ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

TEACHERS EDITION

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The Sanctuary

by: Martin Pröbstle

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Contents

1 The Heavenly Sanctuary—September 28–October 4

2 ”Heaven” on Earth—October 5–11

3 Sacrifices—October 12–18

4 Lessons From the Sanctuary—October 19–25

5 Atonement: Purification Offering—October 26–November 1

6 The Day of Atonement—November 2–8

7 Christ, Our Sacrifice—November 9–15

8 Christ, Our Priest—November 16–22

9 The Pre-Advent Judgment—November 23–29

10 The Eschatological Day of Atonement—November 30–December 6

11 Our Prophetic Message—December 7–13

12 The Cosmic Conflict Over God’s Character—December 14–20

13 Our Prophetic Message—December 7–13

14 The Cosmic Conflict Over God’s Character—December 14–20

15 The Cosmic Conflict Over God’s Character—December 14–20
Exhortations From the Sanctuary—December 21–27 ..............

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# Bible Versions Table

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Unquestionably, the greatest revelation of the love and character of God was at the cross, where the Lord offered Himself in the person of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of a world that never had to sin to begin with. To help us to understand better what this great sacrifice meant, God devised the earthly sanctuary, a pictorial representation of the plan of salvation. This earthly sanctuary, however, only modeled the heavenly one, which is the true center of God’s presence and of His activity in the universe.

When God established the sanctuary on earth, He used it as a teaching tool. The Israelite sanctuary and its services displayed important truths about redemption, about the character of God, and about the final disposition of sin.

The sanctuary formed the template to help us to understand Jesus as our Sacrifice and High Priest. When John the Baptist told his disciples that Jesus was the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John
1 1:29, 36, NKJV), they understood what John meant because  
2 they understood something of the sanctuary. The book of  
3 Hebrews presupposed a knowledge about the ancient Israelite  
4 priesthood so that the original recipients of the letter  
5 could grasp what Jesus was doing for them in heaven.  
6 Sanctuary terminology was also used to teach truths about  
7 Christian living. In short, knowledge of the sanctuary  
8 system became a foundation for the new message of salvation  
9 in Christ.  
10 However, throughout much of the Christian era, the  
11 sanctuary message was largely forgotten. Not until the  
12 middle of the nineteenth century, when Seventh-day  
13 Adventists began to appreciate God’s paradigm of salvation  
14 anew, including the message of the pre-Advent judgment, was  
15 a fresh emphasis placed on the sanctuary.  
16 “The subject of the sanctuary was the key which  
17 unlocked the mystery of the disappointment of 1844. It  
18 opened to view a complete system of truth, connected and  
19 harmonious, showing that God’s hand had directed the great  
20 advent movement and revealing present duty as it brought to  
21 light the position and work of His people.”—Ellen G. White,  
22 The Great Controversy, p. 423.
Introduction: The Sanctuary

1. As the key for a complete system of truth, the sanctuary and Christ’s priestly ministry became the basis for the Seventh-day Adventist faith—and still remains so. In fact, the sanctuary message is the Adventists’ unique doctrine. At the same time, no other doctrine of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (with the possible exception of the Sabbath) has faced so many challenges. Fortunately, throughout the years, these challenges have not only been withstood, they have increased our understanding of this crucial teaching and have made us, as a people, stronger in our understanding of salvation.

2. Ellen G. White recommended focusing our highest attention on the sanctuary because “the sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ’s work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects.”—The Great Controversy, p. 488. Thus, we can “exercise the faith which is essential at this time” and
“occupy the position which God designs [us] to fill.”—The Great Controversy, p. 488.

The sanctuary discloses the heart of God. Studying the sanctuary will bring us close to the presence of the Supreme and to the personality of our Savior and draw us into a deeper personal relationship with Him.

Hence, our study for this quarter: God’s sanctuary, both His earthly model and the heavenly original.

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Key Text: 1 Kings 8:49

The Student Will:

Know: Grasp the reality and basic functions of the heavenly sanctuary.

Feel: Appreciate the warmth and intimacy of the heavenly sanctuary as God’s home.

Do: Accept the biblical picture of a real heavenly sanctuary and internalize its message of “God with us.”

Learning Outline:

I. Know: The Reality and Functions of the Heavenly Sanctuary

A. The Bible repeatedly affirms the reality of the heavenly sanctuary. Why is it important that the heavenly sanctuary be a real place in heaven and not just as a metaphor for salvation?

B. There are five main functions of the heavenly sanctuary: God’s residence; command center of the
universe; place of worship; celestial courtroom; and center of salvation. Which of these were present even before sin, and which will continue even after the great controversy is over?

II. Feel: The Sanctuary as God’s Home

The heavenly sanctuary is described in Scripture as God’s own dwelling place. How does it affect your feelings about the heavenly sanctuary when you view it as more than a celestial courtroom—as also the personal home of God?

III. Do: The Heavenly Sanctuary and God’s Character

How can the understanding of the heavenly sanctuary as the place where “God is with us” (and not just a place of judgment) expand our view of God’s character?

Summary: The heavenly sanctuary reveals a loving God who has condescended to dwell with His creatures from the beginning of Creation.
STEP 1–Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: 1 Kings 8:49

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The heavenly sanctuary demonstrates the “Immanuel [God with us] principle” from the beginning of Creation throughout eternity: God comes down out of heaven into time and earthly space to take up residence with His creatures, invites them to intimate fellowship with Himself (worship), and (after sin) makes a way for this intimate relationship to be restored.

Just for Teachers: We focus this quarter on a subject that is probably more pervasive and foundational in Scripture than any other: the sanctuary. Ellen G. White wrote, in 1906: “The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.”—Evangelism, p. 221. Adventist pioneer Uriah Smith forcibly describes the importance he found in the sanctuary message: “The
Sanctuary! Momentous subject! Grand nucleus around which cluster the glorious constellations of present truth! How it opens to our understanding the plan of salvation! How it lifts the vail [sic] from the position of our Lord in heaven! What a halo of glory it throws upon his ministry! What a divine harmony it establishes in the word of God! What a flood of light it pours upon past fulfillment of prophecy! How it fortifies the mighty truths of these last days! What a glory it sheds upon the future! With what hope and joy and consolation it fills the heart of the believer! Glorious subject! Its importance can neither be overdrawn nor overestimated.”—“Reflections on the Sanctuary,” The Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald, March 25, 1858.

Opening Activity: Ask your class to stretch their minds by imagining and describing what they think the heavenly sanctuary looks like. Ask them to share why they think that God, who is omnipresent, needs to reside in a heavenly sanctuary.
Consider This: Jesus in His incarnation is called "'Immanuel,'" "'God with us'" (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:23, NKJV). Was the "Immanuel principle" already operative before the Incarnation when God dwelled in a location in heaven that He called His sanctuary? Explain. See Exodus 25:8 for God’s stated purpose for the sanctuary. When did the heavenly sanctuary originate? Was there a heavenly sanctuary even before the need to solve the sin problem in the universe? Give reasons for your answer.

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: The Bible contains scores of references to the heavenly sanctuary. (See Elias Brasil de Souza, *The Heavenly Sanctuary/Temple Motif in the Hebrew Bible* Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series, vol. 7 [Berrien Springs, Mich.: ATS Publications, 2005, who examines 43 Old Testament passages; a similar study is being done of the New Testament that looks at over 35 heavenly-sanctuary passages.) These many passages, coming from all parts of the Bible, repeatedly underscore the reality of the
heavenly sanctuary as an actual place in heaven (see, for instance, Rev. 4:2, 11:19). Scripture mentions five main functions of the heavenly sanctuary: it is (1) God’s residence; (2) the command center of the universe, where God rules from His throne; (3) the place of heavenly worship; (4) the heavenly courtroom where God conducts righteous judgments; and (5) the place (along with the Cross) for solving the sin problem. Seventh-day Adventists often emphasize the fourth and fifth functions, which came into view after sin, and these important purposes will be the focus of several future lessons. But because the first three basic, original (and eternal) purposes of the heavenly sanctuary are often neglected, we will highlight these functions in what follows.

Bible Commentary

I. God’s Heavenly Home

(Review 1 Kings 8:49 with the class.)

In the Old Testament, the heavenly sanctuary is often spoken of as a “temple.” These texts that show God is
in His temple (Ps. 11:4, Isa. 6:1, Mic. 1:2, Hab. 2:20, et cetera). The Hebrew word for “temple,” hekal, is derived from the ancient Sumerian word EGAL, which means “great house.” The sanctuary is often called “the house of the Lord” (for example, see Ps. 23:6) and God’s “habitation” (NKJV) or “dwelling” (NIV) (see Deut. 26:15, Ps. 68:5, Jer. 25:30, Zech. 2:13). Thus, the heavenly sanctuary/temple is ultimately God’s residence—His home!

This heavenly temple has been in existence since the beginning of Creation (see Jer. 17:12, whose language reflects Genesis 1:1). Though the metaphysics of God’s existence is hard to understand, He condescended to dwell in space and time, to be close to His creatures—“God with us.” And Jesus is now preparing “‘rooms’” for us to live eternally in His “‘Father’s house’” (John 14:1–3, NIV), which refers to the heavenly sanctuary.

Consider This: How does understanding the heavenly sanctuary as God’s own home, where He invites His creatures for fellowship (and one day to live with
Him), broaden your perspective of God as a warm,
friendly, inviting Person?

II. The Command Center of the Universe

(Review Psalms 47:6–9 with the class.)

Many passages of Scripture depict God in His throne
room and speak of the heavenly sanctuary as God’s
throne room. (See especially 1 Kings 22:19; Ps. 93:1,
2; 97:2; 103:19, 20.) Just as Solomon, the earthly
king in Israel, built a “Hall of Judgment” along with
his personal residence (see 1 Kings 7:1, 7, 8, NKJV),
where he administered the affairs of Israel; so, we
may visualize that the heavenly King has a throne room
or “Hall of Judgment” (the Most Holy Place) and His
personal residence (the Holy Place). From His “command
center” in the heavenly sanctuary, God conducts the
“affairs of state” for the universe.

Consider This: What kind of administrative “affairs of
state” do you imagine God conducting from His throne
room before and after the rise of sin?
III. The Place of Heavenly Worship

(Review Revelation 4 and 5.)

Many biblical passages describe the heavenly sanctuary as a place of worship. Isaiah 14:12-21 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 not only depict the fall of Lucifer and the rise of evil, but they also portray the heavenly sanctuary's existence even before sin, with Lucifer as the “‘anointed cherub who covers’” (vs. 14, NKJV), or covering cherub (see Exod. 37:9). Here, Lucifer's position as the covering cherub implies the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary on the “‘mountain of God’” (Ezek. 28:14, NKJV). The function of this pre-Fall sanctuary is stated in the parallel passage: it is the “‘mount of assembly’” (Isa. 14:13, NIV). At the heavenly sanctuary, the unfallen created intelligences assembled to worship their Creator.

After the entrance of sin, the praise (doxological) function of the heavenly sanctuary continued. Isaiah is shown the heavenly temple when it is astir with doxology; the seraphim chant their praise antiphonally: “‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’” (Isa. 6:3,
NKJV). Revelation 4 and 5 depict a similar worship scene in the heavenly sanctuary after Jesus’ ascension: the heavenly creatures praise their Creator (Revelation 4) and Redeemer (Revelation 5). And doxology will continue to emanate from the sanctuary throughout the climax of the great controversy and for eternity (Rev. 19:1-5, Isa. 66:23, Rev. 21:1-3).

Consider This: What is your reaction to the following theological aphorism: “Before soteriology [the plan of salvation] is doxology [worship]”? What does this statement say about the character of God and His original, eternal purpose in establishing the heavenly sanctuary?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: It is vital to grasp that the original purpose of the heavenly sanctuary was to reveal part of the essential nature of God’s character—“‘Immanuel’”—God with us. That God condescends to live in a heavenly sanctuary among the created heavenly beings reveals that He is not aloof,
distant, cold, and forbidding. He longs to be close to His creatures, to dwell with us.

Thought Questions:

1. Is the heavenly sanctuary a real place in space and time, or is it only a metaphor? Support your answer from Scripture.

2. Much of the Christian world (following the thought of Platonic dualism) still believes that God is essentially “timeless”; that is, He does not come down to dwell in space and time. How does the historical reality of the heavenly sanctuary become a key to providing a correct view of the nature of God? Why is this important?

Application Question:

How does understanding the “Immanuel principle,” in regard to the heavenly sanctuary, affect your personal understanding of the sanctuary doctrine and sharpen your perspective on the character of God?

STEP 4—Create
Just for Teachers: Try to help your students to visualize the warmth and intimacy of the heavenly sanctuary as being God’s own home. An interior decorator in Russia, who became a theology teacher after the fall of Communism, wrote a paper entitled “An Interior Decorator Looks at the Heavenly Sanctuary.” She pointed out that professional interior decorators can tell much about the character of the person who lives in a house by the way the home is decorated. She suggested that the furnishings of the heavenly sanctuary, God’s home, reveal much about God’s character, even before they came into play with regard to the sin problem.

Activity: Think about the various “furnishings” of the heavenly sanctuary (God’s home) as described in Revelation and as partially reflected in their earthly counterparts; visualize what these furnishings of God’s home tell us about God, even before they became symbols of salvation? (For example, how might the table of bread connote God’s “dining room,” where “table fellowship” takes place between God and His heavenly “house guests”—the heavenly intelligences who
assemble to worship Him?) What about the lampstand, the incense, the ark? What insights might these furnishings reveal about God’s character?
Key Text: Hebrews 8:5

The Student Will:

Know: Comprehend the foundations of sanctuary
typology.

Feel: Appreciate the beauty of Christ’s life and
the power of His promises as revealed in
sanctuary typology.

Do: Decide to contemplate Christ’s life and claim
His promises that were foreshadowed in sanctuary
typology.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: The Foundations and Fulfillment of Sanctuary

Typology

A. The Garden of Eden was earth’s first
sanctuary. Why was a sanctuary on earth needed
even before humans sinned?

B. The earthly sanctuary was a copy of the
heavenly original. How can sanctuary typology
help us to understand Christ’s ongoing ministry
in the heavenly sanctuary?

C. The main contours of the earthly sanctuary and
its services find fulfillment in the earthly life
of Christ, in the church, and at the end of
earth’s history. How does this fulfillment of
sanctuary typology expand your understanding of
the gospel?

II. Feel: The Sanctuary, Jesus, and the Church

A. What sanctuary types pointing to Christ are
most meaningful to you personally?
B. How can claiming the Bible promises implied in
sanctuary typology help us to live more Christ-like?

III. Do: Contemplate Christ and Claim His Sanctuary
Promises

A. Determine this next week to make Christ’s
character more vivid in your mind through
sanctuary typology.
B. Which of the precious promises that are implied in sanctuary typology will you choose to claim?

Summary: Sanctuary typology is a powerful aid in assisting us to understand the major facets of the gospel.
Lesson 2

TE-4Q-2013-02-Learning Cycle

STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Hebrews 8:5

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The earthly sanctuary—a copy of the original heavenly sanctuary—pointed forward to a three-phase fulfillment of the work done in its heavenly counterpart, as seen in (1) Christ’s first advent; (2) His body, the church; and (3) the final events of earth’s history.

Just for Teachers: The Greek word typos (from which we get our English word type) has the basic meaning of a "hollow form or mold" (think of a jelly/gelatin mold, an ice sculpture mold, or a bread/scone pan). When we grasp the basic functions of the hollow mold, then we can understand the basics of sanctuary typology: (1) the hollow mold and the end product shaped by the mold are both spatial-temporal realities; so, the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries are historical realities; (2) the hollow mold is not the original but is shaped from
a previously existing prototype; so, the earthly
sanctuary is a copy of the original heavenly
sanctuary; (3) the hollow mold shows in advance the
basic contours of the end product that will be shaped
by it; likewise, the Old Testament sanctuaries reveal
the basic contours of the New Testament fulfillments
of the sanctuary types; and (4) the end product is
greater than the hollow mold and fulfills the function
for which the mold was designed; likewise, the New
Testament fulfillments are greater than the Old
Testament sanctuary types, and they fulfill the
function for which they were designed.

