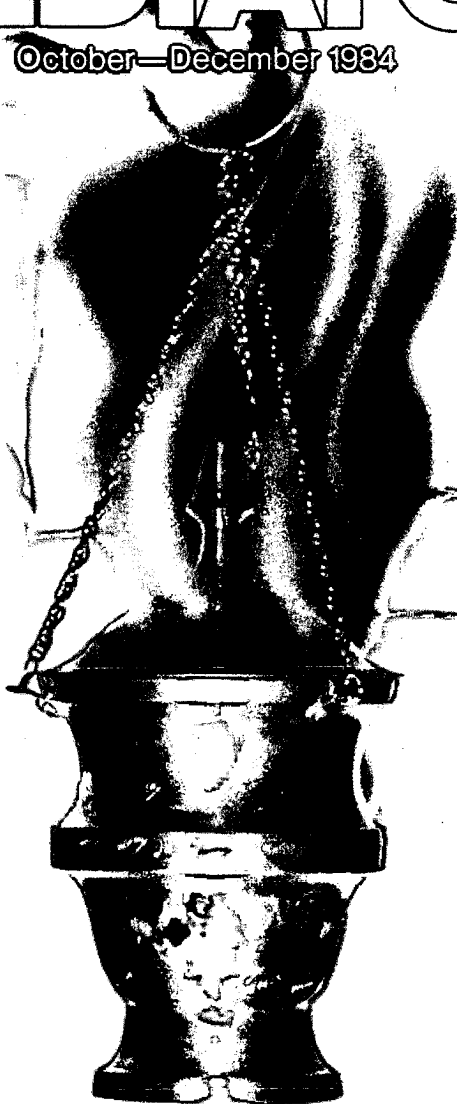


Adult Sabbath School Lessons

# JESUS OUR MEDIATOR

October—December 1934



  
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and. Since Jesus death on the cross, the Christian church is spiritual Israel. Jews are not saved as a nation, but as individual Christians.

**QUESTION FOR THOUGHT:** Is it important to know that Jesus is the church today, and not a

"It is Finished"

Part 1—Israel's End

"They cried out. Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate said unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered. We have no king but Caesar." John 19:15.

It is not important to know who was responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. (See Matt. 26:24.) Jesus as the Lamb of God came to die for the sins of the whole world. Every Christian confesses that he or she betrayed Christ to Calvary. Christ was brought to Calvary. Christ was betrayed and denied by "Christian" apostles. The New Testament says that the Romans and Jews were responsible for Christ's death. But Jesus really died of a broken heart--broken by the sins of a//people. Jesus came to earth to die.

When Pilate washed his hands and was innocent, what did he scream? Matt. 27:24.

... of the things Jesus died for. Mark 15:38: "and (3) Matt. 27:24.

... or more than a thousand years ago Christ was Israel's King, Protector, and Guide. When Israel refused to accept Jesus, they became unprotected.

1. When Jesus said, "It is finished," a hidden hand ripped open the temple veil. "And so your Temple will be abandoned and empty" (Matt. 23:38, TEV).

2. When Christ was resurrected (returned to life), other people were resurrected (see Eph. 4:8). They called Jesus their King. The Jewish leaders were shocked and speechless. What if they were to meet the risen Christ? Never again could they sleep peacefully. --The Desire of Ages, p. 785, paraphrased.

3. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70.

What happened to Israel after the cross? Rom. 11:11-26.

The cry, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15), and the death of Jesus brought the mission of Israel to an end. Since Jesus' death on the cross, the Christian church is spiritual Israel. Jews are not saved as a nation, but as individual Christians.

**A QUESTION FOR THOUGHT:** Why is it important to know that Israel is the church today, and not a nation?

**FURTHER STUDY:** Romans 9 and 10.

1 Sunday January

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**Editorial Offices: 6840 Eastern Avenue, N.W.  
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**Lesson Author: Charles Bradford**  
**Editor: Leo R. Van Dolson**  
**Editorial Secretary: Florence L. Wetmore**  
**Circulation Manager: Gary D. Grimes**  
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# Look What Your World Budget Offering Helped Us Accomplish



Shown above is the new addition to Sagunto College in Spain, the special project you supported with your Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering, second quarter, 1982.

Shown above are the projects you helped make possible, second quarter, 1982, when the Special Projects portion of your mission giving amounted to \$302,425.04. Shown at left is the girls' dormitory in Sagunto, Spain; at right, the French chapel, part of the reconstructed evangelistic center in Brussels, Belgium. This could not have been undertaken without your help. The special projects for this quarter

include a badly needed seminary building for Mozambique Adventist Seminary in Africa, and another for French Adventist Seminary, Colonges, France. We thank you for your generosity and for your prayers on our behalf.

*E. Ludescher*

Edwin Ludescher, President  
Euro-Africa Division

**"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth"  
(Prov. 11:24).**

## Introduction

# Jesus Our Mediator

The desperateness of our situation called for a mediator. Our planet was isolated in rebellion. Its inhabitants had been infected with sin. The survival of the human race was in doubt. Communication had been limited, and a great gulf separated human beings from God. An impenetrable gloom enshrouded the globe. To all appearances the rebels were without hope, without remedy.

To bridge the gulf a mediator was needed who could provide a way back to God—someone in between, someone who could bring the estranged parties together. In the desperate situation God took the initiative. Christ was provided as Mediator. He alone had the proper credentials and credibility to be able to guarantee results, to speak to both sides and to draw fallen human beings back into fellowship with God. In order to do so He had to be willing to pay the price, no matter how high it would be. Being interested in us in a most personal way, He was determined not to fail or become discouraged in His intervention on our behalf.

The Mediator has acted and continues to act in our behalf. Most of His primary mission has been accomplished. Planet Earth rightfully is His. The broken relationship has been restored. The communication gulf has been bridged, the gloom has been lifted, and salvation has been provided for those willing to accept it.

Two more acts in the drama remain—the completion of the investigative judgment and the complete banishment of the instigator, the arch-enemy, the chief rebel and his followers in the final executive judgment. Annihilation of the root cause will lead to the restoration of the planet to what God originally intended it to be.

For the next thirteen weeks, we will embark on a study journey through this grand truth, Jesus our Mediator, and will trace His activity and ministry. We will come to know Him better in the many phases of His noble efforts to rescue humanity. We will understand more clearly the way God works and come to experience at deeper levels the impact of what He has done and what He is doing—of the great salvation He has provided. Doing so should enable us to articulate more effectively the essential meaning of the grand old story. No wonder this teaching has been called the central doctrine of the Christian faith. It is a key to the unity of the Bible. In the Mediator, Jesus Christ, God has placed before His throne our Substitute and Surety.

Christianity is a religion of mediation. Ever since the inception of sin, Jesus has been and continues to be our Mediator with the Father. His mediation is our only hope of redemption and restoration.

“God is approached through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the only way through which He forgives sins. . . . This is the sinner’s only hope, and if he rests here in sincere faith, he is sure of pardon and that full and free. There is only one channel and that is accessible to all, and through that channel a rich and abundant forgiveness awaits the penitent, contrite soul and the darkest sins are forgiven.”—Ellen G. White *Comments, S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, pp. 912, 913.



# 1

September 30 to October 6  
Adult Lesson

## The Great Gulf

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isa. 59:1, 2).

Modern literature is studded with terms such as *hostility*, *estrangement*, and *alienation*. If writers and artists reflect the thinking and feelings of their generation, then our generation is characterized in a special way by a sense of separation and lostness. The biblical writers, the prophets, always have addressed such a feeling. They had what might be called three-dimensional vision—being able to see the past, present, and future. From their viewpoint, God and human beings are separated by a great gulf across which God alone is able to provide a bridge. These holy men of God did not speak softly. Loudly and clearly they thundered and trumpeted about the awful distance, the terrible chasm that lay between sinful humanity and the sinless God. The prophets may appear to be gloomy, even pessimistic at times; but, above all, they are realists. They tell it like it is. It is against this dark background that the good news is flashed and is all the more welcome because of it. The chasm *has* been bridged by the Mediator.

“By transgression man was severed from God, the communion between them was broken; but Jesus Christ died upon the cross of Calvary, bearing in His body the sins of the whole world, and the gulf between heaven and earth was bridged by that cross. Christ leads men to the gulf, and points to the bridge by which it is spanned, saying, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.’ ”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 941.

In John 3:14 we find Jesus telling Nicodemus that He, the Son of man, must be “lifted up” on the cross. To lift up is to place in full view. Christ on the cross becomes the great center of attraction, the magnet that draws. Thus God and human beings are drawn together. The hostility, the rebellion, the sinfulness, all that separates, is overcome by this “lifting up.” The cross now serves as the mightiest of weapons and is indispensable to the work of mediation.

## Part 1 — God Is Holy

“Above it [the throne] stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:2, 3). (See also Rev. 4:8.)

Heaven is a worshiping community. God is the object of worship. He dwells in light unapproachable. All of heaven’s inhabitants recognize His benevolent sovereignty. There is an essential difference between God and His created beings. In the sense of *ultimate* sacredness He alone is holy. When we speak of the holiness of God, we mean His absolute perfection of character in contrast with human imperfections, His infinite purity in contrast to human impurities. God is the “wholly other” and as such is unapproachable by fallen beings. The gulf between God and sinful humanity is a real one. The separation is clear and distinct. Modern thinking would narrow the gap by reducing God to the likeness of humanity. When this is done the awe and mystery that the Bible attributes to angelic worship gives way to a familiarity on our part that is out of place. God’s holiness must be kept in proper perspective.

**What is significant about Isaiah’s response to the vision of God? Isa. 6:5.**

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Isaiah’s response is the only proper response. “You should solemnly consider that you are dealing with the great God, and should ever remember that He is not a child, to be trifled with.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 221. Whenever human beings glimpse the awesome purity and holiness of God, their response is similar to Isaiah’s. One example is that of Peter when he recognized this quality of holiness in Jesus Christ. His reaction was, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord” (Luke 5:8). Later Peter came to realize that the sinner needs to draw close to God in order to overcome sin.

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** Indicate below what some of the other Bible writers have to say about God’s holiness:

1 Sam. 2:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Ps. 111:9 \_\_\_\_\_

Hab. 1:12, 13 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 1:8, 9 \_\_\_\_\_

James 1:13 \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2 — My Thoughts Are Not Your Thoughts

**“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8, 9).**

God should never be confused with His creatures. He is different. In this lesson we will not deal with minor contrasts but with vast differences. God and those created in His image have different modes and patterns of thought—different perceptions. As the prophet sees it, there is no point where human lines of thinking can serve as the measure of God’s way of thinking.

However, we are not talking about a God whose apparent remoteness and total “otherness” means that He is inaccessible to us. The Bible pictures God as being greatly concerned about people. His high and lofty thoughts are not evil, malicious thoughts. They are loving “thoughts of peace” (Jer. 29:11). (See also Ps. 40:5; Ps. 139:17, 18.)

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** Today’s text speaks of the thoughts of God and the ways of God. Read the texts that follow; then indicate how they describe the ways of God:

Ps. 18:30 \_\_\_\_\_

Hosea 14:9 \_\_\_\_\_

Hab. 3:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 15:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Seventh-day Adventists are called upon to reproduce God’s character before the world in word and life. How can we do so convincingly if we have not caught Isaiah’s vision? Ellen White gives this description of the kind of people who can represent the true God rightly: “Like Moses, they have had a view of the awful majesty of holiness, and they see their own unworthiness in contrast with the purity and exalted perfection of the Infinite One.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 470.

**THINK IT THROUGH:** What does all this say to us about worship? How can we apply in our homes and in our churches what we have been studying? How will it affect our witness?

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**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Great Controversy*, pp. 468-471.



## Part 3 — We Are Sinners

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Ps. 51:5).

The Bible states it clearly. There is no possibility of misunderstanding it. We are sinners. Although we are not born with the guilt of sin, we are born with natures inclined to sin. This is our natural condition. We are not condemned for what we inherited from Adam, but the result of that inheritance is evident in those sins for which *we are* held accountable.

**What is the significance of the term Paul uses to illustrate our sinful nature? Rom. 7:18; 8:5, 8, 12, 14.**

---

Paul often uses the term *flesh* to describe the unregenerate state in which we find ourselves. When used this way, *carnal mind* and *flesh* are synonyms. The carnal or fleshly mind is the seat of sin. Sin permeates the flesh and uses it for evil purposes. The flesh has a bent or bias toward sinning, an evil orientation. “There is in his [man’s] nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist”—*Education*, p. 29.

Paul uses another term—*Adam* or the *first Adam*. By this he means that unregenerate, unsanctified humanity is tied to Adam’s fate. This is the sin-death syndrome. “As in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:22).

In the “flesh” we human beings are dominated by another power. We are in bondage to self; in slavery, “sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14). Because the human heart resents this fact, it attempts in various ways to deny it. Bondage is a harsh word. No one likes the idea of such a galling yoke. In Jesus’ day the religious leaders reacted violently to His suggestion that they were slaves. But the principle is clear. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” The worst possible bondage is to be ruled by evil.

“Every soul that refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own man. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan. While he flatters himself that he is following the dictates of his own judgment, he obeys the will of the prince of darkness.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

From every perspective the gulf between God and humans is impassable. The situation in which we find ourselves demands a mediator.

**How far was Heaven willing to go to provide the needed Mediator? Rom. 8:3.**

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**FURTHER STUDY:** *Steps to Christ*, “The Sinner’s Need of Christ,” pp. 17, 18; *The Great Controversy*, p. 505.

## Part 4 — Rebels

**“The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8:7).**

Sin has thrown us out of harmony with heaven. Our moral machinery does not mesh with the operation of the heavenly machinery. As sinners we are rebels, at enmity with God rather than with Satan. Like a man caught in quicksand, all our efforts to extricate ourselves only plunge us deeper in the quagmire. “It is impossible for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 18.

**What is the function of the law? Rom. 3:20; 7:7.**

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Self-deception is a terrible thing. Yet, all of us are subject to it. We are tempted to live out a charade that Jesus called “hypocrisy” (play acting). Often we go to great lengths to avoid being uncovered and even may achieve a measure of success in our game, thus becoming comfortable and self-satisfied. Then God’s law pierces our souls. We perceive it as a living, active, dynamic power—a revelation of God’s character—rather than as commandments written on stone. For the first time we recognize the spirituality of the law as opposed to the letter. It dawns on us what our real condition is—we are in the wrong camp, under the wrong banner, possessed by the wrong spirit. We are horrified to realize that we really never knew ourselves before. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

“The apostle Paul, in relating his experience, presents an important truth concerning the work to be wrought in conversion. He says, ‘I was alive without the law once’—he felt no condemnation; ‘but when the commandment came,’ when the law of God was urged upon his conscience, ‘sin revived, and I died.’ Then he saw himself a sinner, condemned by the divine law.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1076.

