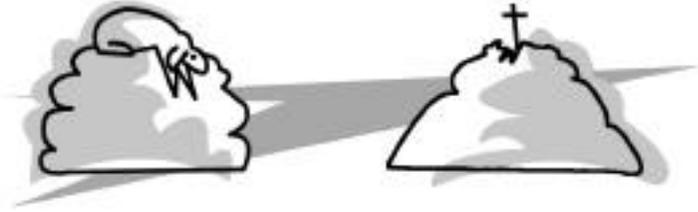


His Glorious Purpose Foreshadowed *in* Types



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Gen. 4:1-8, 22:1-19, Num. 21:4-9.*

Memory Text: “And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together” (*Genesis 22:8*).

Most Christians understand a crucial truth: Salvation has always been accomplished only one way—through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Anyone in heaven will be there only through Jesus, whether or not they ever knew Him by name. Some will know much about the plan of salvation, others little; some will live here amid an outburst of light, others only in the shadows.

And yet life in the shadows isn't all darkness. For there to be shadows, there needs to be light. Shadows, in their own way, are an outline of light; they exist on the edge of light; and they couldn't be formed if there were no light. Shadows help us understand the light.

This week we look at those who were living in the shadows, shadows that were created only because the light was always there to begin with. Long before the full revelation granted at Calvary, the Lord was teaching His people truths about what God would do to save the world from sin, and He taught them with the shadows.

The Week at a Glance: What words does the Bible use to define sin? How was the Cross revealed in the story of Cain and Abel, in Abraham at Moriah, and in the fiery serpents in the wilderness? What do these accounts teach us about the gospel?

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 8.*

The Sin Crisis

The Bible uses a number of different words to convey the idea of sin. Below are the most common ones used in both Testaments, including an explanation of their meaning and a few verses where the words are used. Look up the verses, applying the explanation as you read:

Old Testament

1. *Hattat*, “to miss the mark,” “to miss a target” (*Lev. 5:5, Ps. 51:4*).
2. *Awon*, translated “iniquity,” with the basic idea of crookedness, falsehood, a twisting (*Gen. 15:16, Isa. 43:24*).
3. *Pesha* means a deliberate, willful violation of a norm or authority. It’s rebellion against God and is sometimes translated as “transgression” (*Isa. 1:2, Amos 4:4*).
4. *Resha* means literally “out of joint,” to “be loose,” and commonly conveys the idea of wickedness (*Gen. 18:23, Exod. 23:1*).

New Testament

1. *Hamartia* means literally to “miss the mark” and is used in the New Testament to denote a human decision that is hostile to God (*John 19:11, 1 John 1:8*).
2. *Parokoe* means literally a “failure to hear” or an “unwillingness to hear.” Often translated as “disobedience” (*Rom. 5:19, Heb. 2:2*).
3. *Paraptoma* usually means a slip, a fault, a falling down. Commonly translated as “trespass,” or “transgression” (*Matt. 6:14, Rom. 4:25*).
4. *Anomia* suggests contempt or violation of the *nomos*, the law, and is the word from which “transgression of the law” is translated in 1 John 3:4 (*Matt. 7:23, Heb. 1:9*).
5. *Adikia* conveys the idea of “unrighteousness” (*Rom. 1:18, 2 Pet. 2:15*).

“To miss the mark,” a “twisting,” “a failure to hear,” “rebellion” . . . so many different words and concepts express the idea of sin. What this seems to say, among other things, is that sin can be manifested in various ways, spurred on and incited for different reasons. Write a short paragraph expressing what other lessons you’ve learned about sin from this word study.

Key Text: *John 3:14, 15.*

Teachers Aims:

1. To confront us with the reality and the consequences of sin.
2. To highlight how the Lord has taught those who were looking forward to salvation.
3. To proclaim that the way to receive salvation is but to “look and live.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

Lesson Outline:

I. Sin—the Desperate Crisis (*Isa. 6:5*).

- A. Sin is a senseless rebellion.
- B. Everyone alive or who has ever lived in the whole world, except for One, has participated in this criminal hostility toward God.
- C. Only as we truly realize the horror of sin can we understand the value of what it takes to save us.

II. Shadows and Types Reveal the Cure for Sin (*John 12:32*).

- A. Cain and Abel each represent how we may choose to respond to the promise of Jesus as our sacrificial Lamb.
- B. The substitutionary death of Jesus is shown by Abraham on Mount Moriah.
- C. Moses and the serpent in the wilderness point to our only means of salvation.