Opening Activity: Bring a hollow mold (bread/scone
pan, gelatin/jelly mold, or even an empty milk carton
that could be used to shape a liquid frozen in it) and
explain the meaning of sanctuary typology using the
illustration described above.

Consider This: The Old Testament sanctuary types not
only point forward (horizontally) to their New
Testament fulfillment, but they also point upward
(vertically), showing that the heavenly sanctuary was
in existence (as the prototype) even before the earthly sanctuary was. Why do you think God felt it was important to give to human beings the earthly sanctuary types to point forward and upward to the sanctuary antitypes?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: In this section we will explore three main ideas: (1) the Garden of Eden as earth’s original sanctuary; (2) the biblical foundation for identifying sanctuary typology; and (3) how the sanctuary types have one New Testament fulfillment in three phases. For an extended summary of these ideas, browse the subject of biblical typology on the following Web site: www.andrews.edu/~davidson/.

Bible Commentary

I. The Eden Sanctuary

(Review Genesis 3:24 with the class.)

Besides those mentioned in the Standard lesson Bible...
study guide, note other parallels between Eden and later biblical sanctuaries:

(1) both had an eastward orientation (Gen. 2:8, compare Exod. 27:13-16, 1 Kings 7:21, Ezek. 47:1);

(2) Eden and the sanctuaries shown to Ezekiel and John had a river flowing from them (Gen. 2:10; Ezek. 47:1-12, NIV; Rev. 22:1);

(3) both had precious metals, especially bdellium and onyx (Gen. 2:12; Exod. 25:7; 28:9, 20; Num. 11:7);

(4) the term for “light, lamp” (Hebrew ma’or) used to describe the sun and moon in Genesis 1:14-16, is used elsewhere in the Pentateuch only for the light given off in the sanctuary that comes from oil by the lamps of the menorah in the sanctuary (Exod. 25:6);

(5) after the Fall, at the eastern gate of Eden, the two cherubim are “put” (CEV), or “placed” (NKJV; Hebrew shakan, Gen. 3:24), the same Hebrew verb for God’s intention to “dwell” (shakan) among His people in the sanctuary (mishkan, Exod. 25:8, 9, NKJV).

Consider This: What was the purpose of a sanctuary on earth, even before the entrance of sin?
II. The Earthly Sanctuary: A Copy of the Heavenly Sanctuary

(Review Exodus 25:9, 40 with the class.)

God told Moses to make the tabernacle according to the “pattern” (Hebrew tabnit), that he would be shown in the mountain. Tabnit means “a copy of an original that serves as a [miniature] model for another copy.” Moses was first given a glimpse of the original heavenly sanctuary in all its vastness and glory (Exod. 24:10; see Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 343) and then shown “a miniature model of the heavenly sanctuary” (Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy, vol. 1, p. 269) to serve as a pattern for constructing the earthly sanctuary. Thus, the earthly sanctuary was ultimately a copy of the original heavenly sanctuary/temple.

Solomon’s temple was also made according to the divine “pattern” (tabnit) of the original heavenly temple (1 Chron. 28:11, 12, 18, 19). Even though the tent tabernacle of Moses and the solid-structure temple of Solomon were architecturally very different, the basic contours were the same: the same tri-partite
division of space, the same spatial proportions, the
same kinds of furniture, a veil or curtain between the
Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, and the same
system of sacrifices and priesthood and daily/yearly
services. These are the very contours that the author
of Hebrews summarizes in Hebrews 9:1–7. We should
focus our attention on the essential contours of
typology that remain constant in the various Old
Testament sanctuaries.

Consider This: How does recognizing the basic contours
of sanctuary typology help us to avoid going to
extremes and fixating upon minute sanctuary details
(pins, pegs, pillars, et cetera.) that differ between
various earthly sanctuaries?

III. The Three Phases of New Testament Sanctuary Typology

A. Inaugurated: Christ’s Earthly Life and Death

(Review John 2:19–21 with the class.)

All the basic contours of sanctuary typology find
their basic fulfillment in Christ as He inaugurates
the “last days” (Heb. 1:1, 2, NKJV) at His first
advent. In addition to what was mentioned in the Standard edition of the study guide, note, for example, that Christ is the High Priest (Hebrews 7–10), the Laver (Greek lutron, Titus 3:5), the Mercy Seat (Greek hilasterion, Rom. 3:25), His merits, the incense (Rev. 8:3), and His righteousness, the linen (Isa. 61:10). He is everything toward which the sanctuary points. We need to keep this Christ-centered focus foundational in our sanctuary study.

B. Appropriated: The Church (Corporate and Individual)
(Review 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 6:19 with the class.)

When the church, as a whole, is incorporated into Christ’s body, it also becomes a temple or sanctuary. Thus, the sanctuary typology that pointed to Jesus can be appropriated by the church corporately and individually. Beyond the examples given in the Standard lesson, Scripture assures us that we may become, through Christ’s promised power, a “living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1, NKJV), the light of the lampstand (Rev. 1:20; see also Matt. 5:14), and that our prayers may become like incense (Rev. 5:8, 8:3),
and our righteous works like fine linen (Rev. 19:8),
et cetera.

C. Consummated: The New Jerusalem as the Eternal Tabernacle

(Review Revelation 21:2, 3; 15, 16, 21, 22 with the class.)

The sanctuary also finds fulfillment in the finale of the great controversy. Revelation 21 makes clear that the New Jerusalem is the “tabernacle [skene] of God,” employing the same term as used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) for the sanctuary. So, John did not see a temple in the city because the whole city was now God’s sanctuary (in fact, the equivalent of the Most Holy Place—cubical in shape).

Consider This: What other aspects of the sanctuary are fulfilled in Christ, the Church, and in the final climax of salvation history? What is the significance of the New Jerusalem’s “tabernacle” being in the shape of a cube?
STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Christian writers usually apply sanctuary typology only to Christ. A few see its implications for the church, but the unique Seventh-day Adventist contribution is also to point out the final fulfillment phase of sanctuary typology in the heavenly sanctuary during the wind up of the great controversy.

Thought Questions:

1. How does understanding sanctuary typology reaffirm that the heavenly sanctuary is a real physical place in heaven and not merely a metaphor for salvation?

2. In what ways has your confidence been strengthened in the biblical soundness of the foundations of sanctuary theology—that the Old Testament sanctuary types reveal the basic features of Christ’s ongoing ministry in the heavenly sanctuary?
How is our Adventist understanding of sanctuary typology impoverished if we only concentrate on its fulfillment phase in heaven since 1844 and fail to recognize its historical fulfillment phase in Christ and in the Church?

**Application Questions:**

1. What is your response to the realization that every aspect of the sanctuary fulfillment in Jesus is also available for the Church, His body, and you individually?

2. How does it rejoice your heart to think of actually living with God in His “tabernacle” (the New Jerusalem) for eternity?

**STEP 4—Create**

Just for Teachers: Seek to impress upon the class the richness of seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament sanctuary typology and the power of appropriating the promises of sanctuary types for ourselves.
Activities:

1. Ellen G. White suggests "it would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.

Determine to spend some hours this week contemplating Christ’s life and ministry and death as the beautiful fulfillment of sanctuary typology.

2. Peter writes about the “exceeding great and precious promises” of God’s Word through which we may be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet. 1:4). This week consider a whole new set of Bible promises to claim—the ones implied in the rich typology of the sanctuary.
Key Text: Genesis 22:1-19

The Student Will:

Know: Understand the significance of the Old Testament sacrificial system.

Feel: Sense from the Old Testament sacrifices the awful nature of sin and the terrible cost of our salvation.

Do: Determine to contemplate regularly the fulfillment of the sacrificial system in Christ the “Lamb of God.”

Learning Outline:

I. Know: The Old Testament Sacrificial System

A. The sacrificial system was introduced by God after the Fall (Gen. 3:15, 21). How does the first gospel promise (Gen. 3:15) imply the substitutionary atonement of the Messiah?

B. The meaning of the sacrificial system was grasped by Abraham, especially through his
experience on Mount Moriah. What features of
Genesis 22 reveal the love of the Father in not
withholding His only Son from dying for us?
C. The Passover service (Exodus 12) provides one
of the most comprehensive prefigurations of the
sacrifice of Christ. What basic elements of His
sacrifice are foreshadowed in this service?

II. Feel: The Awfulness of Sin and the High Cost of
Atonement Portrayed in the Animal Sacrifices
A. How can visualizing the Old Testament
sacrifices help us to better appreciate the
heinousness of sin and the infinite cost of
Christ’s atoning death?

III. Do: Contemplating Christ in the Shadows
A. Resolve to spend quality time this next week
contemplating the atoning work of Christ as
prefigured in the Old Testament sacrificial
system.
Summary: The Old Testament sacrificial system provides a powerful portrait of the many-faceted meaning of Christ’s sacrificial death on Calvary.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: John 1:29

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The Old Testament sacrificial system provided a portrait-in-advance of the profound meaning of the sacrifice of Christ. It also typified the experience of Christians in offering themselves as a “living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1, NKJV).

Just for Teachers: A seminary professor tells the experience of when she reluctantly accompanied her husband through the conflict-torn region of the Holy Land to the top of Mount Gerazim at Passover time. Here, the few surviving Samaritans on earth still sacrifice Passover lambs. As the lambs were led to the slaughter, she averted her eyes. But at the last minute, she looked. How utterly awful their deaths were. As she beheld the innocent creatures struggling against the knife, her soul revolted against the
callousness of the priest, who was offering the
sacrifice. But even more, she found revolting the
whole idea of the sacrificial system. Why did innocent
animals have to die to point forward to the death of
Jesus? On the way back that night, in the light of the
full Passover moon, she poured out her bitterness
against God for the awfulness of the animal sacrifices
until suddenly light from heaven penetrated her
darkened mind. She finally began to understand the
point: sin is so awful that it cost the life of the
innocent Lamb of God. This Sacrifice was the only way
that God could get people with their hardened human
hearts to see how terrible sin was, how costly our
salvation is.

Opening Activity: Share the seminary professor’s
story, asking for class responses to the sacrificial
system.

Consider This: Some Christians teach that God did not
actually create the sacrificial system but simply
condescended to use a pagan concept to reach His
people where they were. Why does the Bible not support this view?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: This week we will examine the sacrificial system as introduced to Adam and Eve, as practiced in the patriarchal period, and as amplified in the laws of Moses. We will explore this system’s typological significance for understanding the heart of the gospel.

Bible Commentary

I. The Sacrificial System Introduced in Eden

(Review Genesis 3:9-21 with the class.)

In the first-gospel promise, found in Genesis 3:15, the substitutionary sacrifice of the Messianic Seed is already powerfully portrayed. Visualize it: the Seed, Christ, takes off His sandal, as it were, bares His heel, and steps voluntarily on a venomous viper. It is
a picture of the Seed voluntarily giving up His life
to slay the serpent. Christ volunteered to consciously
step on the head of the most deadly viper in the
universe, the serpent Satan himself, knowing full well
that it would cost Him His life.

Genesis 3:21 indicates that God clothed Adam and
Eve with skins—implying the sacrifice of animals. How
do we know that this clothing refers to more than just
covering their physical nakedness in order to keep
them warm from the chilled, post-Fall atmosphere? We
know because the text makes it clear that their
nakedness after the Fall was more than physical
nudity. After they had covered themselves with fig
leaves, Adam confessed to God that he was still naked
(vs. 10). Thus, the nakedness included a nakedness of
soul—i.e., guilt, which needed to be covered by more
than physical garments. Instead of the fig leaves of
their own works with which they unsuccessfully tried
to cover their nakedness, God covered them with the
robes of a Substitute. Instead of their blood, the
blood of an innocent victim was shed (in parallel with
the sin offering of Leviticus 4:29, the human sinners
probably slaughtered the sacrificial animal
themselves). Here is intimated the Messiah’s substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of humanity. God Himself instituted, and instructed Adam and Eve concerning, the sacrificial system.

Consider This: Ellen G. White writes: “The instant man accepted the temptations of Satan, and did the very things God had said he should not do, Christ, the Son of God, stood between the living and the dead, saying, ‘Let the punishment fall on Me. I will stand in man’s place. He shall have another chance.’” — Ellen White Comments, The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p. 1,085. Why is the substitutionary aspect of Christ’s sacrifice so important in our salvation?

II. Abraham and the Sacrificial System

(Review Genesis 22:1-19 with the class.)

The narrative of Genesis 22 describes the divine test of Abraham in which God asks him to offer up his son Isaac on Mount Moriah. This test may be the very apex of Old Testament gospel prefigurations, revealing in advance how both the Father and Son were to be
involved in the anguish of the atoning sacrifice.

Jesus remarked that "‘Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad’" (John 8:56, NKJV).

When did Abraham see Jesus’ day? The apostle Paul quotes from Genesis 22 (vs. 18) and specifically points out that scripture "announced the gospel in advance to Abraham" (Gal. 3:8, NIV). In the Hebrew of Genesis 22:17, 18, as in Genesis 3:15, the word for "seed" (zera’) first is used in a collective sense to refer to numerous descendants and then narrows to a singular meaning (marked by singular pronouns, although some modern translations do not show this) to focus on the one Messianic Seed in whom "‘all the nations of the earth shall be blessed’" (Gen. 22:18, NKJV). The experience of Isaac on Mount Moriah is thus explicitly linked to the sacrifice of the coming Messiah. Paul also points to the sacrificial spirit of the Father, who "did not spare [withhold] His own Son" (Rom. 8:32, NKJV), using the same language as God had twice used of Abraham on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:12, 16).

Consider This: How does Genesis 22 and the related
narrative of Abraham’s sacrifice in Genesis 15 (see especially verses 6-18) help us to better understand the gospel of justification by faith?

III. The Levitical Sacrificial System: The Passover

(Review Exodus 12:21-27 with the class.)

Among the many sacrifices in the Levitical system, perhaps none provides such a comprehensive, advance presentation of the sacrifice of Christ as the multi-faceted Passover service. Ponder the following points:

1. Foundational significance: Passover marks the “beginning of months” (Exod. 12:2).
2. Focus on the lamb (a symbol of Jesus) (Exod. 12:3, John 1:29).
3. Perfect timing (Exod. 12:5, John 13:1, 18:28, 19:14): Jesus died at 3 p.m. of the fourteenth day of Nisan, just as the first Passover lambs were to be slain.
5. An ample, all-inclusive, sacrifice (Exod. 12:4; John 3:16; Romans 3:23, 24; 5:6, 8, 18; 1 Tim. 4:10).

6. Personal appropriation of the sacrifice (Exod. 12:7, 8; John 6:53; 1 John 1:7, 9).

7. Propitiatory, substitutionary sacrifice. The lamb was to be “roasted in fire” (Exod. 12:8, NKJV). One may still observe the roasting of the Passover lambs over the fire pits on top of Mount Gerizim, as the Samaritans continue to observe this rite each spring. The two sticks of wood placed crosswise in the carcass of the lamb to hold it open for roasting take the very shape of the cross. The fires of divine wrath (Ps. 89:46; Zeph. 1:18; Heb. 12:25, 29) were poured out upon Jesus, as He took upon Himself the sins of the world and received the punishment we deserved.

The word Passover in Hebrew encapsulates the term by which the feast is named. “Passover” in Hebrew pesach, means “to pass or spring over.” God announced to Moses, “And when I see the blood, I will pass over [pasach] you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt” (Exod.
12:13, NKJV; compare vs. 23). Here is a prefiguration of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus.

