesus now works to save us and get us ready to live with Him in heaven. Hebrews 7:1–28 talks more about Jesus’ work for us in the sanctuary and the things He is doing for us.



**Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away our sins.**

### **What does Hebrews 7:1–28 tell us about Jesus?**

These verses in Hebrews are deep and rich with meaning. The verses tell us that Jesus is better than all the priests who came from Aaron and who worked in the Hebrew sanctuary on earth. We now have God as our High Priest. So now, when we think about Jesus, we can think about Him as our High Priest working for us in heaven.

**JESUS, THE ONE WHO WORKS FOR US IN HEAVEN**  
(Hebrews 8:6)

**Read Hebrews 7:24–27 and Hebrews 8:6. What truth do we find in these verses? What hope does this truth give us?**

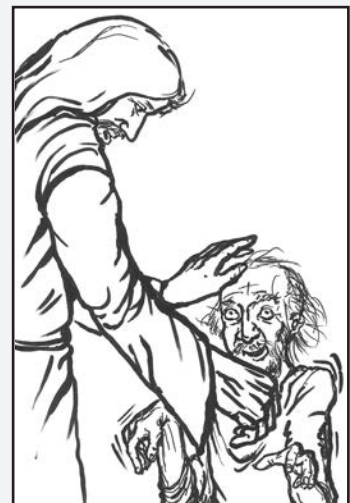
Jesus is our High Priest. A high priest is someone who works to save his people. As our High Priest, Jesus can save us fully. He can save us fully because of several things He did that no religious leader or priest could ever do: (1) Jesus is God. Only God can forgive sins. Because Jesus is God, Jesus has the power to forgive sins. (2) He is our High Priest forever. Ever since the Christian church first started, Jesus has worked all the time for His people. Jesus works for His people with the same love He had when He healed the sick and comforted the lonely on this earth. (3) Jesus also is human. (4) But He was born without sin, and He never sinned. (5) As the One who Never Sinned, Jesus died for the sins of every person who ever lived. (6) Only Jesus, as the Man-God, can work for sinners in heaven's sanctuary. Heaven's sanctuary is the place in heaven where God is worshiped and where His throne is.

Hebrews 7:24–27 and Hebrews 8:6 also show us that Jesus' death needed to happen only one time. His death was for everyone too. It was enough to save every human who ever lived. After all, look at who died for us. Jesus did. How could Jesus' death not be enough to save each person?

**Read Hebrews 9:11–15. As these verses show us, what did Jesus' death give Him to give to us? What does His work right now for us in heaven's sanctuary also give to us, too?**

Hebrews 9:12 says that Jesus "made us free from sin forever" (NLV). The Greek word written as "made us free" also means to "buy back" and "paid the price." This Greek word is the same word used in Luke 1:68. There, Zacharias says God has "'come to his people and purchased [bought] their freedom' " (NirV). What else does Hebrews 9:12 tell us about Jesus' blood? It tells us Jesus is the only One who can make us free. His death is the gift He gives to save us. This gift saves everyone who accepts it.

**Jesus did not start His work for us in the sanctuary until He made us free first. How does this fact give us hope about Jesus' work for us right now in the sanctuary?**



**Jesus works for His people now with the same love He had when He healed the sick and comforted the lonely on this earth.**

**JESUS OUR HELPER (Hebrews 7:25)**

Sin caused an awful separation between God and humans. But Jesus' death on the cross brings humans back to God. Jesus' death lets sinners come near to God again.

**“Our hope is certain [sure]. It is something for the soul to hold on to. It is strong and secure [safe]. It goes all the way into the Most Holy Room behind the curtain. That is where Jesus has gone. He went there to open the way ahead of us. He has become a high priest [the One who works to save us] forever, just like [the same as] Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:19, 20, NIV). Melchizedek was the king of Salem during Abraham’s time. As these verses show us, what has Jesus done for us?**

**Hebrews 9:24 talks about Jesus’ work for us right now in heaven. What is He doing for us right now?**



**Sin caused an awful separation between God and humans. But Jesus’ death on the cross brings humans back to God.**

Jesus is the One who “stand[s] in front of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24, NIV). After He woke up from the dead, Jesus entered heaven’s sanctuary. Heaven’s sanctuary is the place in heaven where God is worshiped and where His throne is. There, Jesus offers to the Father the gift of His cleansing blood. It is the price God paid to buy us back from sin.

When we accept Jesus, our sins are forgiven. We stand before God forgiven and with no sin. But even after we become Christians, we may sin. Why do we sin? We sin because we do not trust in Jesus’ wonderful promises for victory over sin. When we sin, Jesus helps us. He works in heaven as our High Priest. A high priest is someone who works to save his people. As our High Priest, Jesus stands before God for us. Jesus points to His own blood that He spilled for us. He does not point to any good thing we have done. We have done nothing good that can save us. Jesus asks our Father to save us because of what He, Jesus, has done for us. “So Christ [Jesus] can save those who come to God through [by faith in] him. Christ [Jesus] can do this forever, because he always lives and is ready to help people when they come before God” (Hebrews 7:25, ERV).