**What significance do you see in the additional terms that are used to describe the human condition outside of Christ? Eph. 2:2, 3; Col. 1:21; 3:6.**

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The distance or gulf between ourselves and God is intensified by our repeated sinning, our refusal to make God supreme in our lives. Our fallen nature is far from being like God’s nature. By nature He is good, just, and holy. All His attributes may be summarized in a single word—*love*. By nature we are the opposite. The work of the Mediator is to bring these two opposites together—the sinful person and the holy God. This calls for a radical change that can be brought about only by Christ.

## Part 5 — Morality Alone Cannot Bridge the Gulf

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:1-3).

Nicodemus “was a strict Pharisee, and prided himself on his good works. He was widely esteemed for his benevolence and his liberality in sustaining the temple service, and he felt secure in the favor of God. . . .

“ . . . By virtue of his birth as an Israelite he regarded himself as sure of a place in the kingdom of God. He felt that he needed no change. Hence his surprise at the Saviour’s words. He was irritated by their close application to himself. The pride of the Pharisee was struggling against the honest desire of the seeker after truth.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

In Nicodemus’ case religion was an obstacle to faith. His brand of religion gave him a false security. He wanted to make his morality and good works the basis of acceptance with God. Jesus punctured his preconceptions. It is not rank sinners alone but all persons—high, low, rich, poor, religious, and irreligious—who need Christ to make them and their works acceptable to God.

**What balance do we find in the writings of Paul about the futility of even the moral individual’s efforts to work out his own salvation and about the necessity of good works? Rom. 3:20; Phil. 2:12, 13.**

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Without Christ even the moral person’s efforts fall short. The gulf that separates God from sinful beings is too deep and wide to be bridged by human works. “Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. . . .

“ . . . The idea that it is necessary only to develop the good that exists in man by nature, is a fatal deception.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 18, 19.

“He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. There is no safety for the one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 172.

The biblical writers leave us one conclusion alone. Human beings must look to some power above and outside of themselves—to God, for salvation and for power to live as God wants us to live.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14, 15).

Incredible as it may seem, the terrible chasm that separates God and humans has been bridged by Christ, symbolized as a serpent on a pole. “When the people of Israel were dying from the sting of the fiery serpents, God directed Moses to make a serpent of brass, and place it on high in the midst of the congregation. Then the word was sounded throughout the encampment that all who would look upon the serpent should live. The people well knew that in itself the serpent had no power to help them. It was a symbol of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 174.

**In what way do 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13 help us to understand why Christ was represented by the symbol of evil, the serpent?**

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The serpent has been the symbol of sin ever since Satan chose to use that symbol in the Garden of Eden. The serpent on the pole represents Christ becoming sin for us.

The first gospel sermon was preached by God Himself in the Garden of Eden. Our Lord did not let things drift before implementing the great plan of redemption. He declared to the serpent, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). The seed of the woman is the God-man who would accept the death penalty, a painful wound from which He would recover. Before God pronounced the sentence of death on the guilty pair, He gave a message of hope—a Saviour will come, and He will be your Substitute and Surety.

**How are people’s responses to the good news of a Saviour from sin illustrated in the experience of Cain and Abel? Gen. 4:3-5.**

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Cain’s refusal to comply with God’s instructions was a denial of God’s authority. However, “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Heb. 11:4).

**APPLICATION:** The first lesson sets the stage for the study of “Jesus Our Mediator” by showing how sin has placed a universal gulf between God and humanity. Identify the specific issues that mark this general gulf and be prepared to discuss in class how we as Christians should relate to these issues in our everyday lives.



# 2

October 7-13  
Adult Lesson

## The Go-between

**MEMORY TEXT:** “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5).

From the inception of sin Jesus the Son has been the Go-between, the Mediator. The only member of the Godhead who has been made visible, He is the supreme revealer of God. Every contact with planet Earth since the entrance of sin has been through Jesus Christ. “The Father has given the world into the hands of Christ, that through His mediatorial work He may redeem man and vindicate the authority and holiness of the law of God. All the communion between heaven and the fallen race has been through Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 366.

Jesus, the Mediator, stands “in the midst of the throne” (Rev. 5:6), firmly rooted in the Deity. He also became a citizen of earth in our behalf, thus connecting earth and heaven. “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). He still is the God in between. His mediatorial ministry is designed to bring together the parties separated by sin, including those that were under the curse. “Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Col. 1:20).

Before the foundation of the world the members of the Godhead agreed that Jesus would become Heaven’s agent of mercy and redemption—the God who would bridge the gulf that was discussed in our last lesson. Ever since that agreement was made, He has never slackened His efforts or changed His position. He has remained constant, in Old Testament times, in New Testament times, and through the long centuries on this side of His ascension. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). And so, He will ever be, world without end, the One who agreed to stand between us and the Father, earth and heaven, the unique and incomparable Mediator, the channel of saving grace, the One who procures eternal salvation for those who look to Him in faith, constantly trusting and obeying Him.

## Part 1 — God From Eternity

**“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen” (2 Cor. 13:14).**

In order to understand as best we can Christ’s position as Mediator, it is necessary to recognize that He was and is a member of the triune Godhead, existing through all eternity. When we study the doctrine of the Trinity we indeed are on holy ground. The idea of one God existing as three persons is difficult for many to accept. There are three persons in the Trinity, but we must be aware that the term *person* when used of divinity is not the precise equivalent of the same term when it is used to apply to human beings.

The unity of God is the great truth that distinguished Israel from her neighbors. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4). Does the truth revealed in the Old Testament then contradict the truth revealed in the New Testament? Of course not. The word used for God in the first chapter of the Bible suggests more than one person within the one Godhead. “God said, Let us make man in our image” (Gen. 1:26). This doctrine of the Trinity is spiritually enriching to us. God has not existed from all eternity as a single solitary being, but there always has been unity and communion within the Godhead.

**What did Jesus indicate about there being three persons in the Godhead? Matt. 28:19, 20.**

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Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are distinct personalities; yet They form a divine unity and act unitedly in creation and redemption. “There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.”—*Evangelism*, p. 615.

**SEARCH AND LEARN: What do the following texts contribute to our understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity?**

1 Peter 1:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Jude 20, 21 \_\_\_\_\_

John 5:26 \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 2 — Foreordained Before the World Was

“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Peter 1:20).

“In hope of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2).

It was settled in the eternal councils of the Godhead that Jesus, the Son, should be man’s Redeemer. We do not know exactly when. The Bible simply says, “before the foundation of the world.” “The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63. The plan was *laid*, well thought out, and carefully designed. Nothing was left to chance. The agreement was that Jesus should be the Lamb, the Sin Bearer.

What term used by Zechariah sometimes is used to describe the conference where the decision was made to redeem man? Zech. 6:13. (See also Acts 2:23.)

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“None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.

“Before the Father He pleaded in the sinner’s behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing—‘the counsel of peace’ . . . for the fallen sons of men. The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth . . . ; yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But ‘God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

“As a priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne. Revelation 3:21. Upon the throne with the eternal, self-existent One is He who ‘hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.’ . . .

“ ‘And the counsel of peace shall be between Them both.’ The love of the Father, no less than of the Son, is the fountain of salvation for the lost race. . . . And in the ministration in the sanctuary above, ‘the counsel of peace shall be between Them both.’ ”—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 416, 417.

Sin sent shock waves throughout the universe. Heaven itself was greatly affected. Angels stopped singing. Gloom spread everywhere. Was earth to be forever cut off? Was the situation hopeless? No! As soon as sin occurred Jesus stepped into the breach. He acknowledged His role and function as Mediator, Surety, and Substitute for the human race.

## Part 3 — Communicator and Revealer

**“I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:6).**

At the center or focal point of John’s vision stands Jesus. He has all power (seven horns), He is all knowing (seven eyes), and through the Spirit He is present everywhere.

To Jesus, the Second Person of the Godhead, has been assigned the task of being the One within the Godhead who is to reveal God to lost beings. Jesus is the Great Communicator. The fact that He is called “Son” does not mean that He did not exist eternally. “The term by which He is known, the Son of God, reflects His place in the plan of salvation, a role determined before the world was created.”—*Adventist Review*, “The Son,” Special Issue on Bible Doctrines [July 30, 1981], p. 6. After sin came, God continued to keep in contact with humanity through Christ.

**What do we learn about Jesus as God’s chief spokesman? Heb. 11:1, 2.**

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This text implies that Christ serves as God’s perfect Communicator and Revealer. He is God’s thought made audible, His speech made understandable, and His form made visible. A. J. Gordon, an American pastor of an earlier generation, took the position that Jesus is God spelling Himself out to humans in language that we can understand. He felt that all we need to know and can possibly know about God is revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** When we speak of Jesus as the Second Person of the Godhead, how do we avoid implying that He is inferior to God the Father? Indicate how the following passages contribute to our answer to this question:

John 1:1, 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 1:8, 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Col. 2:9 \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus stands fully in the counsels of God, sharing His most intimate secrets. This kind of relationship is possible only among equals. Jesus does not assume a prerogative that is not His when He says, “I come from the bosom of the Father. We are one.”

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.



## Part 4 — Between God and Us

**“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).**

In His own person Jesus is the way between God and humans. He does not say that He will construct or make a way; rather, He declares, “I am the way.” How does He accomplish this? By His incarnation. By taking on human flesh. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

“The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God.”—Ellen G. White, *Youth’s Instructor*, October 13, 1898.

Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one. It is in this union that we find the hope of our fallen race. Looking upon Christ in humanity, we look upon God.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, July 30, 1896.

**How did Jesus illustrate the communication system between earth and heaven? What makes communication between heaven and earth possible? John 1:51; 14:6.**

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In His own person and being, Jesus is the connecting link between heaven and earth; He is the communication system, the ladder, on which angels ascend and descend. Angels are messengers. They carry the communiques, but Jesus is the passageway over which the angels travel. Without this provision no communication would be possible.

“Up to the time of man’s rebellion against the government of God, there had been free communion between God and man. But the sin of Adam and Eve separated earth from heaven, so that man could not have communion with his Maker. Yet the world was not left in solitary hopelessness. The ladder represents Jesus, the appointed medium of communication. Had He not . . . bridged the gulf that sin had made, the ministering angels could have held no communion with fallen man. Christ connects man in his weakness and helplessness with the source of infinite power.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 184.

**How do we avoid giving the impression that we think of Jesus as shielding us from an angry Father? What part did the Father have in providing the “way”? John 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 5:19.**

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God is the provider, the One who gives. His love prompts Him to give.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 63-70.

## Part 5 — Between Human Beings

**“That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby” (Eph. 2:16).**

Christ’s mediation not only affects the relationships between Jews and Gentiles but all relationships. He joins humanity with divinity. At the same time He does not leave the human race without the means to live at peace on personal, family, or national levels. Jesus is the cement that binds. His blood is the bonding agent. His mediatorial work forms more than a dry theory. It has a powerful effect on all who accept Him as their personal Saviour. All that He has done is of no avail until we take advantage of it. The work of Calvary should be ongoing and continual.

**What practical result of Christ’s mediation takes place in human experience? Col. 3:15-17.**

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“A union of believers with Christ will as a natural result lead to a union with one another, which bond of union is the most enduring upon earth. We are one in Christ, as Christ is one with the Father.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 47.

“The heart of him who receives the grace of God overflows with love for God and for those for whom Christ died. Self is not struggling for recognition. . . . He is kind and thoughtful, humble in his opinion of himself, yet full of hope, always trusting in the mercy and love of God. . . .

“The grace of Christ is to control the temper and the voice. Its working will be seen in politeness and tender regard shown by brother for brother, in kind, encouraging words. . . . Love is manifested in kindness, gentleness, forbearance, and long-suffering.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 101, 102.

As one Bible scholar describes it, the Christian church is a cross-shaped community, formed and shaped by the power of the cross. The church community continues to experience the reconciliation which the cross brings. Its members are crucified with Christ. He mediates to them His peace. In turn they are to reflect in their characters and conduct what Christ’s sacrificial and high-priestly ministry make possible.

**How important to Jesus is the matter of reconciliation between church members? Matt. 5:23, 24.**

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Whatever might be the cause, Jesus regards estrangement between believers as a serious matter. It should be observed that the worshiper was under obligation to seek out the brother who “had ought against” him. He must take the initiative, not imputing guilt to the one whom it could be reasoned was the offender.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:5-7).

Jesus cheerfully, voluntarily accepted the awesome assignment to do whatever was necessary to bring God and humanity together. He knew that it would involve suffering, deprivation, and death. When He explained to the angels what was involved, they recoiled in horror. They were loathe to let their Commander go. But He was determined. The decision, the contract had been made during the mysterious “council of peace.” The Father also was torn. There was trauma in the heart of God; and it was a struggle, even for God, to yield up His Son to die for us. This is the mystery of redemption. The Father was willing to endure the pain because of His love for us.

**How committed was Jesus to His unique mission? Isa. 42:4; 53:11.**

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Our Lord was determined to give Himself completely to His mission. No sacrifice was deemed too great. When He came to earth the immediate prospects often were disappointing, but He persevered. He refused to give in to circumstances—never becoming discouraged, never failing. His concentration was intense. Zeal for God and the salvation of the lost consumed Him. He forgot to eat. He was oblivious to danger. He looked straight ahead and “for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2).

**APPLICATION: From the parable of the lost sheep, what can we learn about Jesus, His mission, and our salvation? Luke 15:4-7.**

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Leaving the 99 sheep that were safe in the fold, the shepherd ventured out to seek the one that was lost. He searched for it until He found it. Here again we find a picture of intense interest, concentration, and determination. Jesus is interested in the last, the lost, and the least. The three parables of Luke 15 illustrate this perfectly. The sheep was lost in the wilderness, foolishly wandering. The coin was lost in the house. It did not realize that it was lost. The prodigal son was lost because of his willful disobedience. He knew that he was lost. The sheep and the coin could do nothing to save themselves. Someone must expend the effort to do for them what they could not do for themselves. Jesus took this as His special assignment. It also is ours. We have a part to play in our salvation. We have choices to make. How will you respond?



# 3

October 14-20  
Adult Lesson

## Mediation— A Universal Need

**MEMORY TEXT:** “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:22, 23).

The entire universe was affected by transgression. We are reminded of this in many ways. Nature provides its testimony in such disasters as earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, and storms. Human experience reflects the terrible reality—divorce, wars, and crime. Since the day when the sin of our first parents sent a chill of terror through the universe, things have been out of harmony and sin has cast its dark shadow of decay and death over creation. The startling fact is that the unfallen worlds at one time were threatened and still are involved. The work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary cannot be understood fully merely in relation to what He is doing for the inhabitants of planet Earth.

