

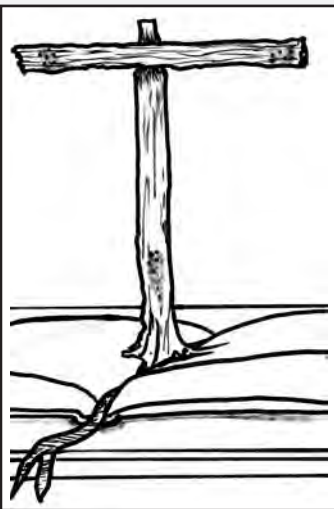
# Jesus, the Perfect Offering for Sin



## SABBATH—FEBRUARY 19

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 15:6–21; Ephesians 3:14–19; Hebrews 7:27; Hebrews 9:22–28; Romans 3:21–26.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “With one sacrifice [offering for sin] Christ [Jesus] made his people perfect [accepted; right with God] forever. They are the ones who are being made holy” (Hebrews 10:14, ERV).



Paul said the Good News about Jesus was “the teaching about the cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18, ERV).

**ROMAN PEOPLE** in New Testament times hated the cross. Why? Because they were ashamed of people who died on the cross. So, they did not write about the cross very much. The Romans felt Christianity was a very ugly religion. They were surprised that people wanted to worship a man who died on a cross. The law of the Jews also announced that a man hung on a tree was cursed by God (Deuteronomy 21:23).

These feelings of fear and shame help us understand why the first Christian paintings did not show the cross. Christians painted peacocks, doves, palm leaves, and fish. Later, Christian art showed the boat of Noah, Daniel in the pit of lions, Jonah being spit out by the big fish, and a shepherd carrying a lamb. Early Christians also painted pictures of Jesus healing the lame man and waking up Lazarus from the dead. These pictures show us that Jesus saves us and loves us. But the cross showed loss and shame. Later, this same cross of shame became the sign of Christianity. Paul said the Good News about Jesus was “the teaching about the cross” (1 Corinthians 1:18, ERV).

This week we will look at the cross in the book of Hebrews.

**WHY WERE ANIMAL OFFERINGS NEEDED?  
(Genesis 15:6–21)**

Paul explains why Jesus needed to die: “Christ [Jesus] died to save people from sins committed [done] against the commands of the first agreement” (Hebrews 9:15, ERV).

In the Near East during Bible times, an agreement between two people or countries was important. The people who agreed to work together made each other promises. Then they said an oath. The oath showed that the gods will punish the one who breaks the agreement. Often, people killed an animal as part of the agreement. Then the people walked between the animal parts. The cut parts showed what will happen to the person who breaks his promise.

Let us look at the example of the agreement that God made with Abraham. Abraham cut animals in half (Genesis 15:6–21). Do you see that only God walks between the animal parts? By doing so, God shows Abraham that He will keep His promise.

**Compare Genesis 15:6–21 and Jeremiah 34:8–22. What do these verses teach us about the agreement?**

The agreement that God gives Israel is important. This agreement shows us that God will give Israel the Promised Land. The agreement includes commandments and blood. The blood is put on the altar to show the people what will happen to the ones who break the agreement. Now we understand better why Paul says, “If no animal is killed to give blood, then there is no way for people to be forgiven for the wrong things they have done” (Hebrews 9:22, WE).

When Israel broke the agreement, God had a hard decision to make. His agreement said that anyone who broke the law of God must die. But God loved His people. What if God refused to punish the lawbreakers? Then God can no longer command anyone to keep His law.

So, Jesus came as our Substitute. He died for us. In this way, Jesus accepts our punishment. At the same time, Jesus can save the ones who broke His law. Jesus can do these two things because He died for us on the cross.

**Why is the law so important to the Good News that Jesus saves us from our sins? What does Hebrews show us?**



**The blood is put on the altar to show the people what will happen to the ones who break the agreement.**

## THE DIFFERENT OFFERINGS (Ephesians 3:14–19)

The death of Jesus made our forgiveness by God possible. But forgiveness is much more than erasing the penalty of sin. Forgiveness includes other important parts. That is why the Israelites offered five different types of offerings. Each offering was necessary to show the meaning of the cross of Jesus.



Paul wanted the Ephesians to understand the love of Jesus.

## What did Paul pray for in Ephesians 3:14–19?

Paul wanted the Ephesians to understand the love of Jesus. The different offerings that the Jews brought to God in Old Testament times helped explain this love:

**The burnt offering.** This gift was an animal offering. The whole animal was burned on the altar (Leviticus 1). This offering showed Jesus who gave His whole life for us. Yes, Jesus was the same as God always. But Jesus “put aside [walked away from] everything that belonged to Him [as God] and made Himself the same as a servant who is owned by someone” (Philippians 2:5–8, NLV).