(For more details, see “Ponder the Passover,” Shabbat Shalom 53, no. 1 [2006]: pp. 4–9, accessible at www.andrews.edu/~davidson/.)

Consider This: The sacrifice of the coming Messiah runs like a “red thread” throughout the Old Testament. Cite other passages setting forth this foundational theme of the gospel.

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Seek to assist the class to see the awfulness of taking an innocent animal’s life—the gruesome sight of animal slaughter, the stench of blood and burning carcasses—in order to better appreciate the cost of Christ’s death for our sin.

Thought Question:
Will sacrifices still be offered even after sin and sinners are no more? Discuss. (See Heb. 13:15 for a hint.)

Application Questions:

1. How may we personally apply “the merits of Christ’s blood . . . to the soul”?—Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 277.

2. What does Paul mean by urging us to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice” (Rom. 12:1, ESV)?

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: In the familiar passage of Ellen G. White, which we quoted last week—“it would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ” (The Desire of Ages, p. 83), she concludes the paragraph: “As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit.”
Activity: Decide to spend thoughtful hours this next week focusing on the sacrifice of Christ, especially as prefigured in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. Report the following week on the effect that this contemplation has had on your level of confidence in, and love for, Him and reception of His Spirit.
Lesson 4

TE-4Q-2013-04-The Lesson in Brief

Key Text: Psalm 27:4-14

The Student Will:

Know: Comprehend God’s beauty, truth, and goodness in the sanctuary message.

Feel: Emulate David’s experience in the sanctuary.

Do: Choose to experience not only “sanctuary prayer” but “sanctuary life.”

Learning Outline:

I. Know: Beauty, Truth, and Goodness in the Sanctuary

A. David’s quest was centered in the sanctuary (Ps. 27:4). Was this only temporary or was it his life goal?

B. David desired to “see the beauty of the Lord” reflected in the sanctuary. What did this actually involve?

C. David also desired to “inquire [investigate God’s truth] in His temple.” What is the “present
truth” of the sanctuary message to be investigated closely in these last days?

D. David also saw “the goodness of the Lord” in the sanctuary (Ps. 27:13, NKJV). What experiences were included in this encounter (Ps. 27:6-12)?

E. The sanctuary message is a way of life; it is possible now to enter the heavenly sanctuary boldly by faith and remain there (See Heb. 4:16; 6:19, 20; 10:19-22; 12:22-24). Does this refer to a prayer experience or to something more, as well?

II. Feel: Making the Sanctuary Experience Real

A. How can we emulate David’s desire to be at the sanctuary? How can we experience God’s beauty, truth, and goodness in the sanctuary as a way of life?

III. Do: Living the Sanctuary Life

A. Choose to experience “sanctuary prayer” and more unceasing “sanctuary life.”
Summary: We may learn and experience lessons of beauty, truth, and goodness in the sanctuary.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Psalm 27:4

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The lessons of the sanctuary may be encapsulated by three qualities: “beauty, truth, and goodness,” which are summarized in David’s song for the sanctuary (Psalm 27).

Just for Teachers: In Psalm 27:4, David boldly identifies his single-minded goal in life, his one great request: “One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life” (NIV). The “house of the LORD” is another term for the sanctuary. David’s single-minded quest was focused upon the sanctuary! In Psalm 27, he summarizes the three-fold experience he wished to have in the sanctuary. Verse 4 gives two facets of this experience: “to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire [after truth] in his temple” (NKJV, italics supplied). (The Hebrew word translated as “inquire,”
baqar, refers to careful examination of evidence in order to determine the truth of a matter.) Toward the end of the psalm (in the verse exactly paralleling verse 4) David pinpoints the third aspect of the sanctuary experience that he longs to have: “to see the goodness of the LORD” (vs. 13). Beauty, truth, goodness—according to the philosophers—these three things constitute the “triple star of value,” what is really worth living and even dying for. (See Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 595, for the same emphasis upon these three qualities.) David insists that all of these values are encapsulated in the message of the sanctuary. This week let’s explore how this is so!

Opening Activity: Ask the class, “If you had only one request to make of the Lord, only one goal to seek in life, what would you choose?” Let the various members of the class share their answers, and then read the inspired answer to this question in Psalm 27:4, 13.

Consider This: When David wrote Psalm 27, he was “a hunted fugitive, finding refuge in the rocks and caves

Discuss: Was David’s central focus upon the sanctuary unique to this time of special circumstances, or did it remain the passion of his life? (See 2 Sam. 7:1-13; 1 Chronicles 22, 28 and 29:1-9; and the numerous Davidic psalms referring to the sanctuary.)

**STEP 2—Explore**

*Just for Teachers:* This week we will look at important lessons that we can learn from the sanctuary. We have summarized these under the categories supplied by David in his inspired encapsulation of the sanctuary experience (*Ps. 27:4, 13*): beauty, goodness, and truth. Psalm 27 may be called the “Song for the Sanctuary”—it has more references to the sanctuary than any other psalm.

**I. Bastion of Beauty**

*(Review Psalm 27:4 with the class.)*

The Hebrew word *no'am*, here translated as “beauty,” is a dynamic term, describing beauty that moves the
beholder by its loveliness, its pleasantness. David
longed to behold in the sanctuary this beauty of the
Lord—a beauty that the Lord has within Himself (His
character) and also a beauty that the Lord imparts.
The psalmist writes elsewhere: “Strength and beauty
are in His sanctuary” (Ps. 96:6). “Worship the LORD in
the beauty of holiness” (Ps. 29:2, 96:9). At least
fourteen different Hebrew words for “beauty” are
employed by the inspired biblical writers in their
description of this aesthetic experience in connection
with the sanctuary.

The wilderness sanctuary was “a magnificent
structure. . . .

“No language can describe the glory of the
scene presented within the sanctuary . . . all
but a dim reflection of the glories of the temple
of God in heaven.”—Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and
Prophets, pp. 347, 349. Imagine just the precious
metals: according to Exodus 38:24, 25, the
construction of this portable wilderness tent
utilized over a ton of gold (29 talents, 730
shekels = 2205 lbs. = 1000 kg) and almost 4 tons
of silver (100 talents, 1775 shekels = 7583 lb.;
3440 kg). Visualize the unsurpassed beauty of the Solomonic temple, which Ellen G. White indicates was “the most magnificent structure ever reared by human hands” and yet only a “faint reflection” of the “vastness and glory” of the heavenly sanctuary.—The Great Controversy, p. 414.

To assist your imagination, consider that, in 1 Chronicles 22:14, David collected for use in the temple 100,000 talents of gold—about 3,500 tons (worth billions of U.S. dollars in today’s monetary value)—and one million talents of silver—about 35,000 tons. From this sanctuary beauty we learn that (1) God is a great lover of that which is beautiful (Exod. 28:2, 40; 2 Chron. 3:6); (2) God’s character as revealed in the sanctuary is beautiful—for example, His holiness (Lev. 19:2; Ps. 96:9); (3) God’s ways of salvation, typified in the sanctuary (Ps. 77:13), are stunningly beautiful; and (4) He longs to give us that same beautiful character (1 Pet. 1:16).
Lesson 4

Consider This: In what ways should our church “sanctuaries” (architecture and decorations) be beautiful today?

II. Temple of Truth

(Review Psalm 27:4, part b, with the class.)

David not only longed to see the beauty of the Lord in the sanctuary but “to inquire [after truth] in His temple” (NKJV). The sanctuary message is not only an experience of awesome beauty; it is also a reflective, diligent search for truth.

In the 150 psalms, there is an average of one explicit reference to the sanctuary per psalm, and these references give insights into many truths connected with the sanctuary, such as worship and praise (Ps. 96:9, 150:1), judgment (Ps. 11:4, 5), and prayer (Ps. 28:2). The psalmist went to the sanctuary when he was trying to understand why the wicked prosper while the righteous suffer, and in the sanctuary (perhaps while watching the fire consuming the sacrifice, representing divine retribution upon sin) he “understood their end” (Ps. 73:17, NKJV). The
present truth of the sanctuary message for these last
days is particularly concentrated in the apocalyptic
books of Daniel and Revelation, which we will study in
later lessons. Every one of us must study the
sanctuary message for ourselves, diligently seeking to
understand its truth in the light of Scripture.

Consider This: What aspects of the “present truth” of
the sanctuary message are most central and also most
strongly challenged today?

III. Garrison of Goodness

(Review Psalm 27:5-13 with the class.)

It is not enough to see the beauty of sanctuary
typology or to grasp the truth of sanctuary for these
last days. The sanctuary is not just an object of
aesthetic contemplation or intellectual stimulation.
It is a living reality. David shows how the “goodness
of God” found in the sanctuary is experienced in
practical life. He describes how he found protection
and vindication in the sanctuary (vss. 5, 5a, 11, 12),
and that this understanding led him spontaneously to
joyous worship (vs. 6b). And at the very apex of the
psalm, David sets forth the ultimate meaning of the
sanctuary as personal fellowship with the God of the
sanctuary: “You have said, ‘Seek my face.’ My heart
says to you, ‘Your face, LORD, do I seek’ ” (vs. 8,
ESV). The psalm for the sanctuary ends with a hope for
the future when final vindication will come along with
a full revelation of the Lord in His sanctuary (vs.
14).

Consider This:

1. How is the subject of the sanctuary a message of
beauty, truth, and goodness for you?
2. What is the relevancy of the sanctuary doctrine for
your personal life? In what ways is it a living
reality?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: The floor plan of the wilderness
sanctuary is actually in the shape of a cross (see
Sunday’s daily study). The arrangement of the various
articles of furniture in the sanctuary illustrate the
main steps in coming to Jesus and remaining in connection with Him in worship and prayer. Follow the priest in God’s “way of the sanctuary”:

• Come into His presence (courts) with thanksgiving (Ps. 100:4).

• Experience repentance, confession, and forgiveness at the altar of sacrifice, which represents the Cross (Heb. 13:10-13, Leviticus 4—see Lesson 5).

• Find cleansing from sin and daily renewal at the laver (Titus 3:5, Greek word loutron for “washing” also means “laver”).

• Find daily spiritual nourishment from God’s Word at the table of showbread (John 6:48, 63; Deut. 8:3).

• Receive the power of the Holy Spirit at the lampstand (Rev. 4:5).

• Offer prayers of intercession at the altar of incense (Rev. 8:4).

• Find deep cleansing at the throne of God represented by the ark (Lev. 16:30; see Lesson 6).

Thought Question:
How do these steps coincide with the beginning of the Christian life and also with the maintenance of the Christian walk?

**Application Question:**

How can these steps be applied in a practical way in one’s daily prayer life? (Some have called this “sanctuary prayer.”)

**Activity:** Develop your own “sanctuary prayer” based upon the steps above.

**STEP 4—Create**

**Just for Teachers:** The book of Hebrews gives a most powerful lesson from the sanctuary: we may NOW enter the heavenly sanctuary by faith, with boldness and by faith—even “live” in the heavenly sanctuary. (Read Heb. 4:16; 6:19, 20; 10:19-22; 12:22-24.)

**Activity:** Invite your class to experience “sanctuary prayer” as described in the previous section, and then, even better, to choose “sanctuary LIFE”!
Key Text: Leviticus 4

The Student Will:

Know: Comprehend the typology of the sin offering (also called “purification offering”).

Feel: Appreciate the work of Jesus as prefigured in the sin offering.

Do: Experience the forgiveness of sin that the sin offering prefigured.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: Typology of the Sin Offering (Leviticus 4).

A. The repentant sinner (1) brought his sin offering to the sanctuary, (2) laid his hand upon the innocent animal, and (3) killed it. The animal sacrifice (4) was eaten by the priest (for the commoner or ruler), or (5) its blood was carried inside the Holy Place (for the priest or congregation). Thus (6) the sinner was cleansed from his sin, and (7) the sanctuary was defiled.
by the record of the sin. What does each of these
steps prefigure in the antitype?

II. Feel: The Joy of Christ’s Forgiveness

A. The Old Testament sin-offering ritual makes
vivid the steps of forgiveness through the
sacrifice and priestly ministry of Christ. What
are your feelings about Christ’s work as you
relive this typology?

III. Do: Experience God’s Forgiveness.

A. The typology of the Old Testament sin may be
experienced in reality as we receive forgiveness
through Christ our Substitute. Have you
determined that you will personally experience
this gracious forgiveness?

Summary: The sin offering foreshadows the way in which
repentant sinners receive forgiveness through the
sacrifice and priestly ministry of Christ. It
also prefigures the way in which the heavenly
sanctuary is defiled by the record of forgiven
sins.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Isaiah 53:6

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The Old Testament sanctuary ritual of the sin offering (also called “purification offering”) foreshadows the way in which repentant sinners receive forgiveness through the sacrifice and priestly ministry of Christ. It also points to the way that the heavenly sanctuary is defiled by the record of forgiven sin.

Just for Teachers: In his classic book on the sanctuary, Adventist pioneer Stephen N. Haskell wrote about the sin offering: “In none of the types was the individual worshiper brought into so close touch with the sanctuary service as in the sin-offering. There is no part of religious worship that brings the worshiper into such close touch with the Lord as when he kneels at the Saviour’s feet, confessing his sins, and
knowing the strength of the promise [1 John 1:9 cited]. . . . It is then that the repentant sinner touches the hem of the Master’s garment, and receives His healing power in the soul.”—The Cross and Its Shadow (South Lancaster, Mass.: The Bible Training School, 1914), p. 123.

Opening Activity: Ask the class to visualize themselves bringing a sin offering in Old Testament times. Then ask them to describe the various steps in the process of receiving forgiveness.

Consider This: Why was there need of a sin offering in the type, and, antitypically, why did Jesus need to die as our Substitute? What does the sin offering teach about the nature of divine justice and mercy?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: In this section we will summarize the major steps in the sin-offering ritual and their antitypical meaning and clarify the kinds of sins that were dealt with by the sin offering.
I. An Overview of the Sin-Offering Ritual

(Review Leviticus 4 with the class.)

Leviticus 4 describes two different procedures for the sin offering—one for the priest or congregation and the other for an individual ruler or a common citizen.

A. Steps in Common. The first four steps are the same for all involved:

1. Recognition of Guilt. The Hebrew word ‘asham (vss. 13, 22, 27) implies both legal status (“are guilty,” NKJV) and subjective experience “realize their guilt,” ESV).

2. Animal substitute, repentance, and confession. The repentant sinner brings his animal sacrifice to the door of the tabernacle (vss. 4, 14, 23, 28). “By the act of bringing the offering to the sanctuary, the individual confessed himself a sinner, deserving the wrath of God, and signified his repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood would remove the guilt of the
transgressor.”—Ellen G. White, in Signs of the Times, July 15, 1880.

3. Hand-laying, thus, in symbol, effecting the transference of sin to the sacrifice. The repentant sinner lays his hand on the head of the innocent animal (vss. 4, 15, 24, 29), symbolically transferring his/her sin to the innocent animal substitute, representing Christ our Substitute (see Leviticus 1; 4; 16:21; 17:11; Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 354, 355).

4. Death of the sin-bearing substitute. The repentant sinner then slays the animal before the Lord (Lev. 4:4, 15, 24, 29). This underscores that it is our sins that ultimately caused the death of the Lamb (see Isa. 53:5, 6, 8), who bore our sins as our Substitute on the Cross (2 Cor. 5:14, 15; 1 Pet. 2:24).

B. Differences in the Two Procedures. In the last phases of the two procedures, there are distinct differences in what the priest does with the animal.

