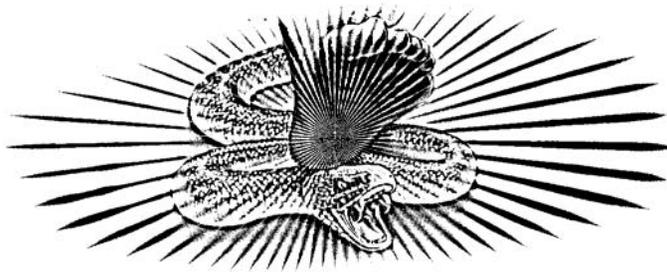


# Atonement<sup>1</sup> Announced



## SABBATH—OCTOBER 25

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22:1–18; Exodus 32; Exodus 34:6–10; Daniel 9.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “But the servant was pierced [nailed to the cross] because we had sinned. He was crushed because we had done what was evil. He was punished<sup>2</sup> to make us whole again. His wounds have healed us (Isaiah 53:5, NlrV).

**KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT:** To show the different ways that God had announced His plan of salvation,<sup>3</sup> even hundreds of years before the Cross.

**THE LORD DECIDED ON AN ANSWER TO THE DEADLY REALITY AND POWER OF SIN.** Then He quickly announced the good news to sinful humans (people). (The first missionary<sup>4</sup> in history was not a created person but the Creator Himself!) The Lord also made sure that this promise of salvation was kept fresh and alive in the humans' minds because He wanted His people to be ready for the first coming of Jesus. In the person of Jesus, the promise would become real. Throughout the history of His people in the Old Testament, God created examples and laws directly tied to His plan of salvation. They showed how His plan of salvation worked. Through the system of sacrifice,<sup>5</sup> the priesthood, and even the king (himself a symbol [word-picture] of the Messiah [the chosen one; Jesus]), the people could understand the supreme (great) sacrifice, the coming of the true High Priest, and the rule of the messianic<sup>6</sup> King. Through Him, God's saving purpose would come true.

1. atonement—the forgiveness and cleansing we receive by faith through Jesus' sacrifice (death) on the cross.

2. punished—made to suffer loss or pain for a crime or for wrongdoing.

3. plan of salvation—what God has done and is doing to save us from sin.

4. missionary—a person sent out by a church to spread its religion in a foreign country.

5. sacrifice—something or someone of value, such as a life that is given up to save or to help save someone or something.

6. messianic—an expected King who was to come and set His people free.

**SUNDAY—OCTOBER 26****A PROMISE TO ADAM AND EVE  
(Genesis 3:1–15)**

**What is being said in verse 15 of Genesis 3:1–15? And what hope can be found there for us?**

Christians know that Genesis 3:15 is a prophecy about the Messiah.

First, Genesis 3:15 shows that the serpent (snake) is a tool of evil and rebellion (war) against God (Revelation 12:9). In the Garden of Eden this evil power defeated Adam and Eve and gained control over the future followers of the woman, a symbol of God's faithful followers.

Second, Genesis 3:15 announces that the serpent (Satan) will be destroyed by the seed (the Child; Jesus) of the woman (the faithful church). The serpent will "strike" the heel of the seed, but the seed will "crush" the head of the serpent. The Hebrew verb *šûp* ("bruise," "strike at," "crush") is the same in both places. This suggests that the seriousness of the attack depends on the part of the body being attacked. The attack against the seed (at its heel) is not fatal. But the seed, though, will crush the serpent's head. And this means the serpent's death will be final.

Third, the Hebrew noun *zera* ("offspring") usually shows "offspring, future children, seed" as a single group. But it also can mean a single future child (for example, 2 Samuel

7:12, 13). In Genesis 3:15 we find both uses there. We read about the future followers of both the woman (the faithful church) and the serpent/Satan. But we also read about a single male child of the woman ("he") who will "crush" "your [singular; only one] head," which means the serpent's head. When "seed" shows a certain child, the pronoun<sup>7</sup> that follows it is in the singular. The "seed" of the woman is Jesus.

What Genesis 3:15 suggests is that as soon as sin entered the world, God's eternal (forever) plan of salvation through Christ was put into action.



Christ is the Lamb that was killed "from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:8, NIV).

**Right from the start, God's plan was to save us and to destroy Satan. What are you doing, day by day, to take advantage of<sup>8</sup> God's wonderful plan of salvation? When all is finished, will you be among the saved and not among the destroyed? (Remember, in the end, it is one or the other.)**

7. pronoun—a part of speech. A pronoun takes the place of a noun—a person, place, or thing. Examples of pronouns are I, he, she, it, you, we, they, this, that, and so on.

8. take advantage of—to make full use of, or to gain as much as possible from.