III. Jesus—our Only Hope of Salvation (*Isa. 6:7*).

- A. A marvelous paradox of the Christian faith is that Jesus, all goodness, becomes, on the cross, the focus of all evil.
- B. We must recognize our own utter inability to save ourselves.
- C. When we look to Jesus in implicit faith, this grants to us the object we most desire and need—our rescue from sin.

Summary: Sin is a desperate crisis that completely destroys our relationship with our Creator. We cannot save ourselves; only Jesus can save us. The types and shadows of the Cross allow us to anticipate this act of rescue. As we recognize our utter inability to save ourselves, we can fully accept and trust in the salvation Jesus offers. In implicit and blind obedience we are invited to but “look and live.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 175.

COMMENTARY

His Glorious Purpose Foreshadowed in Types.

Introduction. Ever since the Fall, it has been God’s pointed aim to restore sinful humanity to oneness with Himself and to eradicate evil forever. He accomplishes this aim through the atoning sacrifice

The Sin Crisis *(cont.)*

“And the whole world lieth in wickedness” (1 John 5:19).

How can we, as beings steeped in sin, fully understand the magnitude of sin? We really can't. It's like trying to look at a blackboard in a dark room. And though we can't fully understand sin, we can still understand enough to know its malignity.

Think of three people to whom you are close: family, friends, neighbors, whomever. Look at their lives and write down the suffering that sin (and not necessarily their own) has brought upon them.

What did you write about? Sickness, disease, death, crime, violence, pain, alienation, hatred, bitterness, and on and on? Now multiply that by every human being who ever has lived or ever will live (except One), and we only begin to understand the ravages of sin.

And yet the outward physical destruction of sin is only part of the problem. Sin goes much deeper than what it does to us physically. Sin is, ultimately, a rebellion against the lordship and sovereignty of God. It is a refusal to accept His authority in one's life, conduct, and final destiny, and it is manifested in different moral, spiritual, and ethical behaviors that inevitably lead to suffering and death.

Sin, to be understood as sin, must be seen in the context of who we are in relationship to God. It must be seen as a state of existence as much as it is acts and deeds. Indeed, the acts and deeds themselves result from the state of sin in which we exist. Sin, therefore, is as much who we are as it is what we do, because, in the end, we do what we do because we are what we are.

Only as we appreciate what it takes to save us from sin can we begin to understand how pernicious it must be. What do the following texts tell us about how bad sin is, in that it took such extreme measures in order to save us from it? Luke 24:7, John 3:14, Rom. 3:21-26, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:24.

of the Messiah. This week we review how the Lord revealed His plan of redemption in types and symbols to His people before the Cross.

I. The Sin Crisis.

Sin, in all its variety and gradation, ultimately pays the same wage—death. Though it promises much and is often pleasurable to the flesh, sin is deceitful and degrading (*see Heb. 3:13, 11:25*), with no truly beneficial effects. Sin separates us from God and impedes our perception of spiritual truth (*Isa. 59:1; Rom. 1:21, 22*). Mingled with pride, sin induces us to believe that our opinions and limited reasoning powers and the collective “wisdom” of humankind are superior to God’s revelation. Sin is far too dangerous and fatal to be parlayed with; we cannot safely make a compact with it, even for one moment.

Jesus came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (*see Heb. 9:26; cf. John 1:29*). Chapters 6 through 8 of Romans lead us not just doctrinally but also therapeutically through the practical processes by which Christ sets us free from the law of sin and death and gives us a new nature that operates in harmony with the righteous requirements of divine law. He has made provision that sin should have no more dominion over us but that His grace should reign supreme in our lives (*see Rom. 6:14, 5:21*).

II. Cain and Abel.

“Cain came before God with murmuring and infidelity in his heart in regard to the promised sacrifice and the necessity of the sacrificial offerings. His gift expressed no penitence for sin. He felt, as many now feel, that it would be an acknowledgment of weakness to follow the exact plan marked out by God, of trusting his salvation wholly to the atonement of the promised Saviour. He chose the course of self-dependence. He would come in his own merits. He would not bring the lamb, and mingle its blood with his offering, but would present *his* fruits, the products of *his* labor. He presented his offering as a favor done to God. . . . Cain obeyed in building an altar, obeyed in bringing a sacrifice; but . . . the essential part, the recognition of the need of a Redeemer, was left out.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 72; read also pp. 71–77.