For a sin of the priest and the whole congregation, the priest brings some of the blood into
the Holy Place (Lev. 4:5, 16), dips his finger in the blood and sprinkles some of it seven times before the Lord in front of the inner veil (vss. 6, 17), daubs some of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense (vss. 7, 18), pours the rest of the blood at the base of the outer altar (vss. 7, 18), removes the suet (vss. 8-10, 19), burns the suet on the altar (vss. 10, 19), carries the remainder of the animal to a clean place outside the camp (vss. 12, 21), and incinerates the remainder of the animal (vss. 12, 21).

For a sin of the individual ruler and individual common person, the priest collects the blood (vss. 25, 30), daubs with his finger some of the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering (vss. 25, 30), pours the rest of the blood at the base of the altar (vss. 25, 30), removes the suet (vss. 26, 31), burns the suet on the altar (vss. 26, 31), and eats the meat of the sin/purification offering (Lev:6:25-30).

The ultimate result is the same for both procedures: the priest “shall make atonement for” (that is, purge or remove the sin from; see NKJV and NIV) the repentant sinner(s), who “will be forgiven” (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31). The verb translated “will be
forgiven” is in the passive (Hebrew nif’al) and implies that it is God who does the forgiving, not the priest.

The basic difference in these two procedures may be summarized by this principle: when the blood goes into the sanctuary’s Holy Place, the meat of the sacrifice is not eaten; but when the blood does not go in, the meat of the sacrifice is eaten by the priest. Why this difference? The answer seems to be that in the cases of the priest or of the whole congregation (which would also include the priest), the priest cannot become the carrier of his own guilt, so the blood goes directly into the sanctuary as the agent of transfer carrying the sin away from the sinner into the Holy Place. But in the case of the ruler and the individual commoner, the priest is not involved in the sin; and thus, he can be the carrier of the sin from the sinner onto himself (see Lev. 10:16, 17). In this latter case, the sin is transferred to the sanctuary via the priests when the priests offer their own sin offering and the blood is taken into the sanctuary.

Ellen G. White supports this latter view: “The sins of the people were transferred in figure to the
officiating priest, who was a mediator for the people. The priest could not himself become an offering for sin, and make an atonement with his life, for he was also a sinner. Therefore, instead of suffering death himself, he killed a lamb without blemish; the penalty of sin was transferred to the innocent beast, which thus became his immediate substitute, and typified the perfect offering of Jesus Christ.”—Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 230.

C. Common Results of the Sin Offering. By means of the sin offering, the sinner is cleansed from the sin, he is forgiven, and the sin is transferred to the sanctuary. In its typological fulfillment, Christ is both the Lamb of God and the Priest-Mediator (John 1:29; Heb. 8:1, 2). He had no sin in Himself; so, as the Priest He could “bear the guilt of the congregation”—yes, of the whole world!—in His own body. He also could minister the benefits of His spilled blood in the New Covenant heavenly sanctuary.

Consider This: What is the function of the blood in the sin offering? What does it cleanse, and what does it defile? Can blood be an agent of cleansing and
defilement at the same time? (See Lev. 6:27.)

II. The Kind of Sin Involved in the Sin Offering
(Review Leviticus 5:1; 6:2, 3 with the class.)

Some interpreters maintain that only unintentional (inadvertent) sins could be forgiven through the sacrificial system, but there is explicit mention of deliberate (non-rebellious) sins also being forgiven through this system (Lev. 5:1, 10; 6:2, 3, 7). The word shegagah, used throughout Leviticus 4 (vss. 2, 13, 22, 27) and often translated as “unintentional” or “inadvertent,” derives from a verb meaning “to wander, go astray,” and can refer to both inadvertent and conscious (deliberate but non-rebellious) sins of “going astray” (Num. 35:11, Eccl. 5:6, 10:5, Job 12:16, Ps. 119:67, Prov. 5:20). (See R. Laird Harris, “Exodus,” The Expositor’s Bible Commentary [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1990], pp. 547, 548.)

Consider This: Numbers 15:22–31 contrasts sins of “going astray” (shegagah) with “high-handed” rebellious sins of presumption. Why was there no
atonement in the sacrificial system for “high-handed”
sins? Could people who committed “high-handed sins” be
forgiven by God if they repented?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Note that the Hebrew word chatt’at
“sin offering” may also be translated as “purification
offering” (especially when it refers to purification
from nonmoral ritual defilement, as in Leviticus 12:5–
8).

Thought Questions:

1 What is the symbolism of the burning of the fat
(suet) of the sacrificial animal on the altar and the
incineration of its carcass outside the camp? (See
Lev. 3:16, 17; Gen. 45:18; Heb. 13:11–13.)

2 Are the concepts of substitutionary atonement and
transfer of sin optional in understanding the gospel?

Application Questions:
What is your response to this statement of Ellen G. White: “We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute.”—Selected Messages, vol. 2, pp. 32, 33?

If we receive forgiveness for sin when we accept Christ our Substitute, why does the record of that sin remain in the heavenly sanctuary? Discuss: Is there an aspect of atonement beyond forgiveness? Give reasons for your answer.

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Return to the visualization of the sin offering, but now summarize the antitypical meaning of its various steps.

Activity: Have the class explain what each step of the sin-offering ritual signifies in the antitype. Determine to accept Jesus anew as your Substitute.
Lesson 6

TE-4Q-2013-06-The Lesson in Brief

Key Text: Leviticus 16

The Student Will:

Know: Grasp the essentials of Day of Atonement typology.

Feel: Sense the importance of the Day of Atonement message.

Do: Choose to participate in the special privileges of God’s people on the antitypical Day of Atonement.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: The Day of Atonement Activities (Leviticus 16 and 23:26-32)

A. The “continual” (tamid) sacrifice burned on the altar throughout the Day of Atonement (Num. 29:11). What does this teach us about the basis of our acceptance with God during the investigative judgment?
Lesson 6

B. The blood of the Lord’s goat cleansed the sanctuary from the accumulated record of confessed sins (Lev. 16:3-19). How does the antitypical Day of Atonement go beyond forgiveness?

C. The scapegoat (or Azazel) represents Satan (Lev. 16:5-10, 20-23). Is Satan our “Sin-Bearer”? Explain. (See Deut. 19:15-19, Rev. 12:10, 20:10.)

D. Congregational activities were required of ancient Israel during the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:30, 23:26-32). How do these apply to the antitypical Day of Atonement?

II. Feel: Assurance in the Judgment

A. The Day of Atonement involves repentance, cleansing, and investigative judgment. How can one have joyous assurance of salvation throughout this process?

III. Do: Eyes on Jesus!

A. Choose to participate in the privileges of spiritual Israel as you “turn your eyes upon Jesus” during the investigative judgment.
Summary: The Day of Atonement services point forward to Christ’s work of investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary and reveal the special activities of God’s people during this time.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Leviticus 16:29, 30

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The Old Testament Day of Atonement rituals prefigure the work of Christ and the responsibilities of His people during the antitypical Day of Atonement.

Just for Teachers: Have you ever wondered or been asked: "Why do Seventh-day Adventists spend so much time studying the Day of Atonement, a topic whose main biblical support is tucked away in a single chapter of an obscure part of the Pentateuch, Leviticus 16?"

Consider this observation: Moses organized the entire Pentateuch into a beautiful symmetrical structure and placed Leviticus at the very high point of that structure!
Why was this chapter placed at the center of the Pentateuch? The Day of Atonement was the holiest day of all the year during which time the holiest person of all Israel (the high priest) went into the holiest place on earth (the Most Holy Place) to perform the holiest work of all (the cleansing of the sanctuary, the work of final atonement). The name “Day of Atonement” in Hebrew is actually Yom Hakippurim [plural of intensification of kippur; used to emphasize the idea of atonement], the “Day of [ultimate] Atonement” (Lev. 23:27).
Opening Activity: Share with the class the symmetrical structure of the Pentateuch and then ask: What makes the Day of Atonement so central for spiritual Israel during the antitypical Day of Atonement?

Consider This: The antitypical Day of Atonement comprises the climactic period of salvation history (the time of the end). During this period, Christ, the High Priest of the universe, goes into the holiest place in all the universe (the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary), to do the holiest work of all time (the final work of atonement)!

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: In this lesson we will look at the typology of the Day of Atonement and its antitypical fulfillment.

I. The Main Rituals of the Day of Atonement

A. The “Daily” Offering

(Review Numbers 29:11 with the class.)
The “daily” (tamid) ministry of the priests was not suspended on the Day of Atonement (Num. 29:11; see Exod. 30:8, 10). The people were still constantly dependent upon the blood of the sacrifice and the priestly intercession of incense. The basis of acceptance before God during the antitypical Day of Atonement remains the same as before: the blood of Christ our Substitute and His righteousness imputed to us.

B. The Lord’s Goat

(Review Leviticus 16:3–19 with the class.)

A number of important truths emerge from the offering of the “Lord’s goat.” (The sin offering of the bull for the sinful priest [vss. 11, 14] is not applicable to Christ the sinless antitype [Heb. 7:26, 27] and thus, is not discussed here).

1. Sin-free blood. No hands were laid on the head of the Lord’s goat (vss. 9, 15); and hence, no sin was transferred to it; its blood was “sin-free.” As “sin-free” blood, its function when
applied to the sanctuary was not to defile but to cleanse it.

2. **Outward movement.** The atoning work on the Day of Atonement moved outward, from the Most Holy Place to the Courtyard (vss. 15-18), symbolically showing that the blood of the Lord’s goat did not defile the sanctuary but cleansed it.

3. **Investigative judgment.** The Day of Atonement implied a day of divine investigative judgment. Those who did not “afflict their souls” (literally, “humble themselves” in repentance) on the Day of Atonement would be “cut off,” i.e., come under divine investigative judgment concerning their afterlife (Lev. 16:29, 31; 23:27, 29, 32). Modern Jewish theologians recognize this function of the Day of Atonement.

4. **Atonement beyond forgiveness.** There is no mention of forgiveness (Hebrew salach) in Leviticus 16 (or any other passage referring to the Day of Atonement). During the year, God had taken responsibility for the forgiven sins upon Himself, as it were, in the sanctuary. On the Day of Atonement He was able to cleanse the sanctuary.
as He demonstrated His justice in having forgiven sinners throughout the year.

5. Cleansing. The Day of Atonement involved a work of corporate cleansing for God’s people. (See Lev. 16:30; Ezek. 36:25-27; Mal. 3:2, 3.) But note that it is God who takes responsibility for the cleansing of those who allow Him to do this work in their lives.

C. The Scapegoat (Azazel) Ritual

(Review Leviticus 16:5-10, 20-23 with the class.)

Many lines of biblical evidence support the conclusion that the “scapegoat” (Azazel) ritual points to Satan and not to Christ, as some modern interpreters claim.

1. Parallelism of personal beings. According to Leviticus 16:8, one of the two goats designated by lots was leYHWH “[standing] for [or belonging to] Yahweh,” and the other was la’aza’zel “[standing] for [or belonging to] Azazel.” If the first expression “for the Lord” refers to a personal being, Yahweh, then in natural parallelism, the second expression “for Azazel”
would refer to another personal being in contradistinction (and even opposition) to Yahweh, i.e., Satan.

2. **Timing.** The Azazel ritual takes place after the work of atonement for the sanctuary is already completed (Lev. 16:20).

3. **Nonsacrificial.** Unlike the Lord’s goat, Azazel’s goat is not slain, but, rather, it is led out alive into the wilderness (vss. 20–22). Azazel’s goat is not part of, nor linked with, the sacrifice of the sin offering.

4. **Elimination rite.** The Azazel ritual is not a sacrificial ritual but an elimination rite. Azazel is the “tote goat”—a “garbage truck,” as it were—to ritually carry the moral “garbage” out of the camp after it has been atoned for.

5. **Azazel and the goat demons.** Leviticus 17:7 warns the Israelites not to offer sacrifices to the “goat demons” (ESV, RSV, Hebrew se’irim). Elsewhere in Scripture these “goat-demons” are associated with the wilderness (Isa. 13:21, 34:14, RSV). Azazel’s goat being led out into the wilderness is thus associated with the demonic
powers represented by hairy goats. The interpretation of Azazel as a demonic power was the predominant view of early Jewish sources, also well represented in the teachings of the early Church Fathers and the prevailing view supported by modern scholars.

6. Revelation 20. The typology of Azazel finds a striking fulfillment in the fate of Satan during the millennium. In a clear allusion to Leviticus 16, John the Revelator in Revelation 20:1–3 describes Satan being “bound” (by a chain of circumstances) to the desolate earth (Greek abyssos, the same word used for the desolate earth in Jeremiah 4:23).

7. Malicious Witness. Satan bears the iniquities of the righteous, not in the sense of being their Savior but as the “accuser of our brothers” (Rev. 12:10, NIV). He receives just retribution according to the principle of the malicious witness (Deut. 19:15–19, Rev. 20:10).

II. The Activities of the Congregation on the Day of Atonement
(Review Leviticus 23:26–32 with the class.)

The five activities of the congregation of Israel on the Day of Atonement each have antitypical application for spiritual Israel today.

A. Gather at the Sanctuary for a Holy Convocation (vs. 27). “God’s people are now to have their eyes fixed on the heavenly sanctuary.”—Ellen G. White, Life Sketches, p. 278 (compare Heb. 4:16; 10:19, 20.)

B. Identify with the Offering Made by the priest (vs. 27). See Heb. 12:22–24. “One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,—Christ our righteousness.”—Ellen G. White, Sons and Daughters, p. 259.

C. Refrain from work (vss. 28, 30, 31). See Heb. 4:3, 9; Ellen G. White speaks of the “rest of grace.”—The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 7, p. 928.


E. Undergo a work of cleansing (Lev. 16:30). See Mal. 3:2, 3; Ezek. 36:25–27.
STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: The word for “cleanse” in Daniel 8:14 is nitsdaq, which has a broad range of meanings, including “cleanse,” “restore,” and “vindicate.” How do each of these meanings match the activities of the high priest in the Day of Atonement?

Thought Questions:

1. If people living in the antitypical Day of Atonement are not saved on a different basis than those living before this time, why is there a special work of cleansing?
2. What is the importance of having “atonement” beyond forgiveness, as typified in the Day of Atonement?
3. Why is it necessary for Satan to bear the punishment of the sins of the saints whom he has falsely accused?

Application Questions:

1. What practical application of the five activities of the congregation on the Day of Atonement can be made to our personal lives in the antitypical Day of
Lesson 6

Atonement?

How does the Day of Atonement judgment message help to give us assurance of salvation?

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Look again at the symmetrical structure of the Pentateuch in the introduction of the Learning Cycle for this lesson. Notice how in this structure the key word of Leviticus building up to Leviticus 16 is "blood," and flowing forth from Leviticus 16 is "holiness."

Activity: Ask the class to discuss the placement of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) right in the heart of the Pentateuch, with blood ("justification") as its basis and holiness ("sanctification") as its fruit. How does this illustrate the balanced gospel of assurance in the judgment (saved completely by grace but judged according to works/fruit)?
Lesson 7

Key Text: 1 Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:5, 6

The Student Will:

Know: Recognize God’s self-sacrifice on our behalf and His unconditional and unselfish love toward people.

Feel: Foster the feeling of gratitude toward God for loving and sacrificing in order to give us the assurance of salvation.

Do: Submit to God’s plan of salvation, praise Him for His unreserved acceptance, and thoughtfully serve as He serves us.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: God’s Incomprehensible Sacrifice for Sinners

A. Why did Jesus have to take on human nature and die on the cross in order to save humanity?
   Compare with Isaiah 53.

B. Why is it not possible for God to only forgive our sins in order to solve the problem of sin?
II. Feel: God’s Self-Sacrificing Love Warms Human Hearts

A. How can you express your thankfulness to God for His love and condescension to our human level?

B. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus became an atoning sacrifice for you, took upon Himself a condemnation that you rightly deserve, and gave you eternal life?