**Yes, we have new life in Jesus. But as born-again Christians, we understand our need for Jesus’ mercy and forgiveness all the time, right? So, why is knowing that Jesus is our High Priest very important to us?**

## THE DAY GOD MAKES HIS PEOPLE CLEAN (Hebrews 9:20–23)

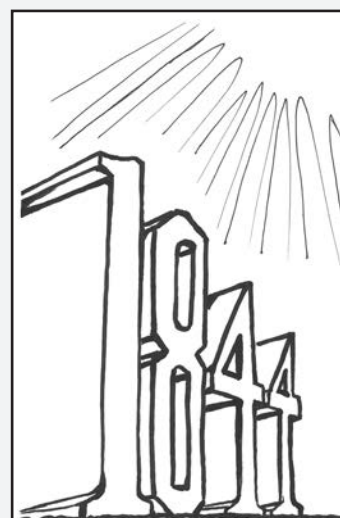
The book of Hebrews talks about the Old Testament sanctuary. The Old Testament sanctuary was the place where God was worshiped in the wilderness before Solomon built God a temple. The book of Hebrews teaches us that the sanctuary on earth was a copy of the sanctuary in heaven. Both sanctuaries had two rooms. The Jewish worship plan for the sanctuary on earth included killing animals. Their deaths pointed to Jesus' future death on the cross for sinners. The blood of these animals also made it necessary for the sanctuary to be made clean.

In the Jewish worship plan, the religious leaders, or high priests, did work in both rooms of the sanctuary. These two rooms are named the Holy Room and the Holiest Room of All. In the same way, Jesus' work in the sanctuary in heaven also happens in both rooms. The first part of Jesus' work for us happens in the Holy Room. The second part of Jesus' work happens in the Holiest Room of All. That is the room where Jesus has been doing His work, since 1844, as Judge and High Priest. A high priest is someone who works to save his people.

In the sanctuary on earth, Jesus' work as Judge and High Priest was shown by the special work that the Jewish priests did on the Day of Cleansing. The Day of Cleansing was the one time during the year that the Jewish high priest entered the Most Holy Room in the sanctuary on earth. There, the Jewish high priest made God's people and His sanctuary on earth clean from sin (Leviticus 16:12–14).

**Read Hebrews 9:20–23. What are the things that need to be made clean with blood? How does this need for making things clean show Jesus' work as our High Priest during the Day of Cleansing, which is happening right now in heaven?**

Many Bible experts are surprised by the idea that the sanctuary in heaven needs to be made clean. Hebrews 9:23 shows us that the work the high priests did to make the sanctuary on earth clean was only a copy, or "shadow [example]," of the work Jesus does now to make the sanctuary in heaven clean and His people holy. When we study the book of Daniel, we learn that Jesus' work to make things clean began in the year 1844. We are now living in that time.



**Jesus' work to make things clean began in the year 1844. We are now living in that time.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “Daniel’s visions show us that the end of human history is connected to the Day of Cleansing. That Day is the time when Jesus makes all of God’s people clean. Jesus will do this work just before His Second Coming. Daniel’s visions also give the time when Jesus’ work in heaven will happen in human history. Jesus’ work in heaven also includes His work as our Judge. As our Judge, Jesus will show everyone in heaven and on earth that God’s people are innocent. He will free God’s people from all sin and guilt. Jesus also will prove that all of Satan’s lies about God are false.”—*Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology [the study about God]* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 2000), page 394; adapted.

“Before Jesus died on the cross, the sins of God’s people were put on the animal offered in place of their sins. Their sins were then carried by the blood of the animal into the sanctuary on earth. [The sanctuary on earth was the place where God was worshiped in the wilderness before Solomon built God a temple.] The animals’ blood was a word picture for Jesus’ blood. But after Jesus died, God made a New Agreement with everyone who accepted Jesus and refused to continue sinning. In the New Agreement, our past sins are, by faith, put on Jesus. Then Jesus carries these sins into the sanctuary in heaven. Jesus is our High Priest. [A high priest is someone who works to save his people.] Just as sin made the sanctuary on earth dirty, sin makes the sanctuary in heaven dirty too. The high priests made the sanctuary on earth clean by removing the sins. In the same way, Jesus makes the sanctuary in heaven clean by removing the sins that are written down in His books. But before Jesus can remove the sins, He must examine His books first to see who believed in Him and stopped sinning. These people are the only ones who will be made clean from guilt. They are the only ones who will receive the gift of everlasting life and Jesus’ blood. His blood removes their sins.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, pages 421, 422; adapted.



Before Jesus can remove the sins, He must examine His books first to see who believed in Him and stopped sinning.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① What two things does Ellen G. White say will show who will receive the gift of Jesus’ blood to take away their sins? Why must we understand this truth?
- ② Read Leviticus 16:15, 16. What did the blood mean back then? What does the blood mean for us today?