**The food offering.** An Israelite brought to God the gift of food to show his thankfulness for everything God did to take care of His people (Leviticus 2). This gift also showed Jesus, who is the “bread that gives life” (John 6:35, 48, ERV). We have everlasting life because of Jesus.

**The peace offering.** This gift shows us a meal shared between friends and family. The meal celebrated the good life that God gave to His people (Leviticus 3). This gift also showed Jesus. Because of His death, we have peace (Isaiah 53:5; Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:14). The peace offering also shows us that we need to take part in the death of Jesus for us. How? We need to “eat” His body and “drink” His blood (John 6:51–56).

**The sin offering.** This offering removed the guilt caused by sin (Leviticus 4:1–Leviticus 5:13). The blood of the animal offering showed the life of the animal (Leviticus 17:11). This blood was a picture for the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus saves us from our sins (Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:14).

**The guilt offering** (Leviticus 5:14–Leviticus 6:7). This offering shows us what we must do to make things right after God forgives us. God expects us to make things right with the people we hurt with our wrong behavior.

## JESUS, THE PERFECT OFFERING (Hebrews 7:27)

**Read Hebrews 7:27 and Hebrews 10:10. What do these verses tell us about the offering that Jesus makes?**

Paul tells us the reason there were so many priests or religious leaders from the family group of Levi. “The other priests were many, because they died and could not go on with their work” (Hebrews 7:23, WE). The priests “need to offer sacrifices [animal offerings] day after day” (Hebrews 7:27, NIV) and a special offering “once [one time] every year” (Hebrews 9:25, ERV). These gifts and offerings “cannot make a person’s heart clean to worship God” (Hebrews 9:9, WE; Hebrews 10:1–4).

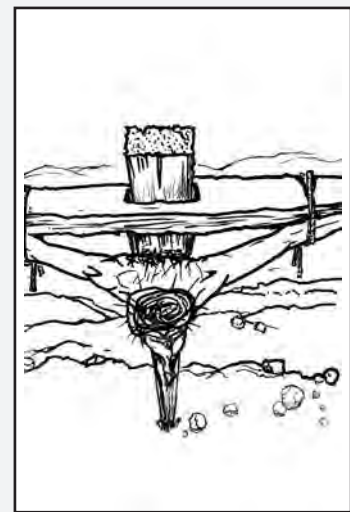
But Jesus is so much better than the priests. Jesus needed to die only “one time.” Jesus’ offering was “enough for all time” (Hebrews 10:10, ERV; read also Hebrews 10:12–14). Jesus’ offering makes our hearts clean (Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:1–10). His offering also puts away our sin (Hebrews 9:26). His offering is better than the animal offerings because He is the Son of God (Hebrews 7:26–28). Jesus did everything God wanted Him to do (Hebrews 10:5–10).

So, the offering of Jesus happened only “one time” and was “enough for all time.” This idea teaches us several important Bible truths:

**1. Jesus’ offering is perfect.** No one can offer a better gift. The priests offered gifts again and again because their gifts did not make us clean. “If those gifts given to God could take away sins, the people who came to worship would no longer feel guilty of sin. They would have given no more gifts” (Hebrews 10:2, NIV).

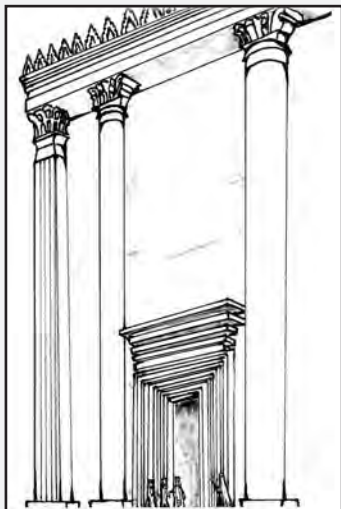
**2. All the different types of offerings in the Old Testament show us Jesus’ dying on the cross.** Jesus died to make us clean from sin (Hebrews 9:14). Jesus also makes us holy (Hebrews 10:10–14). Jesus puts sin away from our lives (Hebrews 9:26). Before the priests from the family of Levi can come to God for the people, they must be clean and made holy (Leviticus 8; Leviticus 9). The offering of Jesus makes us clean and holy (Hebrews 10:10–14). Now we can come to God with bold faith and hope (Hebrews 10:19–23). We can serve God as His royal priests (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Peter 2:9).

**3. Jesus’ death gives us spiritual life, too.** The cross shows us the example we must follow in our own lives. Paul invites us to look at Jesus on His cross and follow Him (Hebrews 12:1–4; Hebrews 13:12, 13).