Cain exemplified the universal principle of false religion—that humans can depend on their own efforts for salvation and bypass the atonement. Cain would worship God but on his own terms and in his own merits. Cain might thank God for His bounties, but he would acknowledge no guilt, no need for a new heart, no need for the Lamb. Behind this obstinate self-sufficiency was pride and anger that drove him to kill his brother, whose gentle entreaties to offer the divinely required lamb were an intolerable affront to Cain’s self-esteem. And here we see how antagonism to the gospel rankles in sin-loving hearts.

Cain and Abel (*Gen. 4:1-8*).

For the past two days we've looked at the sin problem. What about the cure?

For starters, after Adam and Eve transgressed and the Lord banished them from the Garden of Eden, they maintained their contact with Him through worship that centered on looking to the promised Son, who would bring an end to the sin problem. While Scripture doesn't elaborate on the system of sacrifices that Adam and Eve observed, it is evident from the worship activities of their first sons, Cain and Abel, that the sacrifice of the lamb, as an expression of repentance and faith in the coming Messiah, was central to their worship.

What attitudes did Cain cherish that made him refuse to offer the lamb sacrifice? *Gen. 4:1-8, 1 John 3:11-15.*

This story is often seen, and rightly so, as an early example of the contrast between those who accept Christ's righteousness by faith and those who seek to earn salvation by their "good works." Yet, there's an irony here. Those who oppose salvation by faith in Christ alone, without the works of the law (*Rom. 3:28, Gal. 2:16, 3:11*), often claim that such a teaching leads to sin. After all, they reason, if people are told that good works can't save, then why should people sweat through the self-denial needed to produce them (*Rom. 6:1, 15*)?

Read carefully Genesis 4:3-7 and 1 John 3:12. In both texts, what is being said about Cain's works in contrast to Abel's? What were Cain's works, at least as shown in the Bible, and why were they depicted as they were? What do these texts tell us about the nature of trying to earn salvation?

Cain's works were deemed evil, because they were wrought from an attempt to earn salvation, whereas Abel's works, stemming from a heart that understood the need for a sacrifice for sin, were deemed righteousness. In other words, only those who understand their total dependence upon God for salvation, their total dependence upon a Substitute, can produce what would be deemed "good works." The value of works must be seen, perhaps, in the motives that lead to them: Works done from a heart seeking to earn salvation are deemed evil, while works done from a heart expressing thanks for the salvation already rendered are deemed righteous. Why do you think that is so?

III. Abraham and Calvary.

Abraham's statement, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering" (*Gen. 22:8*), reveals his essential grasp of the gospel.

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: *Genesis 22:8; Romans 5:5-8; Hebrews 9:27, 28.*

- 1 "You're all dirty!" Mother observes then requests, "Please wash up before you eat." Sound familiar? As children, how often we washed our hands while forgetting our faces! Reflect on the ways in which sin has sullied your life. Romans 5:8 (*NIV*) encourages us to hope with the words "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." What does it tell you about the gift of salvation, considering God extends it to us even though we are totally undeserving?
- 2 Some Christians suffer from what might be termed the *Cain Syndrome*. Cain thought his gift from the work of his hands would be *good enough* for God. Have you ever found yourself relating to this way of thinking, especially in light of all the "good" things you have done in order to be right with God? Discuss why such a belief makes it so difficult, if not impossible, to personally accept the Lamb of God as sufficient to pay the price for sin.
- 3 If you had been with Abraham on Mount Moriah (*Gen. 22:1-19*), what list of excuses might you have given in order to justify not following through on God's command to sacrifice your son? In light of this struggle, discuss what it must have been like for God to send His Son to our world.
- 4 Israel felt their complaints in the wilderness seemed perfectly justified. They anticipated a glorious future after their rescue from Egypt. Instead, they were on the worst camping trip ever as they wandered in the wilderness. God announces "in returning and rest shall ye be saved" (*Isa. 30:15*). How can we learn to trust in the simple, straightforward commands of God and accept His abundant salvation?
- 5 When the serpent was lifted up, "obedience was the object to be gained, implicit and blind obedience, without stopping to inquire the reason or the science of the matter. Christ's word was, 'Look and live.'"—Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling*, p. 20. As a class, discuss what makes it so difficult to follow this admonition. What is it about the prevailing attitudes, current in society, that make it so difficult to trust our God to fulfill His purpose in our lives? (*See Isa. 30:15, NIV.*)

Abraham and Calvary *(Gen. 22:1-19, Gal. 3:8).*

One of the most moving and powerful stories in the Hebrew Bible is that of Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah. Three faiths, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, all for various reasons, cherish this story. Christians, of course, see in this story a type, a symbol, of the plan of salvation, of the substitutionary death of Jesus in our stead.