“The plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 68.

The Creator and Sustainer must stand between His creation and the shadow of death, protecting human beings, the inhabitants of unfallen worlds, and even angels from the consequences of the rebellion.

“It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1132.

Ultimately, through Jesus’ mediation, there will be perfect harmony throughout the universe. The scars and mars will be removed. That which was lost to sin will be brought back. The plan of salvation preserves, keeps, restores, and “provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1132.

Through Jesus the universal need is fulfilled.

## Part 1 — Creator and Sustainer

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth” (Isa. 40:26).

God is not an absentee landlord. Not only did He create but He sustains. He superintends the vast creation. Nothing, from the smallest atom to the greatest star, escapes His watchcare. He is the God of the infinitesimally small and the infinitely great. He is an exquisite craftsman. The delicate balance of nature demands His constant involvement. The universe is not a huge clock that was wound up tight in the beginning and has since then run under its own energies. The laws of nature cannot and do not operate apart from nature’s God. The Bible pictures a God who is intimately acquainted with His creation. Isaiah’s words are impressive—the vast number of stars, constellations, and planets have been numbered and named by their Creator. The fact that the universe holds together and is a dependable system is attributed properly by the prophets to the power and wisdom of God.

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** What do the texts that follow contribute to our understanding that Christ was the active agent in Creation?

John 1:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 3:9 \_\_\_\_\_

Col. 1:16, 17 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 1:1, 2 \_\_\_\_\_

“It was Christ that spread the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth. It was His hand that hung the worlds in space, and fashioned the flowers of the field.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 20.

**For what purpose did God create the earth? Isa. 45:12, 18.**

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The unselfishness of God is reflected in creation. He intended to people many planets with holy, happy beings who would reflect His life to each other and thus return to Him a revenue of glory. His pleasure is not primarily in inanimate objects, but in persons. In his vision of the heavenly throne room John hears the worshipers exclaiming, “Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:11). The Creator is the Sustainer. He also accepts the responsibility for redeeming the lost planet and its inhabitants. He does not abandon His creation.

## Part 2 — Under Bondage

“The earth will wear out like a garment” (Isa. 51:6, NIV).

Sin has an ecological effect. The earth is under the curse. This explains why there are weeds, noxious plants, brambles, briars, thorns, and a planet breaking down with age; wearing “out like a garment” (Ps. 102:26, RSV). Suffering and death are the norm. Adam and Eve grieved at the first falling leaf. The climate became subject to marked changes. Later natural disasters began to wreak destruction. Death and corruption made inroads into every family. Since the inception of sin, earth and its inhabitants have been sliding downhill.

**How is the human disharmony with nature demonstrated? Gen. 3:17-19.**

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The bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21) has the planet in its viselike grip. “Under the curse of sin all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God. When God made man, He made him ruler over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule. Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree.

“And the life of toil and care which was henceforth to be man’s lot was appointed in love. It was a discipline rendered needful by his sin, to place a check upon the indulgence of appetite and passion, to develop habits of self-control. It was a part of God’s great plan for man’s recovery from the ruin and degradation of sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 59, 60.

In spite of earth’s decay, God’s salvation and righteousness are unchanged. The salvation and righteousness that He provides reverses the process that leads from sin to death. Jesus, the Creator and Sustainer, refuses to give Satan, the usurper, unchallenged control over His creation, including nature as well as humanity. He is willing to extend Himself in the redemptive effort in order to prevent Satan from assuming control.

In spite of the seeming insignificance of this world compared to God’s universe, Heaven has not abandoned us. This planet has become the theater of the universe. God is not through with planet Earth! It is His purpose to demonstrate through His dealing with humanity the unchanging principles that are the foundation of His universal government.

Our hope centers in the fact that the God who is our Creator and Sustainer also has become our Redeemer. He never wearies in His determination to rescue us, and the world itself, from the bondage to sin that resulted when our first parents sold themselves to Satan and sin.

## **Part 3 — Miraculous Protection**

**“It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness” (Lam. 3:22, 23).**

A planet under bondage and under the threat of extinction needs protection. Human existence is a fragile thing. Scientists tell us that a rise in temperature of two or three degrees at the North and South Poles would cause worldwide flooding. They have warned that hydrocarbon emissions and other pollutants will one day upset the delicate balance in the atmosphere. We could go on. Suffice it to say, the mediatorial work of Christ includes the globe and its inhabitants. Sin’s penalty (death) would have been exacted as soon as Adam and Eve sinned if there had been no plan of salvation. But Christ interposed. He shielded our first parents from immediate death and placed the planet under His protection.

The Bible speaks of God’s steadfast love. The Hebrew term *chesed* means “loving-kindness,” “devotion,” “loyalty,” “fidelity.” It occurs in one form or another about 245 times in the Old Testament. In 177 instances it seems to convey the idea of solidarity or stability, as in God’s covenant relationship with His people.

**What basic attribute of God underlies His relationship to the earth and its inhabitants? Gen. 9:16, 17.**

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God’s steadfast love forms the basis of His dealings with humanity. This is expressed in His covenant with “all flesh.” The everlasting covenant embraces more than Israel or the church. Whether or not human beings acknowledge God’s sovereignty, He extends His mercies to them. Christ’s mediatorial ministry protects even the rebellious during probationary time.

**Given the terrible nature and consequences of sin and its constant threat to survival, how can we explain the fact that the earth and its inhabitants have survived this long? 2 Peter 3:9.**

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The word *slack* in this text means “to delay” or “loiter.” It can also mean “to loosen one’s grasp.” The purposes of God for planet Earth are unchanged by centuries of time. Expressed in His covenant, God’s purposes know no haste or delay. The planet is preserved in order to give the people in it opportunity to turn to God in repentance. Christ has not for one day or even one moment given up on the human race and planet Earth. He stood in the breach at Eden, and He has extended His miraculous protection ever since. He has the entire world in His hands. No part of the lost possession is beyond the reach of the Mediator.

## Part 4 — Seeds of Destruction

**“The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away” (Ps. 37:20).**

One thing can be said about the nature of sin. It is highly inflammable and combustible. Left to itself, sin will self-destruct. (See Isa. 9:18; Isa. 1:31; Prov. 13:6.)

It is the hand of a merciful God alone that prevents total destruction.

“God forbears, for a time, the full execution of the sentence of death pronounced upon man. Satan flattered himself that he had forever broken the link between heaven and earth. But in this he was greatly mistaken and disappointed. The Father had given the world into the hands of His Son for Him to redeem from the curse and the disgrace of Adam’s failure and fall.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1085.

**What can we learn from Genesis 6:5, 6, about the moral condition that prevailed before the Flood?**

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D. L. Moody used to say that sin leaped into the world full grown; the first boy born became a murderer. It is true that it does not take sin long to develop and ripen. The destructiveness of sin is illustrated amply in the experience of the pre-Flood generations. Moral degeneracy set in rapidly. They gave themselves over to unbridled and unrestrained passions. Romans 1:18-32 traces the moral decline. Read this entire passage and determine for yourself whether it applies to society today.

**What led God to make the decision to destroy by a flood most of the human race that then existed? Gen. 6:7.**

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God is faithful and loyal, but sin has its consequences. Love is never harsh or cruel, but it *is* just. Love works ceaselessly to save sinners, but is just as determined to overcome evil. Those who continue to reject God’s love will find that love will become wrath to them. Even God’s destruction of evil is a loving act.

Christ, through Noah, came and preached to the antediluvians. “It was His voice that spoke to the inhabitants of the old world in messages of warning, reproof, and invitation.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1089. God made extraordinary efforts to save the antediluvians. But at last the blight of sin covered the earth completely. The experience of the pre-Flood generation, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, is an illustration of the deadly nature of sin.



## Part 5 — For Unfallen Worlds Too

“Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee” (Neh. 9:6).

Ours is not the only inhabited planet. The universe is neither silent nor without inhabitants. Some of the most fascinating passages of Ellen White’s writings draw back the curtain just a bit on these “unfallen worlds.” We also see hints of life on other planets in such scriptural passages as Revelation 12:12; Job 1:6; 2:1, and Hebrews 1:2.

“God’s government included not only the inhabitants of heaven, but of all the worlds that He had created; and Lucifer had concluded that if he could carry the angels of heaven with him in rebellion, he could carry also all the worlds.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 41.

**What biblical evidence can be found to support the suggestion that Christ created other inhabited worlds? Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2.**

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These texts are cited to remind us once again that Jesus Christ is a universal Creator and universal Redeemer. The frame of reference for the great controversy is the entire cosmos. Prophets (see-ers) have the advantage of God’s perspective. They talk about sin being eradicated from the universe. Christ’s lordship is to be exercised over the entirety of His vast creation. “Christ is mediating in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by His mediatorial work.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 254.

**What does Revelation 12:12 indicate about the significance to other worlds of Christ’s victory on the cross?**

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From their vantage point the beings on other planets have seen it all. The Fall, the Flood, the Exodus, the building of the tabernacle at Sinai, the entire history of the Jewish nation, the coming of Christ, His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Their attention is riveted on planet Earth and Christ’s work in the heavenly sanctuary. As the conflict nears its close, they must be all the more anxious for final victory. And above all, they are grateful to the One whose strong arm kept them from the power of the evil one. The great controversy theme holds together the various doctrines and truths of our message in a beautiful and harmonious system. This theme is unique and crucial in understanding the effects that sin in this world has brought to unfallen worlds.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 41, 69.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

“Thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem” (Micah 4:8).

The plan of salvation provides for full restoration of the lost dominion that Adam sold out to Satan. Initially Adam was given dominion over the earth. The command was, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:28). But Adam was not absolute owner. He merely was steward, God’s representative. God still is the landlord. The earth is the Lord’s. The creation that came from His hand characterized with such loveliness and beauty has been purchased back, has been redeemed, by the same hand that made it.

What applications can you draw from the extent of what is to be recovered? Luke 19:10.

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Through sin Adam and Eve lost (1) eternal life—they no longer had the right to eat of the fruit of the tree; (2) their Eden home—they were evicted and an angel placed at the gate with a flaming sword; (3) their covering of light—sin brought them consciousness of their spiritual nakedness; and (4) the privilege of open communion with God. It is the object and purpose of Christ’s mediation to restore, to redeem, to purchase, and to buy back. *To seek* indicates the necessity for the Saviour to leave heaven, to move out of the element of glory and into the veil of flesh. *To save* is to make salvation secure by mediating His own life and character to repentant sinners. Eden will be populated once again with holy, happy beings whose lost estate has been recovered.

What else is included in the rescue-recovery mission, and who directs it? Eph. 1:10.

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**APPLICATION:** Try this exercise:

You have a friend who is an atheist. He sees events determined by the capricious operation of physical and chemical forces. You and he are discussing a news story of a recent disaster. As a Christian, how would you explain to him your confidence in a concerned God who is overseeing the function of the universe? Let your statement reflect concepts from this week’s lesson.



# 4

October 21-27  
Adult Lesson

## What Our Mediator Does

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

A mediator brings about a change in relationships. He does this by first removing the cause for hostility. “ ‘Mediation’ in its broadest sense may be defined as the act of intervening between parties at variance for the purpose of reconciling them.”—James Orr, general editor, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939), p. 2018. Thus reconciliation is at the heart of mediation. There must be, at all costs, a change in relationships. Jesus, our Mediator, does this by pouring out His soul in death, giving Himself freely.

What Christ has done can be illustrated in a limited way by the story of the father and son who became estranged. The situation worsened to the point where the son left the home, threatening never to return. The father responded by saying that he never wanted to see the son again. During the intervening years, there was no contact between them until the mother became dangerously ill. She pleaded to see her son once again. Relenting, the father sent for him. The son came home. Father and son stood on opposite sides of the bed. Weak and sinking fast, the mother took the father’s hand and the son’s hand and, with one last dying effort, joined their hands in hers. That is what reconciliation is like.

Of course no story really can tell it all. Human illustrations break down at some point. This one does when we try to make the human father in the story represent God the Father in every respect. The Father hates sin but not the sinner. Mediation is not necessary to appease an angry God. Where the story is on target is in the mother’s earnest desire for reconciliation, even as the last act of her life. As His last act our divine Mediator gave His life in order that mediation could be effected. In fact, Father and Son joined in giving Themselves in the supreme effort to redeem lost humanity.

## Part 1 — He Reconciles

“You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight” (Col. 1:21, 22).

There are overtones and connotations in the term *mediator* that suggest broker, negotiator, interpreter, spokesman, attorney, advocate, and even guarantor. The term is a broad one. The mediator is the peacemaker who brings the alienated parties together. The mediator needs to know both parties. He also needs to know what is the cause of the estrangement. If the mediator is to be successful he cannot be part of the problem. He must have the respect and trust of the parties he hopes to bring to a reconciliation. He also should have a personal interest in the persons to be reconciled. The personal risk factor cannot be avoided.

Even this description of the mediator and his function but faintly illustrates the all-sufficient ministry of Jesus, the “one mediator between God and men” (1 Tim. 2:5). For our purposes in this lesson we will consider the primary function of the mediator to be that of reconciler—the one who brings the alienated parties together.

**In what way is God the Father involved in the work of reconciliation?  
2 Cor. 5:19.**

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It is love that reconciles, and we can be assured that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love us equally. We must not think of reconciliation as the Son feeling sorry for lost humanity and begging the angry Father to give the child another chance. There is no division in the Godhead’s attitude or feeling toward human beings. Although it was Christ who gave His life to and for us, God the Father also joined in paying that infinite price. It is He who has placed Christ at His altar of mediation.

“God’s appointments and grants in our behalf are without limit. The throne of grace is itself the highest attraction because occupied by One who permits us to call Him Father. But God did not deem the principle of salvation complete while invested only with His own love. By His appointment He has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. As our Intercessor, His office work is to introduce us to God as His sons and daughters.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 363.

All of the New Testament passages that speak about reconciliation represent God as the One who reconciles the human race to Himself through Jesus Christ. Jesus established a new relation to God by an act—His death on the cross. That act became the basis for our new relationship to God. Two estranged persons become as one. Hence the word *atonement*, “at-one-ment.” The point to be remembered is that God took the initiative. He did not wait for us to request Him to intervene.

## Part 2 — He Removes the Cause

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Peter 2:24). (Compare 1 John 3:5.)