**All the different types of offerings in the Old Testament show us Jesus’ dying on the cross.**

## THE CROSS AND COST OF FORGIVENESS (Hebrews 9:22–28)



This temple was a word picture for the government of God.

**Read Hebrews 9:22–28. What do these verses say about the work that Jesus does for us in the temple in heaven?**

The Bible teaches us that the temple in heaven needs to be made clean from sin. This idea should not surprise us when we think about the temple that Solomon built. This temple was a word picture for the government of God (1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2). As King, God is the Judge of His people. His government “is built on what is right and fair” (Psalm 97:2, NIV). So, His people expect God to be fair. They expect God to judge in favor of the innocent and to punish the guilty. When God forgives sinners, God becomes responsible for their sin (Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:17–19). The Hebrew word for “forgiving” in these verses is “nose.” This word shows us someone “carrying” something. So, this word helps us see that God “carries” or becomes responsible for our sins when He forgives us.

The animal offerings that an Israelite brought to the temple showed this idea, too. The Israelite confessed his sins over the animal. Then he killed it. The priest, or holy leader, put the blood on part of the altar. The priest sprinkled the blood in front of the curtain in the Holy Room of the temple, too. The curtain separated the Holy Room from the Most Holy Room. In this way, the priest brought the sin into the temple. This action showed how God became responsible for the sins of His people.

When Jesus takes our sin, that sin makes the temple in heaven dirty. So, the temple needs cleaning. The temple on earth shows us how God will clean the temple in heaven. This work has two parts. During the year, the Israelites brought offerings to the temple. The offerings showed that God made them clean. But the offerings also showed that their sin moved to the temple and to God Himself. At the end of the year, God cleaned the temple. God moved the sin from the temple to the goat named Azazel. Azazel shows us Satan (Leviticus 16:15–22).

These two parts show us the work that God does in heaven to remove sin (Exodus 25:9; Hebrews 8:5). This work allows God to show mercy at the same time that He punishes sin. The people who confessed their sins during the year showed their loyalty to God. They rested and emptied their hearts of all pride on the Day That God Judges His People (Leviticus 16:29–31). God will “destroy” the ones who do any work on that day (Leviticus 23:27–32).



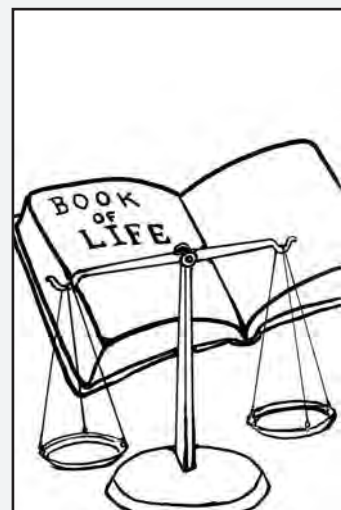
**GOD, OUR JUDGE, AND HIS LOVE FOR US**  
(Romans 3:21–26)

**God saves us because of the Cross. He forgives us for our sins because of the Cross, too. What does this Bible truth show us about God? For the answer, read Romans 3:21–26; Romans 1:16, 17; and Romans 5:8.**

The forgiveness we get from God shows us the work that Jesus does for us in heaven. First, Jesus removes our sins. He “carried” our sins Himself on the cross. There, He won forgiveness for everyone who believes in Him (Acts 2:38; Acts 5:31). So, Jesus can forgive anyone who believes in Him. Second, Jesus makes a way for us to go to God. This new way is named the New Agreement. So, we no longer need to give animal offerings. The New Agreement allows Jesus to put the law of God in the minds of Christians (Hebrews 8:10–12; Ezekiel 36:25–27). The Holy Spirit works with Jesus to put the law inside us.

Second, Jesus works for us during the time when God judges everyone on earth. This work happens during the end times. When Paul wrote Hebrews, this time was far away in the future (Hebrews 2:1–4; Hebrews 6:2; Hebrews 9:27, 28; Hebrews 10:25). But we now live in that time. As our Judge, God starts with His people (Daniel 7:9–27; Matthew 22:1–14; Revelation 14:7). The work that God does as our Judge will show everyone that He is fair and right when He forgives us. During this time, the angels in heaven can look at the life records of all the people of God. God will show everyone in heaven the change that happened in the hearts of His people. God will show how His people changed for the better when they accepted Jesus as their Savior and welcomed the Holy Spirit into their hearts.