Read Genesis 22:1-19. Aside from the gospel element, what other lessons could you draw from this story that could be of value in knowing the Lord? What lessons do you think other faiths can draw from this episode?

Whatever powerful spiritual truths can be taught from this story, the gospel element, the lamb as sacrifice instead of the child, forms the core of the chapter. And one of the things that God was telling us here through the gospel is that even an act of total self-sacrifice—Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his own son (surely, What father wouldn’t have preferred offering himself instead of his child?)—wasn’t what was sufficient to atone for sin. The problem of sin was way too deep for anything any of us, as sinners, could do to solve it. Even an act such as what Abraham was willing to do, out of a heart of faith and submission, wasn’t enough. Only the Lord Himself could take care of the problem of sin; only He could provide the needed Lamb.

Read Genesis 22:8. How was the gospel revealed there? Do you think Abraham fully understood what he was saying? Or was he, perhaps, just trying to calm his son?

Galatians 3:7-9 says that the gospel was preached to Abraham, and that in his seed (*quoting Gen. 22:18*) all the nations of the world would be blessed. Clearly, whatever Abraham had understood about the plan of salvation beforehand, he understood more now. No doubt, it was a painful lesson to learn.

Though Abraham’s works couldn’t save him, in what ways did his works express his faith? What lessons can we learn from this about the relationship between faith and works?

God was not giving a precedent for human sacrifices. Rather, He was vividly exemplifying the paramount gospel truth that in the fullness of time He would allow His only begotten Son to die for the sins of the world. Before Abraham could consummate the sacrifice, God provided a ram in Isaac's place.

To commemorate the marvelous occurrences of that day, Abraham named the place on Mount Moriah, Jehovah-jireh. Moriah means "God will instruct," and Jehovah-jireh conveys the dual meaning "the Lord will see" and "the Lord will provide." He clearly saw our dire need and provided His only begotten Son for our salvation.

Almost one millennium later, the temple at Jerusalem was built on Moriah (*see 2 Chron. 3:1*), with Calvary nearby. These concurrences of location and events exhibit the clarity and continuity of God's purpose.

IV. Moses and the Serpent in the Wilderness.

God had fed Israel daily with manna (*Exodus 16*) and provided

Witnessing

Sodom and Gomorrah. Nineveh. Tyre. Babylon. Any one of these ancient places—as well as a few modern ones—could vie for the dubious honor of being renamed *Sin City*. In such a city, residents and businesses boast that everyone can find any pleasure, any diversion, or anything the heart desires within its borders. Such a place is noted for its fast-living, hard-driving lifestyle—it is not a place for the faint-of-heart. The Sin Cities of the world do a thriving business—sadly, there seems to be no lack of takers for the pleasures they offer!

Yet, in such places Christ's followers are witnessing and modeling to those with whom they come in contact. Their joy in the Lord is too great to keep to themselves—they are sharing with others the promise found in Romans 5:16, 19: "Adam's sin brought death to all. But the gift of life prompted by grace comes through Jesus Christ who died and is alive. This gift is offered to anyone, no matter how much he has sinned, and when the gift is accepted in Christ, it brings about his acquittal. . . . If by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, then by one Man's obedience, many will be made righteous!" (*The Clear Word*).

God's message cannot be denied; His plan of salvation cannot be expunged by Satan and his followers. Ask yourself whether you are doing enough to share the good news. If the answer is No, talk to God about it. Then, speak with others about what you can do together to witness to the citizens of the modern-day Sin Cities of the world, pointing them toward the riches of Christ.

The Serpent in the Wilderness (*Num. 21:4-9*).

During Israel's long travels and sojourn in the wilderness, God in His mercy had miraculously protected them from fiery serpents and scorpions (*see Deut. 8:15*). He had preserved their health and strength, given them water and nutritious food in abundance, as well as guidance on their journey and protection from hostile tribes. Still, the people as a whole found constant cause for dissatisfaction and complaint, especially against Moses. While their feet were moving circuitously toward the Promised Land, their hearts were steadily moving toward perdition.

Some of Israel's complaints against Moses were, it would seem (at least on the surface), legitimate, were they not (*see Num. 21:5*)? After all, food and water are pretty basic necessities. Why, then, the fiery serpents?