Because sin is the alienating factor it had to be removed before there could be reconciliation. Doing so involved Christ’s death for our sins, which Paul says is the heart of the gospel—the good news. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3). The Son of God came on a search-and-destroy mission. He entered Satan’s dominion, defeated him on his own ground, and destroyed the enemy’s stronghold. Sin, which seemed to be such an immovable barrier, can now be removed, taken away. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). The cause for estrangement is removed. Christ has dealt effectively with sin. He has shorn it of its power and ultimately will remove its sting.

**How does the term *Lamb of God* apply to Christ’s mission? John 1:29.**

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In the Jewish economy “the sacrificial lamb” came to be another name for “Sin Bearer.” Jesus Himself was instructed by the slaying of lambs. When He visited Jerusalem for the first time, He came in contact with the doctors of the law who had an entirely wrong concept of the Messiah’s mission. There “He beheld the bleeding victim upon the altar of sacrifice. With the worshipers He bowed in prayer, while the cloud of incense ascended before God. He witnessed the impressive rites of the paschal service. Day by day He saw their meaning more clearly. Every act seemed to be bound up with His own life. New impulses were awakening within Him. Silent and absorbed, He seemed to be studying out a great problem. The mystery of His mission was opening to the Saviour.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 78.

Four times outside of the book of Revelation the New Testament applies the word *lamb* to Christ as the One who suffers, the Just for the unjust, and dies in our stead to atone for sin. There is atoning power in the Lamb and His sacrifice. But when we come to the book of Revelation, the figure of the Lamb becomes central. It is used 28 times. He is depicted as Redeemer (Rev. 14:4), as Judge (Rev. 6:16), as King (Rev. 17:14), and as Victor (Rev. 14:1).

Jesus is the Lamb-Priest who unites in Himself the victim who is sacrificed and the Priest who is the offerer. He has prevailed and thus has all power. His victory is unlimited, final, and complete.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 277, 278.

## Part 3 — He Pays the Price

**“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).**

The removal of sin necessitated the death of the Sin Bearer. His was not to be ordinary death, but He was to taste what it would mean for the sinner to be eternally separated from God. The Mediator must not only bear the sin but also its full penalty. However, the suffering of Christ was not to be confined to the experiences immediately preceding His death. Throughout His lifetime the Saviour’s suffering from contact with sin was intense. The current of His life was in direct opposition to the immorality of the society of His day.

**What significance do you see in the term the Bible uses to describe the penalty of sin? Rom. 6:23.**

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The penalty for sin is spoken of as “wages.” The sinner deserves the penalty. God’s gift, eternal life, is totally undeserved. It is all of grace. The wages we earn by sinning was paid by the Mediator on our behalf. “In death He was more than conqueror. The redemption price has been paid.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1149.

**How does a word Jesus used help us better understand the nature of His sacrifice? Matt. 20:28.**

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The price of our salvation also is called a “ransom.” *Ransom* is a term that comes from the slave market. The human race is sold under sin. The result is that we find ourselves in the most absolute bondage. But Jesus was willing to pay the unbelievable ransom price—His own life.

“Justice and mercy stood apart, in opposition to each other, separated by a wide gulf. The Lord our Redeemer clothed his divinity with humanity, and wrought out in behalf of man a character that was without spot or blemish. He planted his cross midway between heaven and earth, and made it the object of attraction which reached both ways, drawing both Justice and Mercy across the gulf. Justice moved from its exalted throne, and with all the armies of heaven approached the cross. There it saw One equal with God bearing the penalty for all injustice and sin. With perfect satisfaction Justice bowed in reverence at the cross, saying It is enough.”—Ellen G. White, *General Conference Bulletin*, Fourth Quarter, 1899, p. 102.

It is dangerous to think of the ransom provided in Jesus as appeasement. The God of the Christian faith needs no appeasement.

## Part 4 — He Destroys the Destroyer

**“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14).**

In essence, the death of Christ destroyed Satan’s kingdom. It pulled down the twin pillars, sin and death. The prison house of sin collapsed, and death is a defeated foe, although the ultimate victory over death still is to come. The captives are set free. The Mediator prevails, the enemy is vanquished. “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

Satan is a defeated foe! John declared, “I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10).

**SEARCH AND LEARN: How do the texts that follow demonstrate that Christ has been victor in every encounter with Satan?**

Rev. 12:7-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Jude 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 4:1-11 \_\_\_\_\_

The individual battles that make up the great controversy between Christ and Satan became particularly fierce during Jesus’ earthly existence. At the time of each battle our salvation hung in the balance. In both the wilderness and Gethsemane, Christ came close to death. In fact, He would have died had it not been for divine intervention. But such intervention did not take place at the time of the decisive encounter at Calvary. “Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). “As Christ in His expiring agony upon the cross cried out, ‘It is finished’ (John 19:30), a shout of triumph rang through every world and through heaven itself. The great contest that had been so long in progress in this world was now decided, and Christ was conqueror.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 69, 70.

**When and under what circumstances will Satan ultimately be destroyed?  
Rev. 20:7-10.**

Although Satan still exists, his destruction will take place at the end of the judgment, at the close of the millennium.

## Part 5 — He Provides Repentance and Forgiveness

“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

Repentance for sin should not be considered a natural human trait. It comes to us as a gift from God. It is something that is provided. The biblical injunctions to repent are numerous.

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** Study Matthew 3:2; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; then formulate your own simple definition of *repentance*. Write it below:

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Repentance is humanly impossible because, in the first place, we do not, of ourselves, understand the nature of sin, its depths, and its power. Human sorrow or remorse comes from experiencing the results and the consequences. Genuine repentance leads to a complete about-face, a turnabout of 180 degrees—a complete reorientation of life. As the gateway to new life in Christ, repentance forms an important link in the salvation process.

**Because human beings are incapable of repentance or even of recognizing their own sins, how is this work essential to salvation accomplished for them? John 16:7-11.**

It is impossible to overestimate the value of the Holy Spirit’s work. He brings conviction of sin to the human heart. He affects the conscience, making it sensitive and responsive.

Forgiveness is free, but it is not cheap. God is not indifferent toward sin. How could He be, when it caused the death of His Son and so much suffering and pain and death since its inception? But God was willing to pay the full price of our forgiveness and, through Christ, has purchased the right to freely forgive our sins.

Repentance and forgiveness are bound together. Repentance is the signal that forgiveness already has been made available through the Mediator’s work on our behalf. God is justified in granting forgiveness to those who have repented. (See Eph. 1:7.)

While the work of the Mediator has universal overtones in that it affects even the future of unfallen worlds and makes the position of the angels eternally secure, it is nonetheless personal. We must not place the Mediator’s work on a purely theoretical basis. It must come down to where we are, so that we can relate gratefully to Him.



## Part 6 — Focus and Application

“[God] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6).

The Mediator brings about new relationships. He removes the cause for estrangement. At a great price He paid our ransom and now stands in our place, thus releasing us from the sentence of death. He grappled with the destroyer and his prison house, bringing it down by His death. He earned the right to snatch the victims from destruction. Rebels who accept His gracious offer are now friends, loyal subjects. There is no more hostility to God’s law. A spirit of loving obedience replaces an attitude of resistance. Those who were afar are now brought near.

**Summarize in your own words the description of the radical change of status found in Colossians 1:13.**

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*Delivered*, “to draw off,” “to rescue.” *Translated*, “to transport,” “to remove,” or in some instances “to transplant.” These strong words indicate a dramatic transformation, a clean break with the past, and a new, exciting future. Drawn out and rescued from the kingdom of darkness, Christians are transplanted into the kingdom of grace.

**Read Romans 8:1-14.** Notice the contrasts: “after the flesh,” “after the Spirit.” Two possibilities are indicated here—life on two levels. The lower level is the level of enmity against God. Here are the unreconciled who are “not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (verse 7). The upper level is the way of the Spirit, to be “in Christ.” This is the level of new relationships, the level of new life. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God (verse 8). Those in the new relationship (in Christ) are the sons and daughters of God. (See verse 14.) The new standing before God is more than a matter of bookkeeping. God does more than wipe the slate clean. Salvation is more than a legal status. It involves allowing the Holy Spirit to bring our lives into harmony with the divine will and law.

**APPLICATION:** Too often our lives are marked by isolation and estrangement from those we should be close to. This happens in the family. It happens in the church.

Are you aware of a breaking or broken relationship that should be healed? Identify to yourself the person from whom you sense separation. Identify the problem.

What procedures could you follow to involve Jesus as Mediator to bring reconciliation? Write out these steps. Are you willing to involve Jesus?



# 5

October 28 to November 3  
Adult Lesson

## Jesus' Qualifications

**MEMORY TEXT:** "One of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Rev. 5:5).

Revelation 5 provides high drama. One is pictured sitting upon the throne holding a scroll in His hand. The scroll is shut tight, sealed with seven seals. A powerful angel challenges, "Who is worthy to open the book?" A universal search party finds no one worthy, no one powerful enough to do so. Evidently the book is a most important one because John weeps as though his heart is about to break when no one can be found to open it. More than curiosity is involved.

"In the context of Revelation, this will or testament would be a title-deed, as it were to man's lost inheritance which has been repurchased by Christ the Lamb. Thus the scroll is a book of destiny. The opening of it means inheritance in God's kingdom, its remaining closed means forfeiture."—Kenneth Strand, *The Open Gates of Heaven* (Ann Arbor, Mich: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1972), p. 50.

At last the prophet is told, "You may now stop weeping. We have found one who is worthy, equal to the task. He is the Lion of Judah's tribe, the Root of David, the Lamb that was slain." Jesus qualifies because He is equal to God in dignity, in power, in every respect.

"He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (Rev. 5:7).

Jesus also qualifies to open the book because He is the Lamb, a representative of the human race, the God who took upon Himself human nature that He might experience for us the second death that we deserve.

Angels desire to look into the deep mysteries of the plan of salvation, but even angels are limited by their creatureliness. It took One who has the ability and power both to create and to completely destroy to break the seals, reveal the plan, and bring salvation to the fallen race.

We have heard a joyful sound,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves;

Spread the gladness all around,

Jesus saves, Jesus saves.

—Pricilla J. Owens,

*The Church Hymnal*, no. 637.

## Part 1 — Next of Kin

**“If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold” (Lev. 25:25).**

Under Mosaic law it was both the duty and the privilege of the nearest of kin to redeem a property that had been lost by an unfortunate relative. Of course, the nearest of kin must be able to purchase the property. This person came to be known as the kinsman-redeemer, and the law that outlined the practice was called the law of the kinsman-redeemer. There is a marvelous typology here. Jesus, our Mediator, became next of kin to the human family that He might redeem us. To redeem is literally “to buy back.” He takes responsibility for the transaction. He is willing and able to pay the full purchase price. Adam forfeited his right to the inheritance and was dispossessed. His posterity shares his fate.

**In what way can we say that Jesus is next of kin to humanity? John 1:13, 14; Heb. 2:11, 12.**

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Some people are extremely proud of their bloodline. Family tree and heritage mean a great deal to them. Christians can confidently say that they are kin to Jesus Christ. It was our blood that ran in His veins.

“But not to any class is Christ’s love restricted. He identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam. His followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

**What particularly identifies us as being members of Jesus’ family? Matt. 12:49, 50.**

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Jesus becomes brother in a very special way to those who accept Him as Saviour and do the will of His Father. Our heavenly Kinsman has purchased eternal life for all mankind. But not all have acknowledged Him; many even deny Him. He will not force allegiance.

**What action on our part is essential in order for us to become members of Christ’s redeemed family? Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9, 10; Rev. 21:7.**

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## Part 2 — Complete Identity With Us

“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17).

The Son of God became the Son of man. He became part and parcel of humanity. One teaching during the early Christian era held that Jesus merely appeared to be human—His earthly life was a masquerade. The Scriptures deny this vigorously. Ellen White also makes it clear: “Christ did not make believe take human nature.”—*Review and Herald*, April 5, 1906.

“Our Saviour took humanity with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

Not only did Jesus take our humanity while He was here on earth, but He took it for all eternity. “Christ ascended to heaven, bearing a sanctified, holy humanity. He took this humanity with him into the heavenly courts, and through the eternal ages he will bear it, as One who has redeemed every human being in the city of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1905.

**What was the import of Jesus' favorite designation or title for Himself found in Luke 19:10?**

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The primary meaning of the phrase “Son of man” is simply “human being.” Jesus went to great lengths to emphasize His identity with humanity. He refused the trappings of royalty. He grew up “as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa. 53:2). He was at home with the poor. He knew a life of toil and hardship. His hands were calloused. He wore a simple peasant's garment. It is hard to imagine a greater condescension, a greater demonstration of identification with suffering humanity.

**SEARCH AND LEARN: Read Isaiah 53 carefully and list some of the ways that Jesus identified with humanity. In what ways is He different from other human beings?**

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## Part 3 — Special Helper

**“In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18).**

By His unique experience, Jesus our Mediator is well qualified to help us. He knows us intimately. He has walked the path before us. He has entered fully and completely into the human situation.

**Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer? Heb. 2:10; 5:8, 9.**

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Jesus accepted trials and temptations so as to equip Himself better for His mediatorial ministry. He refused to claim exemption from hardship. He was not a stranger to hard work. There were no servants to wait on Him in His Nazareth home. He knew poverty and loneliness. His own family thought Him rather odd. Few ever understood His mission. Then there was the intense, mean, thoroughly unwarranted hostility that He faced. He was the special target of Satan's attacks, the focal point. He accepted all of this in good spirit, never complaining or murmuring.

“Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 568.

**How is this special help experienced in the life of the believer? 1 Cor. 10:13.**

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Christ has accepted a unique relationship and responsibility to the Christian. We have become members of His family. He has made promises to all who trust in Him. He knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. (See 2 Peter 2:9.) He is our special Helper. He is more than sympathetic to us. He is capable of giving us specific help when we need it.

A Saviour who simply feels sorry for us cannot qualify. A Saviour who merely identifies with us is inadequate. Only a Saviour who can bring practical help to poor mortals can meet our needs. This Saviour, who is our Mediator, actually lifts the fallen, strengthens the weak, and revives the faint.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 71, 72.

## Part 4 — Perfect Sinlessness

**“Even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (1 Peter 2:21-23).**

While truly human, Jesus is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26). His perfection of character is unassailable. After living for many years in the little country of Palestine, in full view of all kinds of people, He challenged one and all, “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” (John 8:46). Only a spotless lamb was to be offered. The priest was charged to examine each sacrifice. The Father found no fault in Christ, nor could His disciples. Even Pilate’s wife called Him a just man and Pilate said, “I find no fault in him” (Luke 23:14). One of the dying thieves insisted that He had committed no crime. The demons called Him, appropriately, the Holy One of God.

