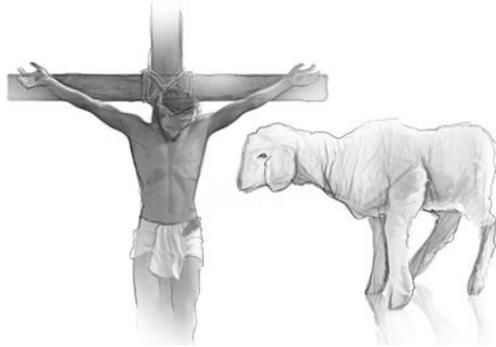


The New Agreement and the Temple in Heaven



SABBATH—JUNE 5

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Exodus 25:8; Isaiah 53:4-12; Hebrews 10:4; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 8:1-6; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

MEMORY VERSE: “So Christ [Jesus] brings a new agreement from God to his people. He brings this agreement so that those [people] who are chosen by God can have the blessings God promised, blessings that last [continue] forever” (Hebrews 9:15, ERV).

NO MOON FILLED THE EVENING SKY with light above Frank. The sky looked as black as ink. Frank was covered in shadows as he walked the empty streets of the city. After a while, Frank heard footsteps behind him. Someone was following Frank in the dark. Then the person caught up with Frank and asked, “Are you Frank the book maker?”

Frank did not know the man. He answered, “Yes, I am. How did you know?”

“Well,” said the stranger, “I do not know you. But I know your brother well. Even in the dark, I can see that you walk and move the same way your brother does. You both are the same size too. So, when I saw you, I knew you had to be his brother, because he told me he had one.”

This story helps us better understand the plan of God for the Holy Tent where He was worshiped in Old Testament times. The Bible tells us this tent was a copy of the real temple in heaven. Sure, the tent was only a copy. Even so, the copy showed important Bible truths. What Bible truths did the Holy Tent on earth show? The Holy Tent showed the death of Jesus and His work for us in the temple in heaven.



Someone was following Frank in the darkness.

A CLOSE, LOVING FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD
(Leviticus 26:11, 12)

“ ‘Also, I will place [put] my Holy Tent among you. I will not turn away from you. I will walk with you and be your God. And you will be my people’ ” (Leviticus 26:11, 12, ERV).

We should understand one idea by now: in both the old and the new agreements, the Lord wants to have a close, loving friendship with His people. The agreements show us the rules for this special friendship.

Friendship is an important part of the agreement. What things must any friendship have to be a success? Friends need to spend time together. They also need to communicate. They need to connect and stay in touch. The Lord, of course, knows this. That is why He leads out in the friendship. He wants to be sure that we, as sinners, can connect with Him in ways we can understand.

In Exodus 25:8, the Lord commands His people to build Him a tent. Why does the Lord want His people to do this? What reasons does the Lord give to His people?

The answer is: the Lord wants to live with His people. This answer brings up another question: Why? Why does the Lord want to live with His people?

You can find the answer to the last question in Leviticus 26:11, 12. Read these verses again (at the top of the study for today). Do you see that the Lord will “place [put]” His tent among His people? That is the same thing as the Lord saying that He will live among them. Then the Lord says He will not “turn away from you.” Next, He says He will “walk with you” and “be your God.” Israel will be His people (Leviticus 26:11, 12, ERV). Look at all these different parts in the verses. They show us that the Lord wants to have a close, loving friendship with His people.

Read Leviticus 26:11, 12 and Exodus 25:8. Write down how the different parts of these verses show us that God wants to have a close, loving friendship with His people.

Now look at the part of the verse where the Lord says, “ ‘I will not turn away from you’ ” (Leviticus 26:11, ERV). How does the Holy Tent show us that God will accept us? Why is this Bible truth so important for making an agreement?



The Lord will “place [put]” His tent among His people.

SIN, OFFERINGS, AND FORGIVENESS (Hebrews 9:22)

God made a way for sinners during Old Testament times to be free from sin and guilt. This plan included animal offerings. Leviticus 1–7 talks about the different animal offerings. God commanded the religious leaders in Israel to be very careful with the animal blood. Blood is one of the most important parts of the animal offerings.

When a person sinned, he broke his friendship with God, the law, and their agreement. There is only one way this sinner can be joined in full friendship with God again. The sinner must bring an animal gift to God. This animal will take the punishment that the sinner should get for breaking the law. The animal will be his substitute. The animal will die in the place of the sinner. God made animal offerings a part of worship to show sinners how He will make them clean from sin and guilt. The Lord takes the sin and guilt into His temple in heaven. The religious leaders during Old Testament times showed this special work God will do. The leaders took the blood into the Holy Tent on earth. Then the religious leaders sprinkled the blood inside the Holy Tent to show that the agreement and friendship with God was made new again.