An interesting twist to this story is the fact that the people were to look at a copy of a fiery serpent in order to live. Why, of all things, a serpent, often in the Bible, as well as in much ancient literature, a symbol for evil (*Gen. 3:1, Rev. 20:2*)? In contrast, Ellen White says that the serpent "was a symbol of Christ; and the necessity of faith in His merits was thus presented to their minds."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 430. Indeed, Christ's own words in John 3:14, 15 give the same idea. Why, then, would a symbol of evil be used to represent something so good?

Some have speculated that the answer is found in the nature of Christ's death itself. At the Cross He was our Sin-Bearer; He was the One who bore the sin and evil of the world, who even became sin, and a curse, for us (*2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:13*). And it's from this, His death in our stead, that we can look and find salvation from the evil that otherwise would destroy us. This is one of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith: Jesus, all goodness, became on the cross the focus of all evil. Hence, the symbol of the serpent as a symbol for Christ, the One who bore all the world's evil.

Put yourself in the position of an Israelite who just got bitten by a deadly snake, which has already killed others around you. You're told that the only way to live is to look at a copy of the snake. Why is this such a good example of what it means to live by faith, to trust in what you don't fully understand, and to accept your own utter inability to save yourself?

them with sufficient water in the wilderness (*see Exod. 17:1-7*). At the root, Israel chafed against God, not because they were in danger of dying from hunger and thirst but because they resented His high calling for them as a people (*see Psalm 78*). If we loathe what our carnal senses regard as the “light bread” (*Num. 21:5*) of divine counsel and instead lust for the pungent pleasures of sin, then we, too, will be smitten and bitten by the venomous elements of the world. But these elements cannot invade our lives if we abide in God’s fellowship and Word.

Only one antidote exists for the confusion and desolation brought on by sin—the cross of Jesus. Christ conquered evil by absorbing the whole of its force into Himself on Calvary. He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He died the death the devil and all his followers, human and demonic, deserve, so that repentant sinners might live the life that is His.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: What memorable trip did you take with your father, or with a father figure?

Verses for Group Focus: *Hebrews 11:17-19.*

Thought Questions:

- ① According to Hebrews 11:17-19, why was Abraham able to make such an unusually harsh trip with his only son?
- ② How were Abraham’s experience and attitude like that of God the Father?
- ③ How was Isaac’s experience and attitude like that of Jesus?
- ④ How does the lamb foreshadow Jesus?

Application Questions:

- ① Why would God ask Abraham to sacrifice what was most precious to him? How often does God ask us to do things similar to what He asked Abraham to do? What might some of those things be? What dangers might there be in making a literal parallel between Abraham’s situation and ours?
- ② Abraham was surrounded by an idol-worshiping culture in which it was not unusual for parents to sacrifice their children to their gods. Naturally, God condemns such sacrifices (*see Lev. 20:1-5*). So, how did Abraham know it was the true God speaking to him?

Further Study: Read Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 422–432.

“Nothing but the righteousness of Christ can entitle us to one of the blessings of the covenant of grace. . . . We must not think that our own merits will save us; Christ is our only hope of salvation. ‘For there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ Acts 4:12.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 431.

“Cain and Abel represent two classes that will exist in the world till the close of time. One class avail themselves of the appointed sacrifice for sin; the other venture to depend upon their own merits; theirs is a sacrifice without the virtue of divine mediation, and thus it is not able to bring man into favor with God. It is only through the merits of Jesus that our transgressions can be pardoned.”—Ellen G. White, *Conflict and Courage*, p. 25.

“The same lesson that Christ bade Moses to give to the children of Israel in the wilderness is for all such souls suffering under the plague spot of sin. From the billowy cloud Christ spoke to Moses and told him to make a brazen serpent and place it upon a pole, and then bid all that were bitten with the fiery serpents to look and live. What if, in the place of looking as Christ commanded them, they had said, ‘I do not believe it will do me the least bit of good to look. I am too great a sufferer from the sting of the poisonous serpent.’ Obedience was the object to be gained, implicit and blind obedience, without stopping to inquire the reason or the science of the matter. Christ’s word was, ‘Look and live.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling*, p. 20.

Discussion Questions:

- ① How do we understand the difference between the results of sin and sin itself? Is that even a fair distinction?
- ② How do these Bible accounts help us understand that salvation has always been by faith alone, as opposed to by the works of the law? Why can salvation never be by anything other than what Christ has done for us?
- ③ Look at the final two sentences in the last Ellen White quote above. What is she saying there? Why is this concept so important, especially today, when the claims of science have such a powerful sway over human thinking?