**What characterized Christ’s attitude toward righteousness and iniquity? Heb. 1:9.**

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Christ was not soft on sin. He upbraided Pharisees and Saducees for their wrongdoing. It appears that to Him man’s inhumanity to man was the greatest sin. He hated iniquity. At the same time, Jesus and the righteous principles expressed in His Father’s law are synonymous. Jeremiah called Him the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 23:6). He and righteousness were at home together. His life was so pure and sinless that He “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). He convinces the world of righteousness, that is, He sets before the universe the perfect example of a righteous life. He becomes the measurement, the test of what righteousness is.

Even as He faced the cross and death, unable to see through the grave, there was no responsive cord to the wiles of Satan; there were no sympathetic vibrations, no point of agreement, no attachment or affinity whatever.

“He met the arch apostate face to face, and single-handed withstood the foe of his throne. Not even by a thought could Christ be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foot-hold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of himself, ‘The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 8, 1887.

**To what extent can Christ’s temptations be compared with ours? Heb. 4:15.**

## Part 5 — Combination of Justice and Mercy

**“I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev. 5:5, 6).**

Jesus is the only One who reveals perfectly to us all the attributes of the Godhead. Angels cannot do this. The Father and the Holy Spirit remain invisible to normal human vision. Jesus, who was in the bosom of the Father, alone can reveal God's character to the human race. He is the God of unlimited power and also infinite mercy. He places His great power under the control of His steadfast love.

Satan misrepresents God's character. At times He pictures Him as a God of justice without mercy. At other times he portrays Him as a God of mercy at the expense of His justice. Because he does, the human family had to be given a demonstration of God's true character. Jesus filled that role. In Him was and is to be found the perfect blend of mercy and justice. He is the Lion of strength and power as well as the Lamb of silent suffering. In Him self-giving love is combined with omnipotence and unlimited power with the kind of justice that never strains out the quality of mercy. The fusion of divinity with humanity is unique in Christ. Indeed, in all heaven and earth, there is none like Him. There never has been, there never will be. The light of heaven shone through Christ as through a crystal prism, and today we still see in Him the full glory of God.

**To what extent was the human Christ able to reflect the glory of His Father? Heb. 1:2, 3.**

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“Looking upon Christ in the flesh we look upon God in humanity, and see in him the brightness of divine glory, the express image of God the Father.”—Ellen G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, “Child Life of Jesus,” Nov. 21, 1895.

As we look on His compassion, we know that there is mercy. As we see Him dying to satisfy the claims of the broken law, we know that there is justice. But, in the person of our Saviour, we also see that “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (Ps. 85:10). An unusual fountain, lined with mirrors, can be found in one of the great cathedrals of Europe. The entire interior of the church is mirrored in this small fountain and can be seen in detail. This harmonizes with the word picture used in Hebrews 1:3: “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” In Jesus we see mirrored perfectly all that God is, and we are moved to love and trust Him.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 243.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

“Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12).

Revelation 4 and 5 take us into heaven's throne room. Chapter 4 emphasizes God's creative power. He is worthy to be praised because He has created (Rev. 4:11). The emphasis in chapter 5 is on redemption. The worshipers praise the Lamb: “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood” (Rev. 5:9). He is the One altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand. All the angels in heaven burst forth in a shout of praise, “Worthy is the Lamb.”

**What signal honor did the Father confer on the divine-human Son? Heb. 1:6.**

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The Son not only is worthy of our admiration but of our praise and worship as well. Christ is in all things to “have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** Match Christ's roles given below with the most appropriate text listed:

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|---------------------------------|------------------|
| _____ Our only Advocate.        | A. John 6:35     |
| _____ Our only remedy.          | B. 1 Cor. 3:11   |
| _____ Our only nourishment.     | C. 1 John 2:1    |
| _____ Our only Source of truth. | D. Acts 4:12     |
| _____ Our only Saviour          | E. John 14:6     |
| _____ Our only Foundation       | F. John 3:14, 15 |

In Hebrews 13:15 praise is likened to sacrifice. No longer does God require animal sacrifices. First and foremost He requires us to give ourselves to Him and to do so with grateful hearts and thankful spirits. This is the kind of sacrifice that pleases our heavenly Father. However, it should be remembered that our sacrifice is acceptable only through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is His righteousness that makes our offering fragrant and gives it merit.

### APPLICATION:

- In what ways can I show my appreciation for God's great gift?
- What practical steps can I take to make the truths we have been studying more vivid and real?
- When did I last speak words of praise to God, to a friend, or to a neighbor?





# 6

November 4-10  
Adult Lesson

## Earthly Illustrations

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written” (Ex. 32:31, 32).

At times God has chosen human beings to represent in a special way various aspects of Christ’s saving ministry. Further, the office and function of the prophet, the priest, and the king in the Old Testament were to illustrate Christ’s multifaceted work as Mediator. Particularly in the Old Testament the Bible deals in types. Bible scholars call this typology. Types always point to the antitype (the real thing). The type is not an end in itself. Neither was the type, the symbol, intended to teach every aspect of Christ’s all-sufficient ministry. Types and human agents provide only limited reflectors of the unsurpassable glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. But again, God mercifully gave us glimpses of redemption through these symbols of salvation. God adjusts His way of communicating to our ability to understand. It pleased Him to make human personality the vehicle of knowledge about the One who was to come and make salvation complete. His work is so all-encompassing, so many-sided, so exceedingly broad, that not one of these persons chosen could adequately portray the reality or reflect the full image. But the record is there for us to contemplate.

Looking at it from this side of the incarnation and Calvary, we see facets of Christ’s character and mediatorial ministry in the types and figures of the Old Testament. Of course, Jesus is the full tapestry, the great whole. These earthly figures are but single strands, which, when brought together, do not begin to approach the One who is sum and substance—the all in all.

But human and earthly types can be used by God to inform us about heavenly things. He uses people such as Abraham, Moses, and Samuel; offices, such as that of the prophet, priest, and king; and a most interesting accommodation to human need, the cities of refuge.

## Part 1 — The Arbitrator

**“If only there were someone to arbitrate between us, to lay his hand upon us both” (Job. 9:33, NIV).**

Job felt keenly the need for someone to stand between him and the holy God. Realizing his own sinfulness, he exclaimed: “If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me” (Job 9:30, 31). He was aware of the distance that his sins put between him and God. “For he is not a man, as I am” (Job 9:32). His question is, “How should man be just with God?” (Job 9:2).

Job needed desperately a go-between or arbitrator, someone to “lay his hand upon us both.” “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!” (Job 23:3).

**How did God, speaking through the prophet Ezekiel, express His need for a go-between? Eze. 22:30.**

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Ezekiel pictures God as looking for a man to stand between Himself and the people. The holy God needs someone to stand between Him and sinners. However, human beings are inadequate to the task: “but I found none.”

“Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God” (Eze. 14:14).

In Old Testament experience, even the best and strongest of men cannot guarantee Israel safe passage or salvation. If it were possible to combine all the righteousness of every good person who ever lived, it would still fall short of the divine requirements.

**What does Job’s experience teach us about where we can find our Go-between? Job 19:25-27.**

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Although at times Job was nearly overcome with despair, he worked his way through the maze to the place where he could voice one of the great affirmations of Scripture. He saw the Redeemer, Christ, through the eye of faith.

The book of Job may be the oldest in the Bible. It is believed that Moses wrote the account while tending his father-in-law’s sheep on the plains of Midian. Job’s faith was progressive, intelligent, and mature. From time immemorial the light of Christ’s mediatorial ministry shone brightly on believers in God.

## Part 2 — Abraham

“Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes” (Gen. 18:23-26).

Abraham was the kind of man God could use as a type of the Mediator. He was truly dependable. “I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him” (Gen. 18:19), is Heaven’s character assessment. Because he was a man of compassion and benevolence, he sought earnestly to avert the disaster when he heard of Sodom’s impending destruction.

**What can we learn from Abraham’s importunate pleading on behalf of the doomed city? Gen. 18:27-33.**

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“With deep reverence and humility he urged his plea: ‘I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes!’ There was no self-confidence, no boasting of his own righteousness. He did not claim favor on the ground of his obedience, or of the sacrifices he had made in doing God’s will. Himself a sinner, he pleaded in the sinner’s behalf. Such a spirit all who approach God should possess. Yet Abraham manifested the confidence of a child pleading with a loved father. He came close to the heavenly Messenger, and fervently urged his petition. . . .

“Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham’s prayer. While he loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. . . .

“The spirit of Abraham was the spirit of Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 139, 140.

Abraham could typify the Mediator because he knew Him and understood His ministry.

**What does Abraham’s willingness to offer his son, Isaac, teach us about faith and obedience? Gen. 22:2, 12.**

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**FURTHER STUDY:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 138-141.

## Part 3 — Moses

**“Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them” (Ps. 106:23).**

Moses' entire life and ministry is an illustration of Christ's mediatorial work. Time and again he threw himself into the breach between God and the people. Moses' prayer for apostate Israel at the time of the golden calf idolatry is the highest example of human intercession. (See this week's memory verse.)

“Moses realized how dreadful would be the fate of the sinner; yet if the people of Israel were to be rejected by the Lord, he desired his name to be blotted out with theirs; he could not endure to see the judgments of God fall upon those who had been so graciously delivered. The intercession of Moses in behalf of Israel illustrates the mediation of Christ for sinful men. But the Lord did not permit Moses to bear, as did Christ, the guilt of the transgressor.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 326, 327.

**What was Heaven's assessment of Moses' ministry? Deut. 34:10.**

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“Moses was a type of Christ. He himself had declared to Israel, ‘The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.’ Deuteronomy 18:15. God saw fit to discipline Moses in the school of affliction and poverty before he could be prepared to lead the hosts of Israel to the earthly Canaan.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 480.

**Study carefully the interesting parallels between Moses and Christ outlined below:**

1. Both were preserved in childhood (Ex. 2:2-10; Matt. 2:13-15).
2. Both fasted 40 days (Ex. 34:28; Matt. 4:2).
3. Both at one time had radiant faces (Ex. 34:35; Matt. 17:2).
4. Both endured murmurings (Ex. 15:24; Mark 7:2).
5. Both made intercessory prayers (Ex. 32:32; John 17:9).
6. Both spoke as oracles (Deut. 18:18; John 7:46).
7. Both died before entering the heavenly Canaan (Matt. 17:3; Jude 9; Acts 1:11).

God's manner of communication with Moses suggests that He saw in Moses a type of His Son. Open, face-to-face communion characterizes the relationship between the Father and the Son. As Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, so Christ our Passover leads us from the darkness and bondage of sin to the marvelous light of freedom and liberty.

## Part 4 — Samuel

**“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way” (1 Sam. 12:23).**

Samuel followed the pattern of Abraham and Moses in that he placed the people’s interests above that of his own. These persons who are recognized as types of Christ, breathed His spirit. They were unselfish. Their love for the people was unquestioned. Their sense of sin, its awful nature, and its terrible consequences heightened and intensified their prayers. Like their Example, they poured themselves out before God with strong crying on behalf of others.

**Note the steps to revival that can be found in the Mizpeh experience: 1 Sam. 7:5-9.**

One way of summarizing these steps follows:

1. Repentance and confession (verse 6).
2. Recognition of deep need (verse 8).
3. Commitment and dedication (verse 9).
4. Intercessory prayer (verses 5-9).

“There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel. Repentance is the first step that must be taken by all who would return to God. No one can do this work for another. We must individually humble our souls before God and put away our idols. When we have done all that we can do, the Lord will manifest to us His salvation.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 590.

### **Why are Moses and Samuel linked together in Jeremiah 15:1?**

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Samuel never wavered from his consistent course. He made the rounds “from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places” (1 Sam. 7:16). In this respect he can be considered a type of the One who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. “In the character of Samuel we see reflected the likeness of Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 607.

Consistency is the characteristic that stands out in Samuel’s life. No matter that the people were faithless, he kept the faith. He did not cease to pray for them. When Israel demanded a king, rejecting him as judge, he continued his ministry. He stood fearlessly before kings, princes, and common people, reminding them of their obligation to God. He saw Israel go from a government ruled directly by God to a monarchy ruled by faulty human beings. The attitude of the people, the condition of the kingdom, which often was in a sorry state of affairs, made no difference.

## Part 5 — Priests, Prophets, and Kings

**“Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them” (Ps. 99:6).**

Jesus serves as Prophet, Priest, and King. These Old Testament offices typify His ministry. In His function as prophet, Jesus makes God’s will intelligible to man. As priest, He intercedes with the Father in our behalf. As king, He rules over a mediatorial kingdom that soon will merge into the kingdom of glory.

*The Prophet:* “Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them” (Jer. 7:25). In a sense, prophets mediate the will of God and the knowledge of God to the people. They stand in the counsels of God, hear His word, and declare it.

**What was the central theme of the prophetic message? 1 Peter 1:10, 11. (See also Luke 24:27.)**

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*The Priest:* “Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office, even Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons” (Ex. 28:1). Priests were expected to intercede with God for the people. They also were types of Christ in His work as Sin Bearer. The high priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his breastplate. (See Ex. 28:29.) They were to be consecrated men of integrity.

**With what intensity were the priests to intercede for the people? Joel 2:17.**

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The priests were to place themselves between the altar and the worshippers. They were to lift their voices in earnest petition to God and to risk their lives in approaching God on Israel’s behalf.

*The King:* “Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee” (Ps. 2:6, 7). Israel’s ideal king was the Messiah, the One who should occupy David’s throne.

**What was the significance of the sacred rite described in Exodus 29:7; 1 Kings 19:16; and 1 Samuel 10:1 that was used to prepare prophet, priest, and king for office?**

## Part 6 — Cities of Refuge

“The Lord also spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: that the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood” (Joshua 20:1-3).

The cities of refuge serve as a marvelous type of the refuge that sinners find in Christ. But they can be included among those lessons of the Jewish economy that are but dimly understood.

**How many cities were set apart, and how were they geographically located? Num. 35:6-14.**

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“Six of the cities assigned to the Levites—three on each side [of] the Jordan—were appointed as cities of refuge, to which the manslayer might flee for safety. . . .

“The cities of refuge were so distributed as to be within a half day’s journey of every part of the land. The roads leading to them were always to be kept in good repair; all along the way signposts were to be erected bearing the word ‘Refuge’ in plain, bold characters, that the fleeing one might not be delayed for a moment. Any person—Hebrew, stranger, or sojourner—might avail himself of this provision.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 515.

Accessibility is the lesson to be understood in the cities of refuge. Everything about them suggests that the way is open.

**APPLICATION:** “The cities of refuge appointed for God’s ancient people were a symbol of the refuge provided in Christ. The same merciful Saviour who appointed those temporal cities of refuge has by the shedding of His own blood provided for the transgressors of God’s law a sure retreat, into which they may flee for safety from the second death.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 516.