The leaders took the blood into the Holy Tent on earth.

How do the ideas we just read about help us understand the questions at the end of the study yesterday?

What special message do the animal offerings show us about the future? For the answer, read Isaiah 53:4–12 and Hebrews 10:4.

The animal offerings changed the way God looked at the sinner. The animal died in the place of the sinner. So, God no longer saw the sinner as guilty and worthy of being killed. Now the sinner was forgiven. His friendship with God was made new. Of course, no animal can really be a substitute for a sinner who broke the law of God. As Paul, the writer of Hebrews, says: “It isn’t possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin” (Hebrews 10:4, NIV). So, we see that the animal offerings must be a word picture for something else: Jesus. Jesus died for the sins of everyone on earth. That is why God can make us clean from sin and forgive us. Because Jesus died for us, we can be friends with God again and accept His agreement.

JESUS, OUR SUBSTITUTE (Galatians 1:4)

One of the most important ideas in the New Testament is that Jesus offered Himself for our sins. Maybe this idea is the most important idea in the whole New Testament. God built His plan to save us with the blood of Jesus. What if someone teaches that Jesus does not save us with His blood? Then this person does not accept Christianity. A cross without Jesus and His blood will not save anyone.

Read Galatians 1:4 and then answer these questions: Does Jesus volunteer to die? Who are the ones that Jesus dies for? What does His death do for us?

Jesus takes our place on the cross. Another name for this idea is substitution. Substitution is an important part of the plan of God to save us. Our sins make us worthy of punishment. The punishment we should get is death. But Jesus “gave himself for our sins” (Galatians 1:4, ERV). He accepted our punishment. Why? Because He loved us. Jesus died the death we should die. So, Jesus is our Substitute. That is why the death of Jesus for us is important Bible truth. All other Bible truths come from this teaching. So, we now have hope that God will make us free from sin. Our hope comes from our faith in the work Jesus did for us on the cross. Now He works for us in heaven. So, we can have forgiveness and everlasting life. Our being saved comes only by our faith in the blood of Jesus. Without His blood, our faith does not mean anything.

Look up these verses: Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 9:14; and 1 Peter 1:19. What do these verses tell us about the blood? What part does blood have in the plan of God to save us from sin and death?

“God does not want you to be afraid. God does not want you to beat yourself up because of your sins. So, do not be afraid that God will not accept you because of your sins and because you are not worthy. . . . You can say: ‘I know I am a sinner. That is why I need a Savior. . . . I have not done anything to make myself good enough to be saved. But I come to God with the blood of Jesus. Jesus is the perfect Lamb of God. His blood removes the sins of humans. So, I ask God to remove my sins, too.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Faith I live By*, page 102, adapted.



Jesus died the death we should die.

JESUS, OUR CHIEF RELIGIOUS LEADER (Hebrews 8:1–6)

In Old Testament times, God wanted to live with His people. God chose to live in the Holy Tent when Israel traveled in the desert. An important part of worship at the Holy Tent included killing animals. The death of these animals was important. Their blood was important, too. The chief religious leader or high priest took the blood into the Holy Tent. He did this for the sinner after the animal was killed.

The killing of the animals and the work of the high priest are word pictures. They show the work Jesus will do on earth and in heaven for all humans. The work of the high priest in Old Testament times did not end when the animal offering was killed. In the same way, the work Jesus does for us does not end with His death on the cross.



An important part of worship at the Holy Tent included killing animals.

Study Hebrews 8:1–6 today. Pray about the verses. Ask the Lord to help you understand what He is saying to us in these verses, and why it is important for us to know it. Write in your own words what you think the message of the Lord is to us in these verses. Ask yourself, How do these verses help us understand the new agreement?

The Bible teaches us that there is a Holy Tent on earth during Old Testament times. Religious leaders serve God in the Holy Tent as part of the old agreement. In the same way, there is a tent or temple in heaven. This temple also has a high priest. He does work in the temple as part of the new agreement. In the old agreement, the Holy Tent and its worship are word pictures. In the new agreement, these word pictures become real things.

We no longer have an animal substitute who did not know right from wrong. Now we have Jesus who did not sin. We no longer have animal blood. Now we have the blood of Jesus. We no longer worship God in a place made by humans. Now Jesus “serves in the Most Holy Place. He serves in the true place of worship that was made by God, not by anyone here on earth” (Hebrews 8:2, ERV). Israel had a human priest or religious leader who was not perfect. We have Jesus who never sinned. He works for us in heaven right now to save us from sin. As you think about these things, read these words from Paul: “We will be punished if we forget or throw away this wonderful way to be saved” (Hebrews 2:3, WE).