III. Do: God’s Grace Restores and Changes Sinners

A. Why is it so important to proclaim to the world God’s forgiveness?

B. How do God’s gracious actions toward sinners help you to act toward those who err?

C. Why is it so tragic if a person rejects the death of Christ?

Summary: When we accept God’s love and sacrifice for us, God forgives our sins, changes our status, blesses us, and leads us into a new path of life.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Isaiah 53:4–6

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: In a powerful way, the prophet Isaiah presents the mission of the Messiah, who is called the Servant of the Lord. In the Bible this is the best description of the role of our Savior on our behalf. This Servant brings hope, and His death saves humanity from their sins.

Just for Teachers: This week’s lesson should help the members of your class to understand the meaning of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as predicted in the life of the Servant of the Lord of Isaiah 53 and as seen in the larger biblical context. This Servant of the Lord was “a man of sorrows,” “a guilt offering,” and out of love He voluntarily died for our sins. His actions on our behalf are filled with humility, compassion, and love.
Opening Discussion: If you were asked to describe in one chapter the most important aspects of the mission of the Messiah, what would you write about Him? What crucial points should not be omitted?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: In the second part of the book of Isaiah are five songs of the Servant of the Lord that are also called the songs of the Suffering Servant (Isa. 42:1–9, 49:1–7, 50:4–9, 52:13–53:12, and 61:1–3). God wants to save His people even though they do not recognize His love. He, therefore, wants us to understand and appreciate His great sacrifice for humanity. In Isaiah 53, this sacrifice can be best described as a substitutionary death that has brought victory over sin, as well as death and justification for those who accept His solution for their sinful situation. For His followers, His infinite sacrifice and faithful love provide the greatest benefits.

Bible Commentary
Our eternal life depends on the fulfillment of the
mission of the Servant of the Lord. His gracious
sacrifice and suffering for us is the source of our
justification and salvation. Understanding these
passages is so vital for our spiritual life that we
will explore them this week with a special emphasis on
the fourth song. Follow the main thoughts of the
biblical material and engage your class in the Bible
study summarized in the sections below.

I. The First and Second Songs of the Servant of the Lord

(Review Isaiah 42:1–9 and 49:1–7 with the class.)

Consider carefully Isaiah’s texts, which describe
Christ’s universal mission. The first song does not
reveal the identity of the Servant of the Lord but
pictures His gigantic task: He will bring justice and
law to the whole world and will be a covenant and a
light to the world. Even though He is a King, He will
not act as a conqueror, but His manner will be gentle
and humble. His strength and power will be in the Word
and the Spirit of God.
The second song identifies the Servant as Someone who has to fulfill a crucial role in bringing Israel and her remnant back to God (so the Servant cannot be Israel or the remnant of Israel; see Isa. 49:6). He not only is an agent communicating about salvation, but He is, in His person, the Salvation to the entire world. For the first time in this song, one also finds allusion to the mental suffering and glorification of the Servant (Isa. 49:7).

Discussion Question: The literal translation of Isaiah 49:6 highlights the fact that the Servant of the Lord is the Salvation for the world: “And he says [the Lord to His Servant]: ‘It is a small thing that you be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will even give you for a light to the Gentiles [nations] to be my salvation to the end of the world’ ” (author’s translation). Compare with your class different translations of this verse and discuss with the members the difference between the declaration that Jesus Christ is the Salvation for the whole world and
the statement that the Servant will bring or proclaim
God’s salvation to the entire world.

II. The Third Song

(Review Isaiah 50:4-9 with the class.)

This song is called the “Servant’s Gethsemane,”
because the Servant Himself speaks about His own
experience, intense suffering, and trust in the Lord.
The prophet Isaiah first paints an incredibly
beautiful picture of the Servant’s appointments and
close relationship with God. The Lord awakens Him
morning by morning in order to reveal His task for the
day. The Servant’s obedient discipleship is described
in this passage.

For the first time the physical suffering of this
Servant is mentioned. He will be flogged, beaten,
tortured, and greatly humiliated by mocking and
spitting (vs. 6). However, in His anguish He trusts
that the Lord will help and vindicate Him.

Discussion Question: What from this passage of the
book of Isaiah proves that the Servant of the Lord
suffered voluntarily? What does it mean in Isaiah 50:7
that the Messiah set his “face like a flint” (NKJV)?

Activity: Ask members of your class to open their
Bibles and share other verses that are dear to them
about God’s love and His promises of care during our
distressing times.

III. The Fourth and Fifth Songs
(Review Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and 61:1-3 with the class.)

The prophet Isaiah comes to the core of the matter in
his fourth song. In five stanzas, each consisting of
three verses, we encounter the most sublime passage
about the Servant’s sacrificial life. This splendid
masterpiece contains the most glorious message about
the mission and accomplishments of the Messiah and
describes them in the following scenario:
1. Paradox of the Servant’s life—highly exalted and
deeply humiliated (Isa. 52:13-15). The puzzle of His
life seems unsolvable. But as Isaiah progresses
further in this poem, the enigma becomes clearer:
the Servant’s journey will be through suffering and sacrificial death to glorification.

2. Rejection of the Servant, man of sorrows, and sufferings (Isa. 53:1-3). People do not believe in Him, and twice in this passage it is underscored that He is despised. This realistic description ends with a sad statement that no one respects Him.

3. Atonement of the Servant of the Lord who took upon Himself our transgressions (Isa. 53:4-6). This core of the song explains why the Servant has to go through all the suffering and humiliation: “Surely he took up our infirmities . . . he was pierced for our transgressions, . . . crushed for our iniquities” (NIV). Isaiah clearly identifies us and our sins as the cause of the Servant’s death. You and I are responsible and guilty for His death, and we cannot blame someone else. It was God’s solution as to how to ultimately solve the problem of sin: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (vs. 6, NIV). Note the passive voice of verbs in verse 5, which explains what was done for us by the Servant. Because of the Servant’s voluntary and
substitutionary death for us, we are healed
(salvation is healing), and we may live.

4. Suffering, trial, death, and burial of the Servant
   of the Lord (Isa. 53:7-9). Isaiah now describes the
Servant’s complete submission to the will of God and
that His grief, sorrow, and suffering were not His
own (He was innocent and without any deceit in Him)
but were because of “the transgression of my
people.”

5. Glorification of the Servant of the Lord (Isa.
   53:10-12). This song climaxes with an explanation of
   the many wonderful results of the Servant’s
   sacrificial death: resurrection, justification of
   many, and the sharing of His victory and spoil with
   others. He continues His work for sinners for whom
   He suffered death: He intercedes for them.

The fifth and final song (Isa. 61:1-3) declares
that the Servant is anointed by the Lord and enabled
by the Spirit to proclaim good news and apply all He
has accomplished in His life and death to sinners in
order to bring freedom and victory to them so that
they can serve others and be His faithful servants
(Isa. 61:4-6).
Discussion Questions:

1. Why can the first reading of Isaiah 53 about the Servant of the Lord be confusing? See the story of the Ethiopian high official in Acts 8:26-40.

2. Why did God lead Isaiah to explain in such detail the events related to the death of the Servant of the Lord? How does Isaiah interpret the meaning of the Servant’s death and its wonderful results?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Jesus applied to Himself Isaiah 61:1, 2 when He proclaimed: “‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’” (Luke 4:16–22, NIV). To what extent can you apply this passage to yourself when God calls you to proclaim His good news to the world? Discuss with your class how it can be properly and wisely done.

Application: Regarding the Servant of the Lord, God states through Isaiah that “the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6, NIV), “my righteous servant will justify many” (Isa. 53:11, NIV), and “he bore the sin of many” (Isa 53:12, NIV).

Discuss with your class how you can reconcile this seeming discrepancy between “all” and “many”? Discuss with your class how this can be done properly and wisely (see how the apostle Paul applied Isaiah 49:6b to his situation according to Acts 13:47).

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Isaiah uses rich imagery to describe the mission and accomplishments of the Servant of the Lord in these five passages we have studied. What are the advantages of such illustrative teaching?

Activities:

1. Isaiah graphically pictures the suffering of the Servant of the Lord and goes through the most vital points by using a vast biblical vocabulary. Ask your class to rewrite chapter 53 of the book of Isaiah, using our modern language to correctly
describe what happened in the life of Christ. How
can one best express in today’s culture the meaning
of His victorious substitutionary death for us? Be
faithful to the biblical text but express the same
thoughts in a clear, simple, and different way. Ask
your class to come up with modern, twenty-first
century pictures, metaphors, similes, and concepts
that would speak to the mind and heart of our
postmodern society. Be creative. Especially aim
this exercise toward the youth. How can we
communicate to them the depth of this
extraordinaire message?

2. Find in your hymnal songs about Christ’s death and
its results for us. Invite your class to learn the
best ones by heart.
Key Text: Hebrews 7:25 and 8:1, 2

The Student Will:

Know: Know our High Priest, Jesus Christ, and the meaning of His intercessory ministry.

Feel: Foster the feeling of love toward sinners as God intercedes for them.

Do: Pray for sinners to repent as Jesus wants to help each one in their daily struggles, save them, and vindicate them against Satan’s accusations.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: Jesus Our High Priest

A. Why do we need Jesus Christ’s mediatory and intercessory work?

B. Why is Jesus the only true Intercessor? What disqualifies Mary and the saints for this role?

C. Who is the only One who can bring assurance into our life, and why?
II. Feel: No Competing Between Christ’s Intercession and the Father’s Love

A. How can Jesus be closer to you when you understand with Paul that our Intercessor is the “man Jesus Christ”?

B. Jesus’ intercessory ministry does not mean that the Father is angry, and it does not mean that Christ has to appease His wrath or change His “negative” attitude. Why is this so?

III. Do: Jesus Vindicates Against Satan’s Accusations

A. Explain the way in which Jesus is the Great High Priest.

B. What does it mean that we can come to Jesus as we are but not just in any manner?

Summary: Our only spiritual safety is in the acceptance of both Christ’s great sacrifice for our past and His daily intercession for us in the present. In this way, our future is secured because it lies in God’s hands.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Hebrews 7:25 and 8:1, 2

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: Christ intercedes for His people in the heavenly sanctuary and is always ready to help them even though they struggle with the reality of sin and the problems of life. He not only wants to make sinners aware of their destructive behavior but especially assists them through His infinite love. As their Mediator and Intercessor, He desires to give them victory over sin. In spite of their failures, He does everything possible to win their trust and to build meaningful relationships with them.

Just for Teachers: This week’s lesson should help class members to understand the meaning of Jesus’ intercessory ministry for them. He wants to save them completely and help them in their everyday struggles. Nothing and nobody can separate us from His love save
our own stubborn choices to remain in sin or to have
an indifferent, lukewarm attitude toward life.

Opening Discussion: Many people struggle to understand
the meaning of the intercessory ministry of Jesus.
They are confused and cannot grasp the necessity and
importance of Christ’s work for us today. Philip
Yancey openly declares: “I have concluded, in fact,
that the Ascension represents my greatest struggle of
faith—not whether it happened, but why. It challenges
me more than the problem of pain, more than the
difficulty of harmonizing science and the Bible, more
than belief in the Resurrection and other miracles.
. . . For me what has happened since Jesus’ departure
strikes at the core of my faith. Would it not have
been better if the Ascension had never happened? If
Jesus had stayed on earth, he could answer our
questions, solve our doubts, mediate our disputes of
doctrine and policy. . . . By ascending, Jesus took
the risk of being forgotten.”—Philip Yancey, The Jesus
I Never Knew (Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan
think: Why do you need Christ as your Intercessor and Advocate?

**STEP 2—Explore**

*Just for Teachers: The popular understanding of an intercessor is of one who is a go-between for two antagonistic parties. This model of two opposed sides and a mediator or intercessor coming between them and trying to reconcile them by changing their mutual hatred, misunderstanding, prejudices, feelings, and attitudes toward each other lies at the heart of this misunderstanding. The implications of such an understanding of Christ’s mediation are quite devastating. The Lord is seen as an angry God who has to be begged, bended, and changed in His attitude toward humans in order to give them grace and grant them mercy. What a horrible picture of God. This distortion of God’s character has terrible consequences in popular Christian thinking: Jesus is not powerful enough to intercede; He needs help. Thus, Mary is pleading with God and, in addition, Peter, Paul, the apostles, plus all international, national,*
and local saints. In this way, God is depicted as a monster, an angry deity who is not easy to appease.

But the biblical model of intercession is completely different!

Bible Commentary

Jesus’ major activity for us today is that He intercedes for us. We need to understand His crucial work for us in the heavenly sanctuary in order to maintain a meaningful relationship with Him and experience victories over evil. Without His help and guidance, we can do nothing (John 15:5, Rom. 8:14, Phil. 4:13). What does this mean, and what does it not mean?

I. What does it not mean for Jesus Christ to be our Intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary?

(Review 2 Cor. 5:19-21 with the class.)

1. Jesus does not need to plead with the Father on our behalf or beg Him to be merciful toward us, because our Heavenly Father loves us (see John 16:26, 27).
2. Jesus does not need to change the Father’s attitude toward us or appease an angry God so that He will give us a little bit of His grace, and this is because He provides the means of reconciliation: ”‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life’” (John 3:16, NIV).

3. Jesus does not need to reconcile God with us, but we humans are in need of being reconciled with Him! Paul explains that as God’s ambassadors our message of reconciliation is: “Be [you people] reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20, NIV).

**Discussion Question:** Jesus Christ is our only Intercessor (1 Tim. 2:2-6). Paul’s assertion was intended to counter the Gnostic teaching of his time. There is no power that can stand between God and this world. He is our Intercessor, because He gave Himself for humanity in order to redeem us. He is our Mediator because He is our Savior. His intercession is actually a continuation of His saving activity on our behalf. In reality it is the realization and actualization of His work for us on the cross. He needs and wants to
apply to our lives today what He did two thousand years ago. We need His death and life in order to be alive, in order to be His followers today. Why are Jesus’ incarnation and death prerequisites for Christ’s intercessory ministry for us?

II. What Does the Intercessory Ministry of Jesus Mean?

(Review Hebrews 7:25 and Revelation 12:10–12 with the class.)

1. Jesus Christ and the heavenly Father meet together (in biblical languages “to intercede” means “to meet”) in order to help humans in their everyday struggles against evil. The first tangible result of that meeting between the heavenly Father and Jesus was the giving of the Holy Spirit to the believers (see Acts 2). All heaven is united to help us in our struggles with sin, Satan, and temptation (John 15:5, Phil. 4:13). Jesus Christ did not come to save us “in” sin, but “from” sin (Matt. 1:21). Hebrews 4:16 spells out eloquently why the intercessory ministry of our High Priest is needed for us: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may
receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (NIV). We are constantly in need of Jesus and are completely dependent upon Him, upon Jesus Christ, as well as upon the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is called *parakletos*, which means that “He is Someone called for help,” “Someone to stand by” (John 14:26).

2. Jesus Christ saves completely by forgiving our sins and justifying us (Heb. 7:25). Jesus identifies with us when we give our lives to Him; He becomes one with us. This identification is so close that it is compared to a very sensitive part of the body: “For this is what the L ORD Almighty says: ‘... whoever touches you touches the apple of his [Lord’s] eye’ ” (Zech. 2:8, NIV). Other clear examples of His identification with His believers are the following statements: “'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me’ ” (Matt. 25:40, NIV); “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (Matt. 25:45); “He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ Saul asked. ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ he
replied” (Acts 9:4, 5, NIV). “’He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me’” (Luke 10:16, NIV). Jesus saves all who come to Him, as they are, confessing their sins openly, honestly, and sincerely in order for Him to transform them by His grace.

3. Jesus Christ vindicates us against the accusations of Satan (see Rev. 12:10-12). He personally stands against Satan’s accusations. Our victory is in Him, because He is the Victor. Because Jesus Christ is our Intercessor and He is vindicating us in front of the whole universe, we can have no fear for the day of judgment (1 John 2:28, 4:17).