There are many spiritual lessons that we may draw from these symbolic cities. But we should not lose sight of the purpose of this lesson, to point out how the work of the Mediator is mirrored in divinely appointed earthly figures and human activities.

What special person has God used in your life to give you evidence of His care? How did this person get involved with your need? What forms did that ministry take?

If that person is still living, why not send a note of appreciation. Let him or her know the results of that ministry in your life.



# 7

November 11-17  
Adult Lesson

## Lessons From the Sanctuary

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8).

The God of heaven seeks continually to reveal Himself to His earth-born children. He is prompted by love. At the same time that He had to expel Adam and Eve from Eden He revealed Himself to be a God of mercy. He told them of the plan instituted for their redemption and even provided a covering for them. In love He instituted the system of sacrifices that made it possible for sinners to approach Him. At first the system was quite simple, yet suited to the age—a blood offering brought by the penitent as an acknowledgment of sin and as a type that pointed to the provision made for the atonement of sin.

During the patriarchal age simple altars of sacrifice and worship dotted the region from Mesopotamia to Egypt. Then came the day when God spoke to Moses saying: “Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). What followed came to be a most glorious revelation of the character of God, a graphic representation of His way of dealing with the sin problem, and a dramatic revelation of the heinous nature of transgression. Notice the progression that took place from simple altars to elaborate systems and ultimately, in Solomon’s temple, to a resplendent building—God’s house for all people.

This week we take a brief look at the sanctuary system that pointed to Jesus our Mediator and to His final work of judgment. Jesus instituted the sanctuary in order that He might reveal Himself even more completely to humanity.

Seventh-day Adventists share many Bible truths with Christians of other faiths. But, and we say it humbly, yet with conviction, God seems to have left to us the articulation and proclamation of the sanctuary and judgment truths that speak volumes about God to modern man. “The heavenly sanctuary provides the remnant church with God’s last message to men prior to Christ’s return. The sublime moral and spiritual heights to which Christ calls His followers underline the supreme importance of this judgment-hour message. The Christian church has not outgrown the mediatorial ministry of Christ, which is more important today than ever before.”—Edward Heppenstall, Foreword, *Our High Priest* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1972), p. 7.



## Part 1 — A Type of the Heavenly Sanctuary

“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.”

“Which was a figure for the time then present” (Heb. 9:1, 9).

The sanctuary was a teaching device. Everything about it was to prefigure or foreshadow some aspect of Christ’s mediatorial ministry. It was made according to precise specifications.

The book of Hebrews contrasts the two sanctuaries—one built by Moses, the other pitched by the Lord Himself. The one was an earthly structure, the other a heavenly one. The first, or earthly sanctuary, had “ordinances of divine service” (Heb. 9:1). From studying the book of Hebrews we learn that the heavenly sanctuary had prescribed services and ordinances also. The first tabernacle (used interchangeably with the word *sanctuary*) was a temporary structure; its services were “for the time then present” (verse 9). The true sanctuary is in “heaven itself” (verse 24).

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** Read Hebrews 9:1 through 10:22 and determine for yourself what happened to the services of the earthly sanctuary.

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There are two extremes that we must avoid in studying the sanctuary types. On one hand, we must be careful not to speak negatively of the earthly tabernacle and its services. Some have been guilty of this in an effort to highlight the efficacy of the heavenly sanctuary. Paul says the earthly sanctuary and its ordinances were glorious. Remember, God instituted it as a teaching device. Jesus is the originator of the type as well as the antitype. On the other hand, we must not become obsessed with the details of the earthly to the exclusion of the heavenly. The sanctuary was designed to throw light on what goes on in heaven; it was not to be an end in itself.

**What was the supreme purpose of the earthly sanctuary? Ex. 25:8.**

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God always is the seeker, the initiator. He takes the first steps. Before we are aware of what He is doing, God devises plans that enable Him to reach out to us. He did this in the sanctuary. He provided a way of getting closer to His people without destroying them. Divinity, veiled and covered, reached out to humanity.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Exodus 25 through 27.

## Part 2 — God’s Holiness

**“You shall hang up the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy” (Ex. 26:33, NKJV).**

Everything about the tabernacle was holy, from the outer court to the most holy place. The linen curtain that surrounded the tent or tabernacle suggested the holiness of the structure.

**Why were the priests commanded to take off their shoes before performing their duties? Ex. 30:19, 20.**

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“The priests were not to enter the sanctuary with shoes upon their feet. Particles of dust cleaving to them would desecrate the holy place. They were to leave their shoes in the court before entering the sanctuary, and also to wash both their hands and their feet before ministering in the tabernacle or at the altar of burnt offering. Thus was constantly taught the lesson that all defilement must be put away from those who would approach into the presence of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350.

**What was the significance of the inscription on the priest’s mitre (headwear)? Ex. 28:36-38.**

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The purpose of the instruction given in this text was to impress the people with the awesome holiness of God and with the need of a pure and holy mediator. The holy God could be approached only by someone who was appointed, qualified, certified, and purified through the blood of the Lamb. The description of the consecration of the priests is found in Exodus 29.

**Where and how was God’s presence most visibly manifest? Lev. 16:2.**

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The holy place of the tabernacle was not accessible, except to a few priests. The most holy was closed even to the priests. The high priest alone could enter there and that only once a year on the Day of Atonement. There the presence of God was manifested in the holy Shekinah. The most holy place was a representation of the throne room in heaven. (See Ex. 25:18-22.) The spiritually sensitive Israelite must have been forcibly impressed with the idea of inaccessibility—the remoteness of God—and his unworthiness to approach Him physically. The need for someone to go in before God for him was apparent. Without such a mediator, who represented the Christ yet to come, there was no possibility of bridging the gap.

## Part 3 — Sin and Guilt

**“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb. 9:22, NIV).**

Numerous sacrifices were offered in connection with the sanctuary services: for example, burnt offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, and peace offerings.

Various kinds of animals were involved—lambs, rams, goats, bulls, pigeons, and turtle doves. The Jewish historian Josephus observes that 256,500 lambs were slain in a single Passover during Nero’s reign. What an awful sight that must have been. The lesson behind the symbol is clear—sin is terrible and the price of redemption is enormous.

**Why were the sacrifices of the first tabernacle inadequate? Heb. 9:9.**

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What humans need is not cleansing of the body but moral cleansing—soul cleansing from the defilement of sin. Sin’s stain is deep and ingrained. No human detergent can wash it away. Here is where the Jewish sanctuary ritual fell short. It could not deal with sin at the place where it has taken root or set up headquarters—the mind. Something more than the blood of bulls and goats and purification rites was needed. Something more has been provided.

**What does the book of Hebrews indicate were the greater and “more perfect” things, and how have they been provided? Heb. 9:11-14.**

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Many of the Old Testament prophets expressed the hope that a “better sacrifice” would be provided, one that would deal decisively and finally with the sin problem. They saw that the only way to be rid of guilt was to remove the sins that cause it. Indeed, almost every culture has some type of ritual cleansing. This seems to express a universal need. The Jewish sanctuary system did not purpose to be the final solution. Its validity was in the fact that it pointed vividly and effectively to something better. Through Christ we not only get rid of the guilt of sin but of sin itself.

**THINK IT THROUGH: What was the true value of the sanctuary and the sacrifices?**

“The whole worship of ancient Israel was a promise, in figures and symbols, of Christ; and it was not merely a promise, but an actual provision, designed by God to aid millions of people by lifting their thoughts to Him who was to manifest Himself to our world.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 123.

## Part 4 — Sin Removed

**“It shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing; and he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin” (Lev. 5:5, 6).**

The earthly sanctuary portrays for us God’s way of removing the stubborn stain of sin. The principle of substitution figured largely in the whole process. An innocent animal was slain as an offering for sin—the victim of another’s transgression.

**What is significant about who actually slew the sacrifice? Lev. 4:33.**

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The repentant sinner took the life of the substitute. By placing his hands on the head of the sacrifice the sinner symbolically placed his sins on the victim. The sin was then removed from the sinner to the sin bearer.

**What part did the priest perform in the ceremony? Lev. 4:34.**

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When the congregation sinned the priest carried the blood into the holy place, putting some of it on the horns of the altar of incense and sprinkling some of it seven times before the veil. Most of the blood, however, was poured out at the base of the altar. (See Lev. 4:17, 18.)

By repentance and confession our sins are placed on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God. He carries them, takes responsibility for them. “The priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them” (Lev. 4:20). Please note: The sin is removed, and then pardon is granted. Jesus saved us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins. The sinner was responsible for his part. He would confess, place his hands on the victim, and take its life. The priest was responsible for confessed sins but not for unconfessed sins. He took the blood into the sanctuary, or, in some cases, ate the flesh of the animal. He actually became, in type, the sin bearer.

**In what way did John the Baptist use sanctuary terminology in speaking of Jesus? John 1:29.**

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The lamb symbol is used many times in the Bible (See Gen. 22:7; Isa. 53:7; 1 Peter 1:19; Rev. 5:6; 12:11.) The development of the symbol reaches its height in the book of Revelation. There the Lamb is extolled as powerful victor, crushing the serpent’s head and granting the redeemed full reinstatement as inheritors of the kingdom. Their names are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (See Rev. 13:8; 21:27.)

## Part 5 — Morning and Evening Sacrifices

**“This is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The one lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even” (Ex. 29:38, 39).**

The ritual was carried out faithfully. The daily or continual service pointed to the constancy of Jesus our Mediator. His once-and-for-all sacrifice is good for all time. Christians are “under the blood,” in the safety zone. Provision has been made. Repentant sinners are covered by a “life assurance” policy.

**What practice of the pious Jews has influenced Christian devotional life? Ps. 55:17; 141:2.**

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“The hours appointed for the morning and the evening sacrifice were regarded as sacred, and they came to be observed as the set time for worship throughout the Jewish nation. And when in later times the Jews were scattered as captives in distant lands, they still at the appointed hour turned their faces toward Jerusalem and offered up their petitions to the God of Israel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 353, 354.

It must have been of great comfort to a scattered, oppressed people to know that a sacrifice was at all times on the altar in their behalf. It is good discipline that will pay off handsomely to gather the family at the beginning and end of the day for prayers. These seasons of prayer will follow the members of the family through the years. They have a binding, uniting influence on young and old.

“The daily service consisted of the morning and evening burnt offering. . . .

“Every morning and evening a lamb of a year old was burned upon the altar, with its appropriate meat offering, thus symbolizing the daily consecration of the nation to Jehovah, and their constant dependence upon the atoning blood of Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 352.

Those who recognize themselves as blood-bought and purchased also will acknowledge a debt of gratitude. The sure mercies of God demand the consecration of all their powers to Christ and His service. This will be done cheerfully and willingly. “We are to give ourselves to the service of God, and we should seek to make the offering as nearly perfect as possible.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 352. This is the kind of offering that God calls a sweet savor with which He is well pleased.

A picture you probably have seen shows an ox standing between a plow and an altar. The inscription near the bottom speaks to us with this challenge: “Ready for either.” Our gift of ourselves to the Lord’s service will be a perfect offering when it is characterized by this kind of commitment.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

**“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20).**

At a time when some are questioning why the sanctuary teaching is so important, we need to understand its full biblical significance. “Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of the believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel’s message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work.”—Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7, p. 17.

**APPLICATION:** Study the following quotation carefully; then list some applications of this statement and this lesson to your life and actions.

“Another lesson the tabernacle, through its service of sacrifice, was to teach—the lesson of pardon of sin, and power through the Saviour for obedience unto life.

“Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle was a symbol—that glorious building, its walls of glistening gold reflecting in rainbow hues the curtains inwrought with cherubim, the fragrance of ever-burning incense pervading all, the priests robed in spotless white, and in the deep mystery of the inner place, above the mercy seat, between the figures of the bowed, worshiping angels, the glory of the Holiest. In all, God desired His people to read His purpose for the human soul. It was the same purpose long afterward set forth by the apostle Paul, speaking by the Holy Spirit:

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.”—*Education*, p. 36.

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# 8

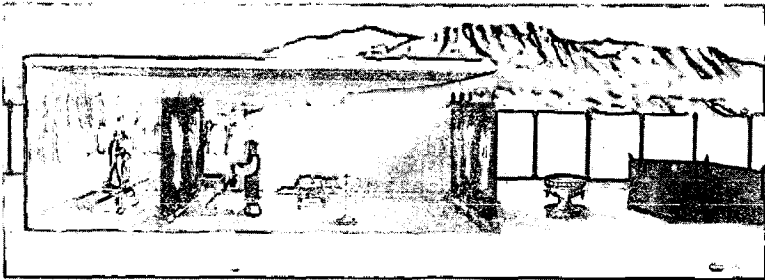
November 18-24  
Adult Lesson

## The Sanctuary Services

**MEMORY TEXT:** “The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah. Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel” (Ps. 20:1-4).

The mediatorial ministry of Christ provides for all our real needs. That ministry is now centered in the heavenly sanctuary. Needs are met and blessings flow from that great center of redemptive ministry. In Ezekiel’s vision the healing waters issued out of the sanctuary (Eze. 47:12), seemingly flowing from the altar. Because of our Saviour’s mediation we are sustained and are to see in all that comes to us the blessing of the Lamb. “The bread we eat is the purchase of His broken body. The water we drink is bought by His spilled blood. Never one, saint or sinner, eats his daily food, but he is nourished by the body and the blood of Christ. The cross of Calvary is stamped on every loaf. It is reflected in every water spring.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 660.

The spiritual enlightenment that enables us to grasp the great essentials of salvation is the gift of Christ’s sacrificial love and His sanctuary ministry. Also the grace to resist temptation and overcome the enemy is mediated or channeled through Jesus Christ our Lord. Were it not for His earnest work on our behalf, we would never escape from sin’s snare. This was clear to the psalmist. He recognized that God’s way was in the sanctuary (Ps. 77:13). The psalmist was moved to put all his trust in the Redeemer. He saw adequate evidence of the Lord’s concern for Israel. Israel was under the watchcare of Messiah the Prince, and He who watched over them would “neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:4).



## Part 1 — The Bread of the Presence

**“Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times”  
(Ex. 25:30, NIV).**

Christ’s mediatorial ministry is not limited to the purely spiritual. Our temporal provisions also come through Jesus Christ our Lord. All blessings flow through the channel of mediation. Food, shelter, clothing, the joys of human friendship—all are mediated. The bread of the Presence or shewbread was viewed as an offering. Because it did not involve blood it did not symbolize forgiveness and reconciliation through the shed blood. “It may be inferred that when Israel offered by way of the priesthood the twelve loaves of bread before God, she was expressing in a pictorial manner not only thanksgiving for His bounties, but also a continuous petition for both physical and spiritual nourishment.”—Frank B. Holbrook, “The Israelite Sanctuary,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshar (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1981), p. 25.