**MONDAY—OCTOBER 27****ABRAHAM SAW MY DAY  
(Genesis 22:1–12)**

**How does God test Abraham's faith in Genesis 22:1–12? Why would the Lord ask Abraham to do this? What deep issues were involved?**

Genesis 22 does not tell us why the test was necessary. By asking Abraham to sacrifice (give up; put to death) his son Isaac, it seemed God was telling Abraham that the covenant relationship<sup>9</sup> had come to an end. And it was as if God were telling Abraham that the special promises made to him were now over. So, that meant Abraham would not be God's instrument (tool) in blessing all the nations of the earth (Genesis 12:3). But Abraham showed his faith to the Lord by being willing to return the gift of his son to God. Abraham decided to fully trust in God's mercy and grace<sup>10</sup> (Hebrews 11:19).

**What made it possible for the covenant<sup>11</sup> to be renewed in Genesis 22:13–18?**

By asking Abraham to sacrifice his son, God was announcing a sentence (judgment) against him and bringing

to an end His special purpose for him. But all this quickly was changed when a ram was offered in place of Isaac. God gave to Abraham what he needed. It was a sacrificial<sup>12</sup> animal that could take the place of his son. In this way the Lord could renew the covenant with Abraham. God, not Abraham, provided (gave) the victim of sacrifice. The animal was substituted<sup>13</sup> for Isaac. It took Isaac's place so that Isaac would not have to die, just as Jesus, on the cross, would take our place and die for our sins. Abraham learned that day how much the gospel<sup>14</sup> would cost God—the life of His Son, Jesus. This is because the sacrificial offering could only “ ‘be provided [given]’ ” through Jesus (Genesis 22:14, NIV).



**God provided a ram to take Isaac's place. In the same way, Christ takes our place so we do not have to die.**

**Our minds tremble at the faith of Abraham. What things are you**

9. covenant relationship—a promise or agreement between God and His people. God continues to bless us as long as we remain faithful to Him.

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

11. covenant—a promise or agreement between God and His people. If the people obeyed God, God would bless them.

12. sacrificial—having to do with an animal, gift, or offering that is given up to get something else that is wanted.

13. substituted—when someone or something takes the place of another person or thing.

14. gospel—the good news that Jesus saves us from our sins; the good news of salvation.

being called to sacrifice, *by faith*, before the Lord? What things, if any, might you need to surrender (give to Jesus) so that the covenant blessings may remain yours?

## TUESDAY—OCTOBER 28

### GOD ANNOUNCES HIS SALVATION TO MOSES (Exodus 32:7–10)

How did God feel about the act of idolatry<sup>15</sup> of the people of Israel on Mount Sinai in Exodus 32:7–10?

This act of idolatry was an act of rebellion against God. This was a breaking of the covenant (promise; agreement) that God had just made with them. Like Adam and Eve, the Israelites were left separated from God. They would have been left to die if Moses had not asked God to give them His mercy (Exodus 32:11–14).

What did Moses say to God after this event? Exodus 32:30–32. How is the promise of the gospel found here?

Moses did not excuse the people. He made it clear to them that they had sinned against God. But he also told them that he was going to meet the Lord to ask Him to forgive them.

He then did the unbelievable: He offered himself to the Lord as a means of atonement! Moses was willing to have his name removed from the book of life (Exodus 32:32; read also Psalm 69:28; Philippians 4:3) if that would make it possible for the people to be restored to unity<sup>16</sup> with the Lord.

Clearly, the Lord could not accept that unselfish offer. Moses' life could not atone ("pay") for sin.



Israel separated themselves from God when they worshiped the golden calf.

How would the Lord finally solve the problem? Read Exodus 34:6–10.

The Lord showed Himself to Moses as a forgiving God. This forgiveness covers all: “forgiving wickedness,

15. idolatry—idol worship (bowing down to statues or false gods); loving something more than we love God.

16. unity—when two or more people or things are joined together as one; when two or more people are in agreement in ideas, feelings, and so on.

rebellion and sin'” (verse 7, NIV). The Hebrew word for “forgiving” literally means “bearing (accepting all upon oneself).” The way God deals with our sin is by removing it from us and bearing (accepting) it Himself. Moses could not do that. God already had decided that He would do it through His Servant. What Moses and the children of Israel needed was given by God.

**God was ready to wipe (remove) them out for their idolatry! What should this tell us about how God feels toward sin? What should this tell us about how we must get sin out of our own lives?**

### WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 29

#### THE SERVANT OF THE LORD (Isaiah 52:13–53:12)

**What great hope and promise does Isaiah 52:13–53:12 give us?**

These verses in Isaiah present one of the most glorious sections (parts) of verses in the Old Testament. This section shows how limited the Israelite sacrificial system was as a way of sin payment between humans and God. The problem of sin was so serious that only the Servant of the Lord (Jesus) could solve it. The verses describe the experiences of both the people and the Servant.

*The People:* The people went through two experiences. The first one was of disbelief. The other experience was confession<sup>17</sup> and sorrow for sins. At first the Servant (Jesus) was seen as ugly, almost like a leper (Isaiah 52:14) and as someone “stricken [punished] by God, smitten [beaten] by him” (Isaiah 53:4, NIV). Because God appeared to have rejected (refused) Him, the people, too, hated and rejected Him (verse 3). Then they realized that God had a purpose in the experience of the Servant (Jesus). The Servant was taking their sorrows and sufferings (verse 4) on Himself. He was bearing (accepting) their sins. And as their Substitute,<sup>18</sup> He was dying for them. When the people saw the sacrifice of the Servant, they saw themselves as they truly were: “All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God. All of us have turned to our own way. And the Lord has placed on his servant [Jesus] the sins of all of us” (verse 6, NIV). It is only by looking at the Cross that we see the twisted results of sin in our lives.