Activity: Ask the members of your class to discuss a clear definition of God’s anger, which is often misunderstood. Consider carefully the following explanation: on the cross, Jesus took upon Himself God’s anger, which was aimed against sin and not against people (unless they associate with sin; see John 3:36). It means that God’s anger is His uncompromised No to sin, His passionate reaction toward evil. Jesus died for us in our place,
experiencing God’s anger and punishment in order that we may live when we put our faith in Him (Rom. 3:21–26; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19, 21; Gal. 3:13, 14). Only through Christ’s atoning sacrifice can we be at one with our heavenly Father.

### III. Jesus Is Praying for You.

(Review John 17:20, 21 with the class.)

According to John 17, Jesus prays for us. He prays for His disciples and the successive generations of His followers to be united and faithful. He did the same specifically for Peter (Luke 22:32). So, the intercession of Jesus means that Jesus is praying for us so that we do not fall. This is an example for us of how we should pray for one another.

**Discussion Question:** Why, too, are even God’s people more interested in God’s blessings of Jesus’ ministry for them than they are in wholehearted obedience?

**STEP 3—Apply**
Just for Teachers: The book of Hebrews stresses that Jesus is our High Priest and Intercessor. Discuss with your class how they feel when they know that Someone is there for them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. He loves, forgives, justifies, helps, sanctifies, delivers from the power of sin, and vindicates against the accusations of Satan. What else could we need that He has not already taken care of!

Life Application: Find biblical examples of humans mediating or interceding for others and compare these instances with Jesus’ intercessory ministry for us. Why is Christ’s intercession superior? How can you act like Jesus by being there for others and by helping them to see God’s goodness in their lives?

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Our God does everything in order for us to know that He is for us and never against us. The intercessory ministry of Jesus on our behalf proves it. As our Intercessor, He died for us so that we can live. Intercession is built on a sacrifice.
Discuss with your class different possibilities of how we can sacrifice something in our own lives to help people in need to be more comfortable. How can you show love to people who are homeless, or to those who refuse your kind attention or notoriously (mis)use your goodness?

Activities:

1. With your class members create a list of people who need your prayers and then pray that God can help them to live a happy and victorious life in Christ Jesus however difficult the circumstances of their lives may be.

2. During this week, personally visit people who you think may need your assistance. They may be sick, financially broken, discouraged, disappointed, or have lost a loved one, friends, or a job.
The Student Will:

Know: Understand the good news of the pre-Advent judgment, which gives the believer assurance of salvation due to Jesus Christ taking the initiative to affirm in front of a heavenly court that we belong to Him.

Feel: Foster the feeling of love toward God, who pronounces judgment in favor of the saints, gives them courage and strength to live, and condemns the little horn with its followers.

Do: Submit to God’s plan and be part of His solution for humanity.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: Jesus Christ our Judge

A. How can you know that Jesus is for you and not against you?

B. Why does truth really matter?
C. Why is it so important to unmask the
activities of the antichrist?

II. Feel: Jesus Christ Secures Your Heavenly Place

A. How do you feel knowing that Christ is not
only your Judge but also your Advocate?
B. When and how will Jesus pronounce judgment in
favor of His children?
C. What is so destructive, repulsive, and evil in
the little horn’s activities?

III. Do: Rejoice in the Lord, Your Judge

A. How can God secure His victory over Satan and
ever for all eternity?
B. Can Jesus be “bribed” by our exemplary moral
behavior, good deeds, or excellent service? Why,
or why not? Why cannot these different ethical
activities make God more merciful to us?

Summary: When God judges His people, He justifies,
delivers, and vindicates; but on the other hand,
He condemns, punishes, and destroys evil.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 22–27

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The pre-Advent judgment gives more assurance of salvation than if it did not occur. God takes the cases of His faithful followers and presents them in the heavenly court. The purpose is to affirm our decision for Him during our lifetime in front of the representatives of the whole universe and thus secure our place in heaven for all eternity. This judgment also condemns the little horn and all who follow him, thus confirming that evil will cease to exist.

Just for Teachers: This week’s lesson provides insight into understanding the pre-Advent judgment. The explanation is given from the perspective of a believer in Christ Jesus and is very positive, because God is for us and never against us. Judgment is an
integral part of the gospel, a unity which needs to be
presented in a right way in order not to scare people
but bring them hope.

Opening Discussion: What is the first reaction and
feeling of the members of the class when they hear
that God will judge them? This question has been asked
in all continents to people from various backgrounds,
and the answer has always been “fear.” Why do we fear
God’s judgment? One of the main reasons is that we
have a narrow understanding of the nature of judgment
and a one-sided definition. What, really, is divine
judgment, and how should it be biblically defined?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: Daniel 7 is written in a beautiful
literary structure that helps one to grasp the main
points of the chapter. After an introduction (vs. 1),
a vision follows (vss. 2–14), then its interpretation
(vss. 15–27), and finally the epilogue (vs. 28). The
vision is divided into different parts, which are
expressed in a chiasm:
(A) Setting a background—vss. 2, 3
(B) Description of the three beasts—vss. 4–6
(C) Terrifying fourth beast—vs. 7
(D) Activity of the little horn—vs. 8
(E) Heavenly judgment—vss. 9, 10
(D’) Little horn—vs. 11a
(C’) Fate of the fourth beast—vs. 11b
(B’) Fate of the first three beasts—vs. 12
(E’) Glorious triumph in judgment—vss. 13, 14.

Thus, the heavenly pre-Advent judgment is at the center of the vision and is its climax. In chapter 7, there are three key passages written in poetry: the two heavenly scenes (vss. 9, 10 and 13, 14) and the crucial interpretation of the vision (vss. 23–27).

Bible Commentary

God’s judgment is usually perceived as condemnation, punishment, or destruction. This negative meaning of judgment is also present in the Bible, but the primary biblical teaching about this divine activity is very positive: because, for God, to judge means to justify, save, deliver, and vindicate His people. It is only
when the primary positive meaning cannot be applied
because of the immediate context that the negative
judgment takes place.

I. Divine Judgment as Gospel—God’s Smile for His People

(Review Daniel 7:22 with the class.)

Daniel explains what will occur in the pre-Advent
judgment in chapter 7 and points to two kinds of
judgment:
1. Judgment of condemnation in connection with the
   little horn (Dan. 7:26).
2. Judgment of salvation. Before Daniel underscores the
   judgment of destruction, he clearly interprets what
   will happen to the believers. The judgment will be
   proclaimed to their advantage, “for” them: “‘Until
   the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in
   favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time
   came for the saints to possess the kingdom’ w” (Dan.
   7:22, NKJV). Glory and hallelujah to God!

Activity: Compare different translations of John 5:24.

According to the NKJV, Jesus states: “‘Most
assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and
believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and

*shall not come into judgment*, but has passed from
death into life’” (emphasis author’s). The NIV puts
this statement in the following words: “I tell you
the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who
sent me has eternal life and *will not be condemned,* he
has crossed over from death to life’” (emphasis
author’s). Which translation is correct? According to
the original Greek, both versions are correct, and
there is good reason to believe that this textual
ambiguity is intentional. The truth is that those who
believe in Christ and His gospel will not be
condemned, and they will not even come into judgment.

How does one understand this? Is Jesus in
contradiction with Paul who assures that “we must all
appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor.
5:10a, NIV)? What does Jesus mean when He states that
those who believe will not come into judgment? It
means that they will not come under the judgment of
condemnation. There is only one judgment which is 100
percent condemnation, and it is the last judgment at
the end of the millennium when all the wicked will be
annihilated. At that time, all the redeemed are already in the New Jerusalem with Christ: so, they will not come into this judgment (Rev. 20:6, 9-15). Believers in Christ do not need to fear any divine judgment, because “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1, NIV).

Discussion Question: How can you train your mind to see God’s judgment as being positive and not scary?

II. God’s Judgment as “For” His People

(Review Isaiah 35:4 with the class.)

Consider carefully the following texts, which prove that our definition of judgment is biblical. There are plentiful scriptural examples of divine positive judgments, but study at least these few examples:

1. The book of Judges. When God’s people were under the oppression of their enemies, they cried to God for help, and He sent them judges—i.e., deliverers who liberated and protected them.

2. David prayed several times to God: “Judge me, O Lord” (Ps. 7:8, 26:1, 35:24). He does not ask for
condemnation but vindication from enemies who were against him and wanted to destroy him.

3. For God to judge really means to save: “From heaven you pronounced judgment, and the land feared and was quiet—when you, O God, rose up to judge, to save all the afflicted of the land” (Ps. 76:8, 9, NIV).

4. Through the prophet Isaiah, God powerfully encourages: “Say to those with fearful hearts, ‘Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you’ ” (Isa. 35:4, NIV). This text plainly but beautifully explains that we need to trust in the Lord (not in ourselves) in order to have assurance of salvation.

Discussion Question: When Paul explains the “in Christ” motif, he states that after we surrendered to God and believed in Him, He in His rich mercy “raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6, NIV). What does it mean that by faith we sit already with Christ in the heavenly realms, i.e., at the right hand of the Heavenly Father (see Eph. 1:20)? Why do we not need to
worry and doubt that one day we will be physically with Him in heaven?

III. God’s Judgment and Joy

(Review Psalm 96:11–13 with the class.)

We usually associate divine judgment with fear and condemnation, but the psalmist put judgment together with joy. Study the verbs he uses in Psalm 96:11–13 and the reason he gives: “Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth”

(emphasis author’s, NIV). Divine judgment brings final victory for God’s people and the end to evil. The redeemed will sing with joy at the second coming of Jesus: “ ‘Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation’ ” (Isa. 25:9, NIV).
Discussion Question: Why can believers in Christ rejoice about divine judgment? Be sure that your reasons are unselfish.

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Explain to your class why it is necessary that God stands for justice when He executes the judgments of condemnation. Why can’t love and truth exist without justice?

Activity: Read aloud with your class 1 John 2:28 and 4:17 and discuss these pertinent texts in small groups of two or three people. On what condition did John build his assertion that we can have bold assurance in the day of judgment and the second coming of Christ? What does it mean to “continue in Him” or “stay in Christ”? Jesus assures that we can bear fruit only if we abide in Him (see John 15:1-17, Hosea 14:8). Apply this saying to practical life. How can we remain in God in order to be fruitful?
STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Contrast for the members of your class the positive and negative dimensions of God’s judgment activities. Invite them to give biblical examples and apply them to modern life.

Activities:

1. How can you help your friends or church members who have doubts about their salvation, are not certain that God can accept them, and live in spiritual schizophrenia, because they fear God’s judgment? How can you help them in their spiritual struggles and suffering?

2. Ask your class to go to the Web site of the Adventist Theological Society www.atsjats.org and find in the archives of the Journal of the Adventist Theological Society Jiri Moskala’s article entitled “The Gospel According to God’s Judgment: Judgment as Salvation.” This article will provide further details, study, and discussion about today’s topic.
The Student Will:

Know: Understand that the cleansing of the sanctuary is the same as the pre-Advent judgment and that Daniel 7-9 describes complementary prophetical events.

Feel: Foster the sense of assurance of salvation, because Jesus presently reveals and affirms in heaven that His grace is sufficient for His people.

Do: As Jesus is for and never against His followers, so we should always encourage and help our brothers and sisters.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: God Restores

A. Why is it crucial to understand the issues behind the usurpation of the “daily ministry” of Jesus Christ by the little horn?
B. According to Daniel 8:14, the sanctuary will be nitzdag, a Hebrew word meaning “cleansing,” “justifying,” “restoring,” and “vindicating.” Explain how these nuances respond to the distorting activities of the little horn.

II. Feel: God of His People

A. How does the sense of belonging to God’s end-time people give you a feeling of urgency for fulfilling God’s mission?

B. How does the prophetical time limit of the activities of the little horn make you feel, and why?

III. Do: God Assures

A. How can you take part in the restoration of truth that has been put down by the little horn’s activities?

B. What is the task of the remnant in the time of the end?
Summary: To take part in God’s last movement means to have an urgent sense of mission in order to fulfill His goal of saving all people.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Revelation 15:3, 4: “ ‘Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. . . . All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed’ ” (NIV).

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: In order to understand the meaning of God’s pre-Advent judgment, it must be seen from a broader perspective and not in isolation. In our explanations of the pre-Advent judgment, our High Priest, Jesus and His activities, must be the most attractive reality and His cross its foundation. Only in this way will the pre-Advent judgment be a meaningful experience for believers by bringing them closer to God, giving them the assurance of safety by being in His hands; consequently, they will rejoice over God’s work in their behalf.
Just for Teachers: This week’s lesson should help members of your class to see the beautiful panorama of God’s judgment activity. The pre-Advent judgment should be explained from the perspective of the Cross. The year 1844 cannot be dissected from A.D. 31 but must be its starting point.

Opening Discussion: God’s judgment on the cross was, and is, the foundation of all other divine judgments. Ellen G. White powerfully encourages that all our teachings must be explained from the viewpoint of the Cross: “The Sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers.”—Gospel Workers, p. 315. As during the Day of Atonement in Ancient Israel, the most important person was the high
priest and what he was doing (see Leviticus 16).

Consequently, Christ and His cross must be the central point of the pre-Advent judgment.

Discussion Question: How can the pre-Advent judgment be explained from the standpoint of the Cross?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: One of the major themes of the pre-Advent judgment is Christ’s affirmation of our affirmative decisions made for Him. Full evidence is given in front of the heavenly beings in order to secure our place in heaven for all eternity. For this reason, we call the investigative judgment an affirmative judgment, because Christ reveals and affirms to heaven that we belong to Him and that His grace is sufficient. As a result, all heaven will applaud Jesus’ work for us, because they will see that God’s transforming grace has prepared His followers to become part of the heavenly family.
To appreciate the pre-Advent judgment, one needs to see the big, universal picture of God’s judging activity. God’s eschatological actions cannot be restricted to only three judgments as is usually done: the pre-Advent judgment, the judgment during the millennium, and the last judgment. The gospel, according to God’s judgment, involves seven phases. Each one is indispensable for understanding the plan of salvation and the great controversy between good and evil, Christ and Satan. Each step is actually a celebration of Christ’s victory and accomplishments at the Cross.

I. Pattern of God’s Judgments

(Review Genesis 18:25 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 with the class.)

The scriptural teaching about judgment lies at the center of God’s revelation. It is the crux of the biblical message and gives a profound paradigm for our thinking. Next to the fundamental proclamation that
God is the Creator (Genesis 1-2), in the Garden of Eden the Lord is presented as the Judge, and the first reference to a trial judgment is given (Gen 3:8-24) wherein God’s grace and justice are intermingled. The biblical Flood narrative is an account about judgment (Genesis 6-9). Already Abraham calls God “the Judge of all the earth” (Gen. 18:25). And we can continue to demonstrate judgment after judgment in the Bible. Judgment is an integral part of God’s nature; it is His divine prerogative, His very characteristic. To understand God means to know and comprehend His comprehensive judgments. Through the study of His judgments, we can know who He is and His character.

Discussion Question: Why did Jesus say in John 14:1-3 that He would go to heaven to prepare a place for us? It must mean something more than only preparing mansions because as our Creator He could do them in “a few days.” Why would it take so long? What, then, is involved in Jesus’ statement?

II. An Overview of the Seven Phases of God’s Universal Judgment
(Review Revelation 15:3, 4 with the class.)

The gospel according to divine judgment is perfect as seen from the perspective of a genuine believer in Jesus:

(1) Pedagogical or typological judgment in pre-cross time. God gives us educational lessons, “mini-judgments,” from the Old Testament past. From this historical background, we may know that He is truly the God of grace, love, justice, truth, order, and guarantor of freedom. He loves people but hates sin. We are responsible for our actions, and there are consequences to what we do.