**Why did Jesus include a petition for bread in the prayer He taught us to pray? Matt. 6:11.**

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The Bible teaches that there is a difference between the sacred and the profane. However, it does not draw a sharp line between the spiritual and the material. Christ created the natural world for us. We need to beware of a “spirituality” that divorces itself from God’s good world.

**What do Jesus’ “bread of life” statements found in John 6:33, 35, 50, 51 mean to us today?**

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Jesus’ hearers were confused because they took His words literally. They were even more shocked by His suggestion that they drink His blood. For Jesus to encourage the Jews to taste blood was sacrilege. What could He ever mean? they asked one another. Having been taught by the rabbis, they should have known that the Saviour was referring to His teaching, His words. (See John 6:63.)

**How did Jesus relate His words to His person? John 12:48.**

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To reject the words of Jesus is to in effect reject Him as Saviour. We cannot divorce Christ from His words.

**What significance can be found in how often the bread of the Presence was renewed? Lev. 24:8.**



## Part 2 — The Light of the World

“Thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it” (Ex. 25:37).

Darkness symbolically represents ignorance. When a person says, “I was kept in the dark on the matter,” he or she means, “I was prevented from obtaining the facts.” But light dispels darkness.

By the time of Jesus, there were two huge lampstands in the temple court. These lamps were kindled after the evening sacrifice and shed their light over the city. The people hoped for the Messiah to come and shed His light over Israel just as the lampstands illuminated Jerusalem.

**Summarize in your own words what Jesus means in introducing His sermon on light the way He did in John 8:12.**

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“In the manifestation of God to His people, light had ever been a symbol of His presence. At the creative word in the beginning, light had shone out of darkness. Light had been enshrouded in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, leading the vast armies of Israel. Light blazed with awful grandeur about the Lord on Mount Sinai. Light rested over the mercy seat in the tabernacle.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 464.

**How does this symbol of God’s presence influence people on planet Earth? 2 Cor. 4:6.**

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We need to keep in mind that every ray of light, understanding, and truth, which ever has pierced the gloom enshrouding the earth and human hearts, comes through Jesus Christ. He is Mediator of the saving knowledge of God. (See John 17:3.) He is the light “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). “Every gem of thought, every flash of intellect, is from the Light of the world.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 465. He flashes the light into our intellects, and thus we are enabled to “see” truth.

**SEARCH AND LEARN: Read Revelation 1:13 and 2:1 and answer the following:**

When was Jesus seen?

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What is the significance of this vision to the church today?

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## Part 3 — The Altar of Incense

“Thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it.”

“And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it” (Ex. 30:1, 6, 7).

Many times, our prayers are tainted with traces of selfishness. Sometimes we do not even understand our own motives. The ministry of the altar of incense illustrates how our prayers are made acceptable. The adding of the incense—the righteousness and merits of Christ—renders our prayers acceptable before God.

**SEARCH AND LEARN:** Study Revelation 8:3, 4, and Romans 8:26 in order to better understand Christ’s antitypical ministry at the altar of incense in the heavenly sanctuary. Indicate what you learn in the space provided below:

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The system works. A feeble human whispers a prayer on earth, and it is amplified in heaven—heard and answered by a prayer-hearing God whose ears always are open because of Christ’s mediation.

The Spirit’s intercession is different from that of Christ. His is more a work of assistance than of mediation. There is no hearing impairment with God, or inability to understand our speech. The communication problem is with us. The Holy Spirit does His work on this end—prompting our prayers and helping us to frame our words and express the thoughts that He has implanted. The answer is bound up with the petition. He knows what to pray for; and when we cooperate with Him, He “maketh intercession . . . according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:27).

**What privilege is ours that would have been unthinkable for a petitioner to do literally on the grounds of the earthly sanctuary? Heb. 10:19, 21, 22.**

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Jesus opens the way into the heavenly sanctuary through His sacrifice, His shed blood. There is unimpeded access to the presence of God. He also prepares us for this privilege by making our hearts clean through the sprinkled blood.

“Our Redeemer has opened the way so that the most sinful, the most needy, . . . may find access to the Father.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 113.

## Part 4 — Mercy and Justice

“The cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Ex. 25:20-22).

The most holy place of the earthly sanctuary was a symbolic representation of the throne room in heaven. Ellen White’s description is unsurpassed: “No language can describe the glory of the scene presented within the sanctuary—the gold-plated walls reflecting the light from the golden candlestick, the brilliant hues of the richly embroidered curtains with their shining angels, the table, and the altar of incense, glittering with gold; beyond the second veil the sacred ark, with its mystic cherubim, and above it the holy Shekinah, the visible manifestation of Jehovah’s presence; all but a dim reflection of the glories of the temple of God in heaven, the great center of the work for man’s redemption.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 349.

The mercy seat covered the ark. Enshrined in the bosom of the ark was the law of God, a transcript of His character. It is highly instructive that the ark’s covering is called the mercy seat. God’s throne is a mercy seat at which mercy is blended with justice.

**What words used by Paul and John illustrate the function of the quality of mercy in Jesus Christ? Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2.**

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The atoning work of Christ covers or reconciles the sinner to God.

“The ark was the hub of Israelite religion and worship. . . . It could be said that all the essential elements in redemption coalesce [come together] at the ark: God Himself, His law, sacrificial blood, and priestly mediation.”—Frank B. Holbrook, “The Israelite Sanctuary,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 28.

The Bible indicates that the ultimate solution to the sin problem was related closely to Christ’s work in the most holy place. It was here that the symbolic services of atonement and intercession were centered. They met in the holy of holies. So those great students of the Word had to conclude that the atonement provided on the cross must be consummated in the most holy place. God upholds the principles of His law as absolutely unchangeable (justice stands), but He places mercy in the form of a Mediator before Him as a covering for sin.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 348, 349.

## Part 5 — The Day of Atonement

“He shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation. And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And he did as the Lord commanded Moses” (Lev. 16:33, 34).

Once a year in the Jewish economy a special day focused the ceremonial activities on the removal of sin and the cleansing of the sanctuary—the Day of Atonement. Priestly ministry had its finest, most decisive hour. The ritual was elaborate and impressive. Anticipation ran high. All Israel was involved—absolutely absorbed—in the drama. This is what the Day of Atonement actually was—a national drama that involved all the people of God.

**How was the great controversy between Christ and Satan illustrated in the two goats used on the Day of Atonement? Lev. 16:7, 8.**

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The goat that was sacrificed symbolizes our Lord’s sacrificial death. The scapegoat was not slain, and thus was not involved in redemption through the blood. Its function was different.

**What did the priest do with the blood of the slain goat? Lev. 16:15.**

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Most biblical scholars agree that the priest’s handling of the blood—they call it blood manipulation—is most important. On the climactic day the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat—its ultimate application. Everything about the Day of Atonement ritual suggests finality and completeness. In these services the mediatorial process was complete, the sin problem fully resolved.

**What was the fate of the live goat? Lev. 16:21, 22.**

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The chief instigator of sin and rebellion must suffer the fate that naturally results from transgression. Satan bears the sin he has caused and receives the ultimate wages of sin—eternal death. In no wise does he atone for sin, although his expulsion makes the at-one-ment complete. Jesus our Mediator alone provides, through His blood, the price of our redemption. Jesus’ death was a voluntary sacrifice for sin. Satan’s death will come as the involuntary consequence of sin.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Great Controversy*, pp. 669-673.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

“Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually” (Ex. 28:29).

The breastplate must have been an especially impressive article of clothing in the priest’s glittering attire. (See Ex. 28:15-28 for a description.) This symbol emphasizes again the intimate relationship between priest and people. He bore their names on his heart. When he went before the Lord, the people were, in symbol, carried with him into God’s presence.

**On what other article of the priest’s clothing were the children of Israel’s names inscribed? Ex. 28:8-12.**

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When we speak of accepting Christ as our personal Saviour we imply that He becomes our Friend, One who is acquainted with us intimately, One who never leaves us or forsakes us (Heb. 13:5).

The mediatorial ministry of Jesus benefits the entire creation, including the unfallen worlds and the heavenly hosts. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that its benefits also are personal. We serve the kind of God who sees sparrows fall and takes notice of the details of our lives, counting even the hairs of our heads. We can be sure that our Mediator keeps us in mind individually.

The ephod and the breastplate are tokens of remembrance, “stones of memorial” which the priest bears “upon his heart before the Lord continually” (Ex. 28:30). In the same way, the resurrected Christ, in His glorified body, bears the marks of everlasting remembrance, the scars of the nailprints and the spear wound. (See John 20:25, 27.) He will bear these throughout eternity. All of sin’s trace effects will be erased except these tokens that will remind us of Christ’s sacrifice.

**APPLICATION:** Do you see a relationship between what we have studied this week and the public forms of worship today?

Many Christians follow the practice of bowing the head for a prayer of thanks before eating a meal. When observed doing this in a public establishment, they are sometimes asked about this custom and its meaning. How would you answer?

What insight for your answer can you find in parts 1 and 3 of this lesson? Based on that material, prepare a short statement in which you frame a witness response to the above question.

Be alert to the Holy Spirit’s giving you an opportunity for using it.



9

November 25 to December 1  
Adult Lesson

# Advocate Versus Adversary

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25, 26).

The fact that we, in and of ourselves, are lost and unable to do anything about it cannot be disputed. Our redemption and rescue from the prison house of sin calls for superhuman effort, for supernatural power. But God can save us only in a way that is consistent with His character. He cannot set aside His law in order to declare sinners righteous because His law is a transcript of His character. It also is the foundation of His throne because God is the moral Governor of the universe. Therefore He cannot simply say, “It’s all right; I will let sinners by this time.” Doing so would compromise His rule of justice and undermine His moral authority.

“It is not possible for God to offer a general amnesty for five or ten or twenty billion sinners merely by divine decree. . . .

“God created the universe of a million worlds governed in righteousness. He created His creatures to live in righteousness. He instructed them that any departure from righteousness would be considered rebellion against Him. The penalty would be separation and death.”—Edward Heppenstall, *Salvation Unlimited* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974), p. 47.

The Mediator, the Atoning One, takes upon Himself the task of securing the sinner’s release. He stands to plead his cause. He becomes his advocate or legal aid. He pays the full penalty through His blood; and, as a mercy seat, He becomes a covering, shielding the repentant sinner. His work for sinners is not unopposed. The adversary challenges Christ’s right to redeem us. Yet there can be no serious question as to the outcome. The Advocate takes guilty sinners and makes them righteous. They stand before the law of God as though they had not sinned.

“The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us, but in our hearts and characters.”—Ellen G. White, Letter 406, 1906.

## Part 1 — All Need Legal Aid

**“What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:3, 4).**

The law of God is declared to be perfect, holy, just, and good. It also is called spiritual. Our weak, carnal nature is incapable of obedience to such a holy standard. But the gospel brings good news. God sent His Son in human flesh to live out the principles of His Father’s law in a totally human environment. No longer can the weakness of human flesh be made an excuse. A righteousness to match the law has been provided. Humanity is no longer compelled to rely on its own pitiful resources and strength to live in harmony with the royal law. The principles of God’s holy law have been written on our hearts and minds.

**What assurance do we have that Jesus has dealt adequately with the sin problem? Rom. 3:24, 25; 1 John 2:2.**

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Jesus entered the human situation on the same level as does every child of Adam; and then, through one mighty deed—His death on the cross—He broke sin’s stranglehold forever. By virtue of His atoning sacrifice, He has the authority to represent us, to cancel our debt of sin, and to shield us from the demands of justice which sin incurs.

**What function does the law serve? Rom. 3:20; 7:7, 13.**

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The law of God is like a spiritual microscope. What is not apparent to normal vision is magnified a thousand times. We are enabled to see the serious nature of sin. Remember that it was Jesus’ purpose to “magnify the law, and make it honourable” (Isa. 42:21).

“It is by beholding that we become changed. And as those sacred precepts in which God has opened to men the perfection and holiness of His character are neglected, and the minds of the people are attracted to human teachings and theories, what marvel that there has followed a decline of living piety in the church.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 478.

**THINK IT THROUGH:** Because of my sins I am under the heavy penalty of the law. As I recognize the exceeding sinfulness of sin, what else can I do but cry out for help—for something, someone, out of and beyond myself to step in and help me?

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Great Controversy*, pp. 467-474.

## Part 2 — Skillful Advocate

“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34).

Under the law we are brought to condemnation. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23)—Jews, Gentiles, even teachers of the law. We need a skillful lawyer to plead for us. Again the gospel has good news for us. The court has appointed legal aid. It is Christ who becomes our Advocate and intercedes for us.

**What did Jesus have to do in order to qualify as our perfect Advocate? Heb. 2:17, 18.**

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Jesus identified with us completely. At His baptism He established His ties with humanity, accepting the rite although He had never sinned. When Jesus asked the Baptist to administer the rite, John shrank from the task. Jesus ordered him to go ahead with His baptism. The Advocate must set the full example as well as experience the real-life situation of those He would represent.

**Summarize what Hebrews 7:25 has to say about the effectiveness of Christ’s advocacy.**

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“No sooner does the child of God approach the mercy seat than he becomes the client of the great Advocate. At his first utterance of penitence and appeal for pardon Christ espouses his case and makes it His own, presenting the supplication before the Father as His own request.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 364.

**What assurance do we have that our cases are not hopeless? John 6:37, 39.**

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The skillful Advocate pleads so effectively that not one of His clients need be lost. As a lawyer He has never lost a case.

**How does Jesus as our Advocate cope with the fact that we are guilty? 1 John 2:1-3; 1:7.**

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He does not cover the facts. He urges us to confess. Then He assumes responsibility for our sins. But it is only confessed sins that He covers. Unconfessed, unforsaken sins are our responsibility.



## Part 3 — Provides Access

**“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1, 2).**

The barriers in the earthly sanctuary, such as the curtains at the entrance to the holy and most holy, suggested physical inaccessibility. Solomon’s temple also had barricades and walls that kept Gentiles, women, and handicapped persons out of certain areas in the temple complex. But no one can block the way to the throne of God. There is equal access through Jesus. When He clothes us with His righteousness and presents us to His Father we are accepted in the Beloved.

**What attitude should characterize Christ’s earthly clients as they approach the judgment throne? Why? Heb. 10:19-22.**

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Christ pierces the dividing curtains and appears before the throne on our behalf. His skill as Advocate, His acceptance in heaven, His power and status are calculated to inspire confidence and boldness in the client. There is no need to cringe in fear; the Advocate has pierced the veil. In Him we find assurance, certainty, and warranty.