Ellen G. White talks about this time: “Man stands in front of God. The record of the life of man is stained and dirty with sin. Man confesses his guilt. He can’t make any excuse for his sins. But Jesus is there. Jesus is our Helper, our Lawyer. Jesus supports everyone who asks for forgiveness and gives his life to God. Jesus defends us. He wins the quarrel against Satan, who accuses us. Jesus shows what He did at Calvary for us. Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to the law of God before He died on the cross. This perfect life gives Jesus all the power in heaven and on earth. Jesus asks the Father to show mercy for guilty man and to bring him back to God again.”  
—*Testimonies for the Church*, volume 5, pages, 471, adapted.



**The work that God does as our Judge will show everyone that He is fair and right when He forgives us.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “Calvary,” pages 741–757; “‘It Is Finished,’ ” pages 758–764; in *The Desire of Ages*.



“I asked God for forgiveness. I was changed by His mercy and loving-favor.”

Professor Jiří Moskala explains what happens on the Day When God Judges His People. God “does not show my sins to everyone in heaven the same as a shopkeeper shows his goods for sale in the window of his shop. No, God does not do that at all! God shows the surprising and wonderful power of His mercy. In front of everyone in heaven, God explains my feelings and thoughts about Him. God shows my behavior, my actions, and the way I lived. God will show the people in heaven all of these things. Yes, Jesus will tell everyone that I made many mistakes. Yes, I sinned against His holy law. But He will also tell everyone I was sorry for my sins and quit sinning with the Holy Spirit’s help. I asked God for forgiveness. I was changed by His mercy and loving-favor. Jesus will announce: ‘My blood is the only thing that the sinner named Jiří needs. Jiří chose to live for Me. Now Jiří is kind to other people. He is not selfish. He is My good and loyal servant, who is full of faith.’ ”—“Toward a Biblical Theology of God’s Judgment: A Celebration of the Cross in Seven Phases of Divine Universal Judgment,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 15 (Spring 2004): page 155, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Many people feel that they need to make God happy with an offering. Some people travel far away to show their faith. Many people help others. Other people say no to many pleasures in life, even good activities, to “earn” God’s forgiveness. What should we think about all this behavior? How does the cross of Jesus show us that He put an end to the need for all these offerings (Daniel 9:27; Hebrews 10:18)?
- ② At the same time, why is giving offerings important? Why did Jesus say we need to pick up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24)? Why did Paul say, “Let your bodies be a living and holy gift given to God” (Romans 12:1, NLV)? What is God’s message to us in Matthew 16:25; in Romans 12:1; and in Hebrews 13:15, 16?

## CELL-PHONE PASTOR

**K**hamla works hard to take care of his family. Khamla and his family live in a country village in Laos. Laos is a country in Southeast Asia. Soon Khamla gets sick. His legs feel so heavy that he cannot walk. He cannot get out of bed for three months.

Khamla has no money to see a doctor. Khamla tries many different plant medicines. He goes to different healers, including a witch doctor in his village. Nothing helps.

Finally, someone tells Khamla about a Seventh-day Adventist pastor named Sadua Lee. Pastor Sadua Lee helps many people by cell phone. So, Khamla calls Pastor Sadua Lee and asks him for help.

Phone calls cost a lot of money in Laos. The phone call costs 700 kips. A kip is money in Laos. One kip is equal to eight cents in American money. At this time, 1/3 of the people in Laos live on less than \$1.25 a day. 2/3 of the people in Laos live on less than \$2.00 a day. So, phone calls are very expensive in Laos. But Khamla wants to be healed so badly. So, he calls Pastor Sadua and asks him to heal him.

"I am nobody," the pastor says. "I cannot heal you. But my God, who is named Jesus, can heal you if He wants to. All we need to do is ask Him."

Khamla asks the pastor to pray for him on the phone. The pastor agrees.

The next week, the pastor calls Khamla to pray for him again. Khamla is so excited. "I can walk!" he says.

His legs are weak. But for the first time in three months, he can walk. Khamla already went out and worked on his farm.

"Your God is powerful," Khamla tells the pastor. "How can I worship this God named Jesus?"

The pastor tells Khamla that he can and should worship Jesus all the time. Jesus also made a special day for worship, the seventh-day Sabbath. Khamla agrees to stop work on Sabbath to worship Jesus. Khamla lives very far from a church. So, he asks the pastor to help him worship. So, now Pastor Sadua Lee calls Khamla every Sabbath. But Pastor Lee is happy to do it. Jesus healed Khamla. So, Jesus can give them the money to pay for the phone calls, right? Of course, He can!

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering. This quarter, your offering will help church workers share the Good News about Jesus with the people in Laos and other countries in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

This story shows us the "I Will Go" plan of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This plan is about how we can share Jesus with everyone. Learn more about this plan at [IWillGo2020.org](http://IWillGo2020.org).

## INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



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"I can walk!" he says.**