JESUS WORKS FOR US IN HEAVEN (Hebrews 9:24)

Study Hebrews 9:24. This verse explains the work that Jesus does right now for us in heaven. We can learn many things from Hebrews 9:24. But we want to look at the last part of the verse. This part tells us that Jesus now stands “in front of God for us. He is there right now” (Hebrews 9:24, NIV).

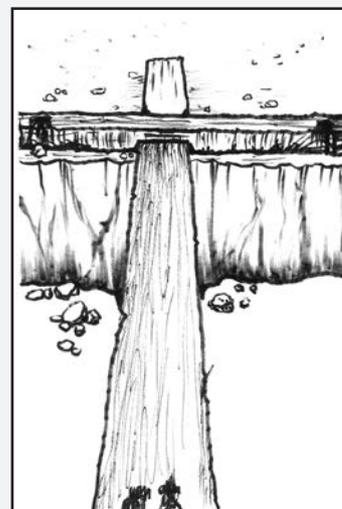
Do you understand how much this verse promises us? We are sinners. If we stand in front of God right now, what will happen to us? The glory of God will burn us up, right? So, we cannot stand in front of God right now. But Someone else can stand there for us. That Person is Jesus. Maybe we have been very bad in the past. Maybe we have broken the law of God in an awful way. The good news is that Jesus goes to court for us in heaven. He asks God to pardon us. Think about how loving Jesus was when He was on earth. He also was very forgiving and accepting, too. Now this same Person is our Lawyer in the courtroom in heaven!

Jesus is the same as a Human “Bridge.” Jesus paid the price for our sins at the cross (1 Peter 2:24). So, now Jesus stands in between God in heaven and humans on earth.

We can understand this idea. Sin caused a separation between God and humans. Jesus is both God and Man. He is perfect. So, Jesus is the only One who can be a “bridge” between sinners and God. The most important idea to remember is that the God-Man Jesus stands on our side in heaven. He can understand all our tests in life and our suffering (Hebrews 4:14, 15). That is why He is the best Person to stand for us in front of our Father in heaven.

“There is one God. There is one Man standing between God and men. That Man is Christ Jesus. He gave His life for all men so they could [may] go free and not be held by the power of sin. God made this known to the world [humans] at the right time” (1 Timothy 2:5, 6, NLV). What two jobs do these verses show us Jesus does? How are these two jobs shown by the Holy Tent and its animal offerings in Old Testament times?

The new agreement gives us good news: Jesus stands for us in front of God. Jesus asks God to forgive us and give us power over sin. Our hope in God makes us safe.



Jesus is the same as a Human “Bridge.”

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “The most powerful angel in heaven cannot pay the price needed to save one sinner. Angels with four wings cannot pay this price. Angels with six wings also cannot pay the price. Only a Person who is the same as God can save humans. This Person must be the same as God in every way. Everything about this Person shows that He is worthy to stand in front of God for sinners. He also will show God and His love to humans. The Substitute for humans will be the same as humans, too. He must be born human with the feelings and thoughts of a human. He must be connected with the human family. Then He can stand in front of God for humans. The Substitute for humans also must have the same thoughts and feelings as God. He must be connected with God. Then He can show God to humans and stand between God and humans, too.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 257, adapted.

“Jesus says: As you tell other people about Me, I also will tell God and the holy angels about you. You are My witnesses on earth. I will pour on you My loving-favor. My loving-favor will flow from you to other people. Then they will be healed. I will stand in front of God for you in heaven. The Father will not see all the mistakes you made or everything wrong with you. No, He will see you the same as He sees Me. You will be perfect in His eyes.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 357, adapted.



“The most powerful angel in heaven cannot pay the price needed to save one sinner. . . . Only a Person who is the same as God can save humans.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; and Ephesians 3:12. How do these verses help us understand that Jesus is the only Way that we can come to God?
- ② Look at the second Ellen G. White quotation above. Do you see that she explains the job of a lawyer? When the Father looks at us, He does not see our sins. No, He sees the holy life of Jesus, who is our Lawyer in heaven. Think about what this means. Discuss your answer with the class.
- ③ We know that Jesus is in the temple in heaven. What does that mean for us right now, today?

Summary: Jesus is our perfect Offering. He stands in front of the Father for us in the temple in heaven. The work Jesus does in heaven is the reason for the new agreement and its promises.