(2) Central and cosmic judgment on the Cross. Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins, died for us, and thus experienced the judgment of condemnation in order that we may live and never be condemned to the second death. Also, Satan and evil were defeated.

(3) Decisive judgment during our lifetime. If we surrender to Jesus, He applies what He accomplished at the cross to our present experience. He justifies and changes us by His amazing grace, Word, and Spirit. He gives eternal life, peace, joy, and full assurance of
salvation, and He sets us with Him in heaven on His
throne.

(4) **Affirmative judgment (called also investigative
judgment) before the second coming of Jesus, from 1844
on. Christ, as our true witness and intercessor,
secures legally and transparently our place in heaven
by revealing and affirming in front of the universe
that we have truly accepted His righteousness
(justification is the basis of salvation) and have
cultivated a relationship with Him. Consequently, we
are fitted (sanctification is the fruit of salvation)
by His transforming grace, Word, and Spirit and may
safely be admitted into the heavenly family and enjoy
eternal life.

(5) **Realization judgment at the second coming of
Christ. At Christ’s second coming, He personally comes
to the earth in order to give His faithful followers
tangible and physical eternal life.

(6) **Attestation judgment during millennium. Jesus
Christ takes time to explain to the saved His thinking
and decisions in order to help them to understand His
judgments, cope with the eternal loss of their beloved
ones (if applicable), and gain deeper insights into
the great controversy, His struggles with Satan and evil. He provides time for healing.

(7) The executive judgment or last judgment at the end of the millennium. Finally, God Himself forever annihilates all evil—Satan, evil angels, the wicked, and sin—so that only love, truth, justice, peace, and harmony will reign. As Creator, He will recreate for His people the new earth and new heaven. Thus, true and meaningful life can be fully secured and enjoyed eternally.

Discussion Question: Ellen G. White outstandingly summarizes the gospel of salvation in the following way: "If you give yourself to Him [Christ], and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned."—Steps to Christ, p. 62. Out of the seven phases of God’s judgment described above, which phase is impacted the most by our decision to follow Christ? What consequences does this phase have on other phases of divine judgment?
III. The Final Celebration of the Cross

(Review Revelation 20:9-15 with the class.)

At the end of the millennium, at which time the final judgment takes place, the throne of God will be elevated. Above it will be seen the cross of Jesus, and in its shade the whole history and drama between good and evil will be explained. Each wicked person will then see his or her life (see Rev. 20:9-15). Ellen G. White eloquently describes the scene: “Above the throne is revealed the cross; and like a panoramic view appear the scenes of Adam’s temptation and fall, and the successive steps in the great plan of redemption.”—The Great Controversy, p. 666.

Adventist Theological Society’s Web site
(www.atsjats.org).

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the cross of Jesus impact the last judgment?

2. Why is the whole story of the great controversy revealed to everyone at the very end? What is the purpose of this last judgment when you know that God does not share these great insights only so that the wicked would die as “informed sinners”?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Your joy, enthusiasm, and conviction have great influence. Contemplate how to make the judgment message relevant to young people.

Application Questions:

1. Just imagine that you are physically present at the investigative/affirmative judgment in the heavenly court. Where would you like to be in that court? Express your feelings.
2. What would you do if you knew that the book with your life in it had just been opened and your case was being discussed?

Activity: How would you paint the scene of the heavenly judgment? Concentrate especially on the repentant sinner’s position in relationship to Jesus. Would you draw a distance between them? If yes, why? If not, how would you express their relationship? What about human faces? Would you paint them to look serious, smiling, or sad? Why?

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Create with your class a list of questions that you think Jesus or the angels will ask about our individual lives. Justify your questions. What kind of questions would you like to be asked in the heavenly court about the activities of the little horn? Make another list.

Activities:
1. With the class develop reasons that demonstrate that the visions of Daniel 8 and 9 belong together and that the 70-week prophecy forms an actual part of the 2,300-evenings-and-mornings prophecy. Take into consideration the following: (A) the angel Gabriel gave both visions (8:16, 9:21); (B) the same vocabulary of “understanding” and “vision” (8:27b, 9:23) is at the end of the vision of chapter 8 and in the beginning of the vision described in chapter 9; (C) the specific Hebrew term nechtak (from the root chatak) given at the beginning of the 70-week prophecy means “cut off” and thus shows that the period of the 70-week prophecy should be taken from the previous prophetic unit of 2,300-evenings-mornings prophecy (9:24a); (D) a prophetic time element is usually given at the end of a vision, but, in chapter 9, it is given at the beginning of the vision, hinting that it is connected with the previous vision (8:14, 9:24); (E) Daniel usually has a dream or vision and then follows it with an interpretation (see chapters 2, 7, 8, and 10–12); however, in chapter 9 there is no vision but only an
interpretation, thus pointing back to the explanation of the previous vision of chapter 8.

2. Give your class a special assignment to find different reasons for the validity of the year-day principle in interpreting apocalyptic prophecy. Share the results next week.
Key Text: Revelation 14:6, 7

The Student Will:

Know: Explore the meaning of the three angels’ messages in order to become deeply acquainted with the gospel for today. This summary message of hope helps to recognize the most essential truth needed to be proclaimed.

Feel: Foster the presence of God in everyday life.

Do: Worship the Creator God in truth and spirit.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: Everlasting Gospel to the Whole World

A. What is the meaning of the phrase “everlasting gospel,” which occurs only once in the whole Bible?

B. Why does God command in Revelation 10 to “prophesy again”? How can you be a part of this fulfillment?
C. Explain how the three angels’ messages teach or reflect the doctrine of justification by faith.

II. Feel: God’s Three Imperatives

A. Why does God command us to fear and worship Him?
B. How can fear and love be combined?
C. How can you show respect for God and give Him glory?
D. In what ways can you build a meaningful, personal relationship with your God?

III. Do: Characteristics of the True Followers of God

A. According to Revelation 14:12, what are the three essential signs of God’s people?
B. What are the characteristics of Babylon? How can you historically recognize these features?

Summary: The three angels’ messages prepare people to face the last-day deceptions and be ready for the second coming of Christ. One’s attitude toward this message is a matter of life or death.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Revelation 14:6, 7

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: The three angels’ messages are, as a unit, the core message of Seventh-day Adventism. These proclamations are like a tripod on which our theology stands and are the reason that we exist. Together they are an outstanding summary of the gospel for today with God at the center and justification by faith as the basis. They are a foundation of what we believe and reveal our Adventist identity.

Just for Teachers: This week’s lesson should help the class members to understand better the relevancy, importance, and beauty of the message aimed for people living before the second coming of Christ. It is the eternal gospel and has a simple literary structure (introduction—vs. 6; first presentation of the gospel—vs. 7; second presentation of the gospel—vs. 8; third
presentation of the gospel—vss. 9-12; and voice from
heaven—vs. 13). Chapter 14 consists of three principal
parts: (1) the Lamb with the 144,000—vss. 1-5; (2) the
three angels’ messages—vss. 6-13; and (3) the second
coming of the Son of Man, presented as the Reaper of
the harvest—vss. 14-20.

Opening Discussion:

1. The term eternal gospel is used only once in the
   entire Bible; namely, in Revelation 14:6. It is by
design and not by chance that it is employed in
relation to the time of the end. The purpose is to
underline that the gospel preached today is not a
new invention, but it is a gospel that was always
valid and has never changed. Forms and emphases can
be different in time, but the principal message is
always the same. There is only one gospel; what is
this gospel?
2. Ellen G. White wrote in an article entitled
   “Repentance the Gift of God” the following
statement: “Several have written to me, inquiring if
the message of justification by faith is the third
angel’s message, and I have answered, ‘It is the
third angel’s message *in verity.*’”—The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, April 1, 1890 (author’s emphasis). Where in Revelation 14:6–13 can you find references to the doctrine of justification by faith?

**STEP 2—Explore**

*Just for Teachers: You can appreciate and perceive the relevancy and urgency of the three angels’ messages when you study them in their context and see what the two beasts under the leadership of the dragon want to accomplish, according to Revelation 13. They mandate the full obedience of humanity. Key words in Revelation 13 are worship (vss. 4 [twice], 8, 12, 15), authority (vss. 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12), and power (vss. 2, 7, 14, 15). This satanic trinity (the dragon, the beast out of the sea, and the beast out of the earth) attempts to lead the whole world into false worship (a worship built on a wrong relationship with God) by usurping God’s authority and using force. Revelation 14:6–13 is God’s answer to these false activities. It is God’s ultimatum to the world.*
Bible Commentary

The principal theme in the three angels’ messages is not the beast or the mark of the beast or obedience but the Lamb, Jesus Christ, occurring at the very center.

I. “I Saw the Lamb”

(Review Revelation 14:6, 10 with the class.)

Consider carefully the key words of the three angels’ messages that connect all the messages together. What are the direct verbal connections among these three messages? There is a thematic connection (about judgment) between the first and second messages, but there is no direct word that connects them. The link between the first and the third messages is the term worship used in contrast: the first message calls for worshiping the Creator, and the third message warns against worshiping the beasts. The connection between the second and the third messages is the word wine and again it is in contrast: Babylonian-maddening wine of
false teaching, given as drink to all nations (the second message), and the wine of God’s wrath that will be poured out on the unrepentant (the third message). The true worshiper will not drink from any of those wines. The connecting word between the third message and the voice of God is rest: there is no rest for the wicked, according to the third message, but the Holy Spirit assures that there is a rest for those who live and die in the Lord. The result is clear: the third message really connects all messages together. It is like a magnet that holds them together as a unit. And at the center of the third message is the Lamb.

When you teach about Revelation 14:6-13, your audience needs to see the Lamb, Jesus Christ. We need to teach them how to trust in the Lord and help them to cope with their fears. The best compliment you can get from people after your presentation is that they say: “Thank you for showing me the Lamb.” The main message of Revelation 13, 14 is not about the beasts, the mark of the beast, 666, the patience of the saints, keeping the commandments of God, et cetera, (all these topics are important). It is about the
Lamb. If you point to the Lamb, then you do what John the Baptist was doing (see John 1:29, 36).

Activity: Find out and study with your class all the occurrences of the word lamb in the book of Revelation and compare them with the rest of the New Testament. Here are some hints for you: the Greek word to arnion for “the lamb” occurs 30 times in the entire New Testament, and out of these 30 instances, this particular word is used in the book of Revelation 29 times—referring 28 times to Jesus (for the first time in 5:6) and once to a brutal beast that pretends to act like a lamb (13:11). (Be careful in your study, because another word for a “lamb” in Greek, ho amnos, is used four times in the New Testament [John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; and 1 Pet. 1:19]).

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you present the three angels’ messages as messages of hope and not as ones of condemnation? Ellen G. White excellently states: “The third angel’s message must be presented as the only hope for the
salvation of a perishing world.”—Evangelism, p. 196; emphasis supplied.

2. What is the characterization of people to whom the three angels’ messages need to be preached? Is there a difference between living and sitting on the earth?

These people also live in a divided world with different nations, tribes, languages, and peoples. How can the eternal gospel unite humanity and be a remedy for their many problems?

II. The Three Key Imperatives

(Review Revelation 14:7 with the class.)

God through John stresses that we need to fear God, give Him glory, and worship the Creator. The reason is given: “because the hour of his judgment has come” (NIV). It means that God desires to justify, save, deliver, and vindicate people. Consequently, He invites them to live in His presence, to allow Him to change them so they can reflect in their characters God’s character of love, and to maintain a meaningful relationship with Him. These actions of obedience are
the results of accepting and responding to God’s grace.

Discussion Questions:
1. How is worshiping the Creator relevant in our postmodern world where the theory of evolution is the most popular explanation for the origin of life?
2. What role does the observance of the Sabbath play in the context of maintaining a fresh awareness that the living God is our Creator?

III. Living and Dying in the Lord
(Review Revelation 14:12, 13 with the class.)

Revelation 14:13 declares: “‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord’” (NIV). Note that God’s voice underscores the manner of dying. How can you die in the Lord? You can die in the Lord only if you first live in the Lord! The apostle Paul very emphatically stresses in his epistles the “in Christ” motif, because we totally depend in our lives on Him. It means that the main theme of the three angels’ messages is to encourage and lead people to “live and
die in the Lord.” This is the practical outcome of seeing and personally knowing the Lamb.

Discussion Question: What are the three true characteristics of those who stay faithful to Jesus, according to Revelation 14:12? In what sequence do they occur in the life of the believer?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: In Revelation 18:4, it is stated that God’s people live in Babylon, because God calls them: “‘Come out of her [Babylon], my people’” (NIV). How can you denounce the sins of Babylon and still love Babylonians? How can you preach the fall of Babylon and still be in good relationship with them?

Application Questions:
1. Study the Scriptures and find out if a human being may also be called “an angel” or, more accurately, “a messenger.” An excellent hint can be found in Malachi 3:1. How can you personally be such an angel/messenger?
2. In Revelation 14:6, what is the meaning of the angel/messenger who is proclaiming the eternal gospel and flying in midair? What is this symbolic language and rich imagery trying to communicate? How can you and your congregation make the three angels’ messages attractive for the community in which you live?

**STEP 4—Create**

*Just for Teachers:* Study with your class the meaning of the term *Babylon*. What are different characteristics of Babylon in the Bible? How does Babylon behave, and what is her attitude toward others?

**Activities:**

1. Help your class to imagine in a very practical way God’s presence in their lives. Encourage them to do, for at least one week, things that remind them that Jesus is always physically present with them. For examples, suggest putting another plate on the table to remind them that He is eating with them or
place another chair besides them while reading, watching TV, or working on their computers. This will be a new experience for the members of your class and can change their thinking and lifestyles forever.

2. Discuss with your class how family worship can be meaningful, even though everyone may be too busy and individualistic. Be creative in discussing different possibilities and new forms of worship that would be especially attractive to the children and young adults.
Lesson 12

The Lesson in Brief

Key Text: Revelation 16:7

The Student Will:

Know: Understand the core of Satan’s attack against God in the original revolt in heaven and how God’s judgments reflect His love and justice.

Feel: Appreciate and see how God’s loving character was revealed in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.

Do: Constantly be in the service of the Lord by letting God be God of his or her life.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: The First Revolt in the Heavenly Sanctuary

A. How do Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 describe Satan before his fall?

B. What were Satan’s original claims against God?

C. What does it mean that we were created as free moral beings?
II. Feel: God’s Vindication on the Cross

A. What lessons did the Cross teach the angels?
B. Sin started with pride and was defeated by Jesus’ humility. What about pride is so treacherous that even Lucifer, God’s perfect creation, could fall into it?
C. How can God be just and gracious at the same time?

III. Do: The Church and Individual Believers as Players in the Theater of the Universe

A. How can our faith and obedience vindicate God’s character of love?
B. How can believers in God live to His shame and reproach His name?
C. Rebellion in heaven was advanced by gossip. How can you stop participating in any form of gossiping?

Summary: By God’s actions, He vindicates Himself in front of the entire universe. His moral power of love wins.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Job 1:6-12, Ezekiel 36:26, 27

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: God wants us to understand the great controversy issues and know the part we play in this spiritual warfare between good and evil, Christ and Satan. We are not spectators but part of the drama; we are on stage. If we stay in close relationship with the living God, we will be partakers of His final victory over evil, which is secured due to His victory on the cross. At the final battle with evil, God will be seen as the One who is the Warrant of true freedom, and everyone will understand that He is the God of love, truth, and justice. Then every redeemed person and the inhabitants of heaven will serve the Lord with deep devotion, willing hearts, and joy throughout eternity.