*The Servant:* The experience of the Servant was very painful. He was lonely, rejected (refused) by all (verse 3), burdened with sorrows and suffering (verse 7), and even “cut off from the land of the living” (verse 8, NIV). But, there was no reason for this treatment because “he hadn't [had not] harmed anyone.

17. confession—the act of telling God your sins and admitting to others what you have done wrong against them.

18. substitute—someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing. Jesus is our Substitute because He died for our sins.

And he never had lied to anyone” (verse 9, NIV). Why was this innocent person suffering? It was because the Lord was presenting the Servant’s life as a “guilt offering” (verse 10, NIV). He was accepting the sins of the people and dying in their place so that they could be called righteous (holy) and innocent (verses 11, 12). But after that sacrificial death, He was to see light again (verse 11) and to be given a very high position (Isaiah 52:13).

Isaiah depicted the sacrificial death of Christ as the only acceptable payment for sin. Christ became what we are so that we may be restored to fellowship with God.

**Read again Isaiah 52:13–53:12 and pay special attention to all that Jesus has done for us on the cross. What hope do you see in there for yourself?**

## THURSDAY—OCTOBER 30

### ANNOUNCED IN DANIEL (Daniel 9:7–11)

**In Daniel 9:7–11, how did Daniel describe the condition of the people in his prayer?**

To experience God’s healing and freedom from sin, we must first recognize that we are lawbreakers and sinners against God. A basic human<sup>19</sup>

problem is our unwillingness to confess that there is something seriously wrong with us. We hate to admit that we are in great need of forgiveness and peace with our Creator. Even forgiven sinners always must recognize, as Daniel did, that we are in daily need of God’s forgiving grace.

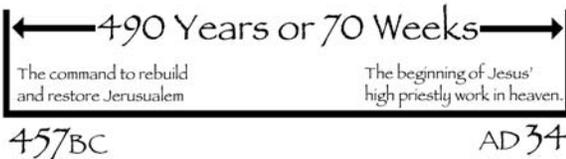
**What is Daniel’s prayer to the Lord in Daniel 9:16–19? On what basis is Daniel making this prayer?**

We need to understand that we are sinners. When we do, we need to ask to receive God’s forgiveness. Daniel knew that he needed God’s mercy and His wonderful grace to save him from his sins.

In this chapter we also find a prophecy.<sup>20</sup> In it God reveals not only *how* He was planning to solve the problem of sin but also the time frame when this would happen. (Read Daniel 9:24–27.) The *how* was through His Anointed One, the Messiah, the King. The *time* for Jesus’ sacrificial death and the beginning of His priestly work (the anointing of the sanctuary) is 70 weeks (490 years). The prophetic period runs from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34. God expected His people to be ready for the coming of the Messiah. What this amazing prophecy shows is that God is in full control of every part of His work of salvation and that He will make sure it fulfills His purpose.

19. human—having to do with men, women, and children.

20. prophecy—a message sent from God that tells what will happen in the future.



The 490-year prophecy shows that God is in control of His work of salvation.

**How important is it for you to know that even after you have accepted Jesus as your Savior, you will always need His forgiving grace? Does that weaken your assurance (being hopeful and certain) of salvation? Or does that give support to your assurance? Give reasons for your answer.**

### FRIDAY—OCTOBER 31

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** “Instant (right away; at once) Substitute: Man accepted the temptations<sup>21</sup> of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do. But in that instant Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead. He said, ‘Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man’s place. He shall have another chance.’ ”—Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 1, page 1085.

**Importance of Isaiah 53:** “This chapter should be studied. It shows Christ as the Lamb of God. Those who are lifted up and are vain with pride should think about this picture of their Savior. Then they should humble themselves in the dust. The entire chapter should be memorized. Its influence<sup>22</sup> will humble the sinner who becomes uplifted through self-importance.” —Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 4, page 1147.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ Go back through the week’s lesson. Take everything that is taught each day and write a summary of all that we can learn about the plan of salvation from what God has shown in these Old Testament stories. Bring what you have learned and share it with the class.
- ❷ Read the first Ellen G. White quote listed above. What does that tell us about the character of God?<sup>23</sup> What does it mean to have “another chance”?
- ❸ As a class, go over the story of Abraham on Mount Moriah. What other lessons can we learn from it about what it means to live by faith?

21. temptations—things that can turn us away from God and that try to get us to do, think, feel, or say what is wrong.

22. influence—the power to affect or change persons or things.

23. character of God—who God is; having and understanding the character of God is the same as being kind, loving, honest, and so on. God’s law (Ten Commandments) shows us His character.