Just for Teachers: God actually invites us to understand His decisions in order that we are able to
see that He is the God of love and justice (Rom. 3:4; Ps. 51:4; 34:8; Phil. 2:10, 11). His authority, word, and character were challenged and ridiculed from the very beginning (Gen. 3:1–5, see also Isa. 14:12–15, Ezek. 28:11–19). It is interesting that the Hebrew root rakal (used in Ezekiel 28:16) can also mean to “go around to gossip or slander,” which reveals Satan’s method of working, such as when he accused God of injustice (Hebrew ‘avelah). This week’s lesson should help the student of the Bible to understand the issues in the great controversy. In the exploration section, we will focus on the book of Job, which provides significant insight into the spiritual-warfare theme.

**Opening Discussion:** Four main figures play dominant roles in the book of Job, and their characters are revealed: God, Satan, Job, and his friends. How are these main protagonists categorized in the book? What can one say about each of them?

**STEP 2—Explore**

There is pictured a heavenly assembly before the Sovereign Ruler of the universe in which the sons of God are gathered before Him. Satan, the adversary, "also came among them" (1:6, NKJV). The word also suggests that he was not a regular member of that group. The immediate context gives the impression that he behaves like the one to whom the earth belongs, "'roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it' " (vs. 7, NIV). Satan is characterized as an intruder; playing the roles of the accuser and the possessor of planet Earth.

Bible Commentary

According to the book of Job’s prologue, God justifies Job in front of a solemn assembly gathered (1:8, 2:3). Twice in the first two chapters, God declares Job to be right, blameless, upright, fearing God, and shunning evil. His character is without question not because he is sinless (Job knows he is a sinner; see
7:21, 10:6, 14:17) but because of God’s transforming grace. In these two encounters, which God initiates, God directs His words to Satan, and He engages him in heightened dialogue. God is presented as passionately standing up for Job. But Satan does not share God’s loving affection for Job and involves Job in his argument against God.

I. The First Issue: Is God Right While Justifying Sinners?

(Review Job 1:8-11 and Romans 3:26 with the class.)

Satan does not agree with God pronouncing Job as righteous, and he tackles Him with a seemingly innocent question: “‘Does Job fear God for nothing’” (1:9, NIV)? At first glance, it is directed against Job, but in reality it is an attack on God by attempting to disprove His statement about Job. The real drama turns on the fact that God is for us and proclaims us just. Thus, the main theme of the book of Job is the justice of God (theodicy): is God just when He is justifying us?
Discussion Question: Why are God’s people seemingly more tested than unbelievers, going through difficult trials in life? What special purpose is there behind such trials?

II. The Second Issue: From What Motives Do Believers Serve God?

(Review Job 1:9, 2:3 with the class.)

To understand Satan’s cynical question (‘Does Job fear God for nothing’), which introduces the theme and the plot of the book, it is necessary to study the question’s key expression, “for nothing.” The Hebrew term chinnam for this expression occurs four times in the book (1:9, 2:3, 9:17, 22:6). It can be translated also as “gratis,” “without a reason,” “for naught,” “freely,” “for no purpose,” “in vain,” and “without cause.” Satan’s question can be stated thus: does Job serve God disinterestedly? Is his piety unselfish and his devotion wholehearted? Or, expressed differently: does he serve God out of love, i.e., for nothing? Thus, in front of the whole universe, it must be clarified as to what motivates us to serve God. Is it
out of fear and in order to escape punishment and
dead? Is it for the reward of eternal life and many
other blessings? Or do we obey Him out of gratitude,
because we love Him for His Person, for who He is?

**Discussion Question:** Why are our motives so important
that they need to be revealed in the heavenly court?

**Activity:** Ask members of your class to discuss their
own motives as to why they follow God? What role do
our motives play in life? What differences do they
make?

**III. The Third Issue: Whom Do We Trust and Obey?**

*(Review Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:4 and Job 13:15 with the
class.)*

Job confesses his full trust in the Lord even though
he does not understand what is going on in his life.
He knows God from his previous experience as a good,
loving, and caring God; so, he stays with Him:
“‘Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him’” *(Job
13:15, NKJV).* And on another occasion, he strongly
proclaims his personal faith in a personal God: ‘I
know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he
will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been
destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself
will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another’ ”
(Job 19:25–27, NIV).

Ultimately, what is really crucial is whom do we
trust? Do we follow God and His instructions, or do we
live according to our own selfish views and Satan’s
offers? Our orientation and directions in life are the
things that must be clearly revealed in the great
controversy.

The prophet Ezekiel announces God’s promise to
give His Spirit to His people in order that they may
obey His laws: ‘‘I will give you a new heart and put
a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart
of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put
my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and
be careful to keep my laws’ ” (Ezek. 36:26, 27, NIV).
The heart transplant is needed in order for us to be
able to follow God and His precepts. The circumcision
of the heart can be performed only by the Heavenly
Surgeon. This Spirit changes and transforms lives—He
is the indweller, sanctifier, and re-Creator. He is
the transforming Spirit abiding with and in us. The

God’s law is put into our hearts only by the work
will give my Spirit in you, and I will do that you
will walk in my statutes and keep my laws, and you
will do” (author’s translation). In other words, God
says: “I will do that you will do,” which means that
God will move us or cause us to obey by His Spirit.
The Lord commands obedience, and we must make a
decision to obey, but we are unable to follow our
decision and obey. However, when we cooperate with
God, He gives us His Spirit to make that obedience
happen. What God commands of His people, He always
helps them to do. What He requires, He provides.
Obedience is God’s gift, not our own performance or
achievement, and it proves also that God is right.

Discussion Questions: How can God teach us to do His
will and lead us by His Spirit? How can you recognize
God’s will for your life? Why does David ask: “Teach
me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good
Spirit lead me on level ground” (Ps. 143:10, NIV)?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: The book of Job sheds light on many
important issues besides those already mentioned in
this lesson (e.g., God is not the author of suffering;
the Lord is not responsible for evil in the world; are
followers of God willing to do God’s will and die for
Him rather than secure their own life; the sovereignty
of God and human freedom). Discuss with your class the
practical implications of these many issues.

Activities:

1. Discuss with your class David’s prayer: “Do not cast
me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from
me” (Psalm 51:11, NIV). Why is the presence of the
Holy Spirit so important in our life?

2. When God responded to Job’s complaints (chapters 38–
41), He pointed to the fact that He is the Creator.
Why is it so crucial to believe in the biblical
Creation? How does belief in Creation help one to
cope with such perplexing issues when calamities and tragedies of life strike?

**STEP 4—Create**

*Just for Teachers: When Job suffered, his friends visited him even though their theology was wrong. The solidarity we show to those who suffer is the most important thing. What those who suffer need are not our explanations but presence. Discuss with your class those whom you should visit in order to make a difference in their lives and bring light and hope to them.*

**Activities:**

1. Discuss with your class the possible motives of people who come to evangelistic meetings or church. Why do people not come? What could we do to change that?

2. Visit the elderly people of your congregation and ask them what has given them power and strength to cope with evil and the difficulties of life? Where did they find courage to handle their problems? Ask
the same questions of younger people in your church
and compare their answers.

3. What resources would you recommend to young people
in the church to enable them to better understand
the great controversy issues?
Key Text: Hebrew 10:19–25

The Student Will:

Know: Recognize the Source of our confidence, Christ, our High Priest, who died for us and lives to help us to serve God and others.

Feel: Appreciate God’s care for us by encouraging His followers to positively respond to His exhortations.

Do: Cultivate the feeling of love toward sinners as God has and encourage them to go forward no matter how big their obstacles.

Learning Outline:

I. Know: Our Only Confidence

A. Why is our confidence not built on our performance or achievements but solely rooted in God’s work for us?

B. Why do Christians need to cultivate faith, hope, and love?
II. Feel: God Exhorts His People

A. How do you feel when God encourages you to follow Him? What does it say about His care for His people?

B. How can you draw near to God when He is always with His people and takes the first step in restoring a genuine relationship with us?

III. Do: Encourage Others

A. How can you help people to experience and grow in a meaningful relationship with God?

B. How can you encourage a friend, a member of your church, or a former member to worship God by regularly attending church?

Summary: Our faith in God is shown by our care for others. When you encourage the weak, you strengthen your own relationship with God. We need each other and need to walk together to the New Jerusalem.
STEP 1—Motivate

Spotlight on Scripture: Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:19-20; 10:19-25

Key Concept for Spiritual Growth: God is the great Encourager, and He wants us to obtain the ultimate, positive sanctuary experience. We can have bold confidence to enter the heavenly sanctuary and have sure access to God through Jesus Christ, our High Priest, who opens the way for us. From this cosmic command center, He blesses His people, gives us full assurance of faith, strengthens our hope, and deepens our love so that we can spiritually grow and be ready for the Day of Judgment.

Just for Teachers: This week’s lesson should help individuals to know how important it is to never give up, to encourage one another, and to stay in close fellowship with one another. We depend on one another and need to be in touch with brothers and sisters as
they also need us. Because God encourages us, we can encourage one another.

Opening Discussion:

Can you remember when you were down and someone encouraged you? What were your feelings, and what was most helpful for you in that situation? Were you encouraged by a smile, gesture, greetings, hug, financial help, song, sermon, prayer, welcome, or a simple word?

STEP 2—Explore

Just for Teachers: The major theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that Jesus is superior, better, and higher than anything or anybody else. This superiority of Christ should lead His followers to a new lifestyle in such a way that He is always their priority.

Bible Commentary

Consider carefully how the author of Hebrews uses the expression ta hagia. What does this term mean? The NIV and other versions translate it as “the Most Holy
Is this translation correct? There is a consensus among scholars that the book of Hebrews is heavily dependent on the Septuagint (LXX is an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament from the third and second century B.C.). It is, therefore, important to study the Epistle to the Hebrews in connection with the Septuagint.

The expression ta hagia is used in the LXX 109 times, and it never describes the Most Holy Place alone. It is well documented that this term is employed for the sanctuary as a whole and not only for the Holiest. It is recognized that in 106 times this term refers to the whole sanctuary, and 3 times it points to the Holy Place (1 Kings 8:8; 2 Chron. 5:9, 11). So, the main idea in Hebrews 9:11, 12 is that Jesus entered the sanctuary “once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (NIV). This is why we can “have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, . . . let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb. 10:19–22, NIV).

I. Enter the Sanctuary and Approach the Throne of Grace
With Confidence

(Review Hebrews 4:14-16 with the class.)

We may boldly enter with full confidence and assurance into the heavenly sanctuary, because we have a great High Priest, our Intercessor, who has gone ahead of us. He understands our fragility, vulnerability, weaknesses, temptations, problems, troubles, and difficulties, because He went through similar experiences while living on earth as a human being. Thus, He is able to sympathize with us and help us in life’s struggles. This is why the author of the letter to the Hebrews encourages: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence [Greek word parresia means also boldness, assurance, courage], so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (4:16, NIV).

Discussion Questions:

1. How is our boldness in approaching God connected with the claiming of His promises? Support your answer with biblical evidence.
2. How can you grow in love? Be practical and concrete in your answers. How can you tie your answers to Paul’s explanation about what is true love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-10?

II. Let Us Not Give Up Meeting Together

(Review Hebrews 10:24, 25 with the class.)

The author of Hebrews underlines the fellowship of believers (10:24, 25; 12:22-24), which is the result of a new reality accomplished by Christ. Christians need this community in order to stay focused, and they should never abandon this fellowship (10:25). The sense of belonging to Christ and to one another forms one family of brothers and sisters (10:19; see John 1:12; 1 Cor. 12; 1 John 3:1). This close bond must be strong among believers. It is actually Christ’s love that draws and joins His followers together (2 Cor. 5:14).

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the reason that the author of Hebrews gives for not abandoning meeting together?
2. Why should we build a community of faith, as opposed to living individualistically and independently? Why do we need one another?

III. Never Give Up! Persevere in Doing God’s Will!

(Review Hebrews 10:35, 36 with the class.)

That God is for us is also shown through the work of the Holy Spirit. There are seven references to the Holy Spirit in the book of Hebrews (Heb. 2:4; 3:7; 6:4; 9:8, 14; 10:15, 29), which assert how the Holy Spirit brings divine confirming witness of the definitive word spoken through Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the Source of Scripture’s inspiration and speaks through it (3:7, 9; 9:8; 10:15). Through the Spirit, the Written Word remains current and contemporary: “So, as the Holy Spirit says” (3:7, NIV). The words of Scripture are “living” words (Heb. 4:12). The Holy Spirit interprets Scriptures for today and enables us to walk in the new covenant (Jer. 31:31–33, Ezek. 36:24–28).

The phrase “Spirit of grace” (Heb. 10:29) draws attention to the power and presence of God in our
lives. The work of the Spirit is an expression of
divine grace. Insulting the Spirit of grace would mean
insulting everything that has come from God. Welcoming
the Spirit of grace would mean opening one’s way, via
the Spirit, to the very “throne of grace” where divine
helping grace (available through our great High
Priest) is anchored, offered, and assured. Here the
transformational work in relation to the new covenant
experience is fully realized in the heart (10:15). To
be partakers of the Holy Spirit means to be partakers
of Christ.

The author of Hebrews appeals: “Persevere so that
when you have done the will of God, you will receive
what he has promised” (10:36, NIV). Perseverance is
important; it is one characteristic of God’s people
before the second coming of Jesus (Rev. 14:12; see
also the experience of Moses—Heb. 11:27; and James’
appeal in 5:7-12).

There are many exhortations in the book of Hebrews.
They can be summarized by God’s appeal: “Today, if you hear
his voice, do not harden your hearts” (4:7, NIV). God’s
call is actually a call of the Holy Spirit (3:7), and it
demands total dedication to God. When we realize that
something needs to be changed and put in harmony with Him and His will in our lives, we should respond to His calling immediately.

Discussion Questions:

1. The author of the Epistle of Hebrews states that we should encourage one another “all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:25, NIV). What kind of Day is it—the Day of Judgment/Atonement or is it the Day of Jesus’ second coming? Support your answer with biblical evidence.

2. How can we hope without wavering? What does it mean to “hold unswervingly to the hope” (Heb. 10:23, NIV)?

3. How can believers in Christ insult “the Spirit of grace” (Heb. 10:29, NIV)?

STEP 3—Apply

Just for Teachers: Help people to understand the real value of prayer. What does it mean to come to God with bold assurance and courageous confidence in order to
“receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Heb. 4:16, NIV)?

Discussion Questions:

1. What does it mean that believers can freely approach God? Is God so far from us that we need to draw near to Him?

2. Jesus Christ entered into the heavenly sanctuary in order to do His mediatorial work and provide the benefits of His intercession for His followers. How, and for what, can we obtain help from our Intercessor?

3. Ask the members of your class to discuss how to make the life of the congregation attractive for youth, church members, and friends.

4. How can you express your genuine Christian love and feelings for others? How can you “over-love” someone?

Activity: Discuss with your class the difference between a destructive and a constructive critique. What is the nature of true encouragement? How can one
avoid being judgmental or putting people down while helping them to grow in certain areas of life?

STEP 4—Create

Just for Teachers: Practice in a concrete way with your class what to say and how to encourage people who are disappointed, hurt, or spiritually weak. How can you motivate people to regularly worship, be part of the community of faith, and study the Word of God?

Activity:

1. The summary of the Epistle to the Hebrews is simple: “Do not forsake Jesus. He brought a whole new dimension to your life, opened heaven for you, and brought reality toward which all the Old Testament types pointed.” What techniques can you use in order to remember Jesus’ work for humanity and keep it fresh in your mind in order to experience it?

2. Divide your class into two groups and ask each group to discuss the meaning of Jesus’ entry “within the veil” (Heb. 6:19, 20; 10:19, 20) and
then evaluate their arguments. Ask them the following question: is the Day of Atonement, or the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary, a part of what it means to enter “within the veil”? Compelling evidence speaks in favor of the view that takes entering within the veil as referring to the inauguration.