The proper way to enter a building is through a door. Entrance to the kingdom of God is through Christ alone. There is no other way. There are many false doors—most of which involve a salvation-by-works approach, but also can include trusting in one’s own faith for salvation. (See *The Sanctified Life*, pp. 63, 64.) But these false doors do not provide access. Not only is the gospel good news, but it also is simple. The faith that lays hold on eternal life is not complicated and cumbersome. To accept Christ as personal Saviour is to accept His claims upon us and His right to direct us. It involves focusing everything on Him and His will. When we do so He grants us a new status.

**What sort of things are involved in the new status that we receive through Christ? Rom. 8:16, 17; 1 Cor. 3:21-23.**

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As members of the family of God we have access to all that is God’s. Children have privileges denied nonmembers of the family. But the privilege also involves responsibility. “We shall not want to meet these slighted opportunities and neglected privileges in the day of judgment. Our eternal interests for the future depend on the present diligent performance of duty in improving the talents God has given into our trust.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 127.

## Part 4 — The Adversary

**“He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him” (Zech. 3:1).**

Satan is called the “accuser of the brethren.” He opposes Christ’s mediatorial ministry. Those who belong to Jesus, who have become His clients, are Satan’s special targets. While God is not willing that any should perish, Satan is not willing that any should be saved.

**What is the import of the way our Advocate responds to our adversary? Zech. 3:2.**

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Satan delights in pointing out the shortcomings of the people of God. He would like to challenge the Advocate regarding His right to save these faulty people. “Are they the ones to take my place?” he asks derisively. Jesus does not engage in debate with Satan. He simply rebukes him. It is Jesus’ right to save; He has purchased it with His own blood. By His death and endless life Jesus saves. He knows how to deliver.

**How did Jesus demonstrate His power over the adversary at the time of the death of Moses? Jude 9.**

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Even before the cross, Christ was more than equal to the conflict. Satan claimed Moses’ body. Again, notice that Jesus did not enter into an argument with him. His standard response seemed to be: “The Lord rebuke thee.” Satan merited rebuke because he had tempted humanity in the first place. He steals the affections of Christ’s lawful possession, His children; leads them astray; and then seeks to become the arresting officer, judge, and jury. But our Advocate will not relinquish His right to save those who cling to Him in faith. One obvious task of our Mediator is to place a check on Satan’s power. While salvation is all of grace and is not dependent on human effort, determined effort is necessary to stay in saving relationship to Jesus Christ. The Christian cannot remain passive. Satan must be resisted. (See 1 Peter 5:8.)

**In the vision of Joshua and the angel, what symbolic act determined the outcome? Zech. 3:4, 5.**

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The change of raiment mentioned indicates Christ’s righteousness that is both imputed and imparted to us. “The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 35.

## Part 5 — Adversary Silenced

“I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10).

“The last link of sympathy between Satan” and unfallen beings was broken when he murdered Christ. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 761.) For that reason he now is restricted to this planet. But at one time he had access to other worlds; he also badgered the good angels as they came and went from heaven. Such access was no longer granted him when Christ gained the victory on the cross.

**What biblical evidence indicates that Satan and his hosts are now confined to earth? Rev. 12:12, 13.**

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The adversary has been forced to limit his influence to this fallen world. His wrath knows no bounds. He is furious over the restraint. His resulting anger is directed against the followers of Christ. If only he could exterminate them, his sovereignty over earth would be unresisted.

**What powerful weapons of resistance do Christians have? Rev. 12:11.**

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“So long as the soul rests with unshaken confidence in the virtue and power of the atonement, it will stand firm as a rock to principle, and all the powers of Satan and his angels cannot sway it from its integrity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 357, 358.

**APPLICATION: How can I avail myself of this protection? What steps should I take to make sure the blood is on the “doorpost” of my heart?**

**What completely and forever silences Satan’s accusations that humans cannot obey God’s law? Rev. 14:1-5.**

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When the Mediator brings His people to perfection, Satan’s accusations are demonstrated to be wrong. “To those who call upon Him for strength for the development of Christian character, He [Christ] will give all needed help.” “While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon the faithful ones the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father’s name written in their foreheads.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 590, 591.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

**“The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.”**

**“And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:22, 27).**

Heaven is a friendly court. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as all the heavenly host, are trying to pull us through. The investigative pre-advent judgment does not put us in a kind of double jeopardy, as if God were seeking to do everything possible to destroy us. In the investigative judgment God goes public. He opens books and discloses records that vindicate His justice and mercy. His salvation is so complete and adequate that there is nothing for those to fear who have demonstrated their acceptance of Christ’s advocacy by allowing Him to live out His life within them. In fact, a pre-advent judgment is called for to demonstrate that God’s dealings are beyond suspicion. He in no wise excuses the guilty. But His plan makes the guilty guiltless through His Son, the Mediator, who also is Judge.

“Because He has tasted the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and understands the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has victoriously withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal justly and tenderly with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save,—because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgment.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 210.

**What assurance do we have that Christ’s mediatorial ministry will be successful on our behalf? Jude 24, 25.**

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**APPLICATION:** This week’s lesson portrays how the great controversy comes to focus in each life.

Zechariah 3 provides a vivid frame for this contest. All humans may identify with Joshua. This transfer may provide a useful self-evaluation exercise.

1. List areas of your life where Satan may legitimately accuse you of shortcomings this week.
2. At the bottom of this page write a commitment to Jesus. In this, surrender the list you made under 1 above and accept His forgiveness.
3. Hear Christ rebuke Satan.
4. Sense the feeling of cleansing as Christ enfolds you in His righteousness.



# 10

December 2-8  
Adult Lesson

## Our Priest-King

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down upon the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:3).

Christ has set up a mediatorial kingdom. He has a throne. Even now He exercises kingly rule. His kingdom is not earthly, nor is it yet the future kingdom of glory. It is that kingdom of grace which stands between the kingdoms of this world and the final revelation of the everlasting kingdom that shall ultimately swallow up all others. He now is enthroned as a Priest-King. He was installed in this position at His ascension. The phrase “at the right hand of God” indicates supreme honor and authority. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost signaled Christ’s inaugural. “The Captain of our salvation is interceding for His people, not as a mere petitioner to move the Father to compassion, but as a conqueror who claims the trophies of His victory.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 154.

Our Mediator acts from a position of strength. As He stated to His disciples, all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). Jesus’ work did not end at Calvary. As one writer puts it, “He did not retire to write His memoirs.” He entered upon a vigorous ministry of mediation and reconciliation that will not cease until the plan of salvation is accomplished. The Son of man, seated at the right hand of the throne of God, is exalted. God has bestowed upon Him the name which is above every other name (Phil. 2:9). All creatures are commanded to worship Him. (See Eph. 1:21.)

From the throne of mediation Christ wages warfare against Satan and his evil angels. When Jesus came He invaded Satan’s kingdom, overcame the powers of darkness, and set up on earth an extension of His kingdom. Those who accept Him as Saviour and Lord have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated “into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13). Thus they have become targets of the enemy who seeks to destroy them. There are battles and casualties. Not all soldiers are loyal, but our Priest-King is steadfast. He stands up on behalf of His people. They look to Him for direction, and from His sanctuary He leads them from victory to victory.

## Part 1 — Priest and King

**“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.”**

**“Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:1, 4). (See also Heb. 7:1, 2.)**

Reference already has been made to the multiphased ministry of Jesus Christ. He is Prophet, Priest, and King. The book of Hebrews applies the prophecy of Psalm 110 to Jesus. He is compared to Melchizedek, who was called king of Salem, king of peace, and a priest of God. Many believe that Melchizedek was an ordinary human being who by character and office could be a type of Christ in His dual role of priest and king.

**What can we learn about Christ’s ministry from the historical account of Melchizedek? Gen. 14:18-20.**

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**“At one time Melchizedek represented the Lord Jesus Christ in person, to reveal the truth of heaven, and perpetuate the law of God.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1093.**

As an authority figure Melchizedek had impressive credentials. He blessed Abraham (father of the faithful and friend of God) and he received tithes from him. “Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. . . . And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better” (Heb. 7:4-7). To place any earthly figure above Abraham was a high tribute indeed.

“It was Christ that spoke through Melchizedek, the priest of the most high God. Melchizedek was not Christ, but he was the voice of God in the world, the representative of the Father.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1093.

**What contribution does the prophet Zechariah make in regard to the dual role of Christ as Priest-King? Zech. 6:13.**

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As Melchizedek was king of peace, so Christ is called the “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). Christ shares the throne of the universe with the rest of the Godhead.

**What other aspect of Christ’s throne is brought out in Hebrews 4:16?**

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The kingdom over which Christ now rules is the kingdom of grace. It is that invisible, spiritual kingdom which Jesus referred to as being “within you” (Luke 17:21). In this kingdom the King also is our Priest.

## Part 2 — The King's Subjects

**“Giving thanks unto the Father . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col. 1:12, 13).**

Christ, our Priest-King, takes former rebels and transforms them into loyal subjects. He delivers them from the terrible slavery of sin. Then He registers them as members of His new kingdom. It is possible to us by choice to change our citizenship through the provisions He has made.

**What characteristic particularly marks the subject of the King? Heb. 5:9.**

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Obedience is the hallmark of the saints, the highest expression of loyalty. Disobedience and disloyalty gave rise to the sin problem. The lyrics of the old spiritual are theologically correct: “My God will raise up a nation that will obey.” The covenant relationship is based on the law of God. “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people . . . : and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Ex. 19:5, 6). Under the terms of the everlasting covenant the law is inscribed on the hearts of Christ’s followers, both in Old Testament and New Testament times.

**What privileges and rights go along with citizenship in Christ’s kingdom? 1 Peter 2:9, 10.**

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The King’s subjects are to reflect His character to the world. They are to be light bearers among the nations. The love relationship between the King and His subjects places great demands on both. Christ has fully discharged His responsibility to His children. The question is, “Are we fulfilling the terms of the agreement (covenant), discharging our responsibility?”

**How do citizens of the kingdom live in relation to the world? Phil. 2:15.**

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Christians must offer the world a choice, something different, something better. The church of God is a colony established in this world by Heaven. Everything about this colony should suggest the “home country.” Its members should demonstrate a different attitude as well as a different philosophy of life and life-style. The Priest-King is working in and through human beings toward the formation of a thoroughly transformed community. They are to form a body of light that will illuminate the earth.

## Part 3 — The King's Ransom

“From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

The word translated as “witness” is the same as our word *martyr*. Our Priest-King was willing to pay the supreme price in order to ransom us. When the Scriptures speak of a person's blood being shed, they almost always refer to violent death. This is the strong inference in Isaiah 53:12—“He hath poured out his soul unto death.” The struggle for our salvation cost the King His life. His resistance to sin literally pressed blood from His pores.

**What comparison does Peter make between Christ's ransom price and earthly ransoms? 1 Peter 1:18, 19.**

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“The plan of redemption involved the death of the Son of God. Unless we conceive of God as being entirely unlike us, this cost must have been immense. ‘I might give myself,’ one father said upon hearing the story of the cross, ‘but I could never give my son.’

“The cost to the Son of God was equal to that of the Father. He must become incarnate, be subject to His own creatures and from them suffer every indignity, and at last be hanged on the tree as a criminal.”—M. L. Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), p. 257.

**What is the significance of the word *redemption* in Ephesians 1:7?**

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The Bible uses several picture words in speaking of salvation in Jesus Christ. In this case it is *redemption*. The term comes from the slave market where human beings were bought and sold, or from the business world. To redeem means “to buy back,” “to repurchase.” People borrow from a moneylender, ordinarily leaving some valuable item as collateral. Redemption of the article involves a price.

“The world does not acknowledge that, at an infinite cost, Christ has purchased the human race. They do not acknowledge that by creation and by redemption He holds a just claim to every human being. But as Redeemer of the fallen race, He has been given the deed of possession, which entitles Him to claim them as His property.”—Ellen G. White, Letter 136, 1902.

Our ransom is a sure and solid one.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, pp. 363, 364.



## Part 4 — The King's Gifts

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Eph. 4:8).

Ancient kings celebrated their victories by lavishing gifts upon their subjects. On Christ's ascension He inaugurated a kingdom and reign that particularly is characterized by generosity. He is anxious to give good gifts. He is the heavenly Merchantman who comes laden with good things and lavishes them on His people. But basic to our reception of all His gifts is our willingness to repent.

**What gift must precede the forgiveness of sin? Acts 5:31.**

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Repentance is first and foremost a gift. It cannot be generated by human effort. It is the King's goodness that produces this radical change in the sinner. Sorrow for sin is a part of the experience, but more is involved. There must be a turning away from sin. When repentance takes place sin is viewed in a different light. The New Testament Greek word for *repentance* refers literally to “a change of mind.” In commenting on David's repentance as recorded in Psalm 51, Ellen White says, “A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 25.

Notice the consequences of trying to repent under our own power:

“Just here is a point on which many err, and hence they fail of receiving the help that Christ desires to give them. They think that they cannot come to Christ unless they first repent, and that repentance prepares them for the forgiveness of their sins. It is true that repentance does not precede the forgiveness of sins; for it is only the broken and contrite heart that will feel the need of a Saviour. But must the sinner wait till he has repented before he can come to Jesus? Is repentance to be made an obstacle between the sinner and the Saviour?

“The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ. . . . It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. . . . We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 26.

**Why does Christ emphasize our need of repentance in the Laodicean message? Rev. 3:19.**

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**FURTHER STUDY:** *Steps to Christ*, “Repentance,” pp. 23-26.

## Part 5 — The Gift That Brings All Others

“Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:33, 38).

It bears repeating that the risen Lord lavishes gifts upon His people. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost signaled that His priestly reign had begun. The Holy Spirit is the gift which “when claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 672)—a major gift indeed.

**What do we know about Christ’s willingness to grant this major gift? Luke 11:13.**

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One of Jesus’ favorite themes was the gift of the Holy Spirit. As His earthly ministry drew to its close, He expanded on the subject even more.

“In Jesus’ farewell discourses to His disciples He told them: ‘Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you’ (Jn 16:7). Why would it be to their advantage to have Jesus leave and the Holy Spirit come to take His place? Because since Jesus had taken on human nature He was subject to the limitations of time and space. . . . But the Spirit is not so limited. Hence, Jesus had to go away and return through the Spirit in order to be forever present.”—Walter F. Specht, “Christ’s Session, Enthronement, and Mediatorial and Intercessory Ministry,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, p. 351.

**What part does the Holy Spirit play in the proclamation of the gospel? (See Acts 1:8.)**

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It is impossible to witness effectively for Christ without the Holy Spirit. The disciples were commanded to wait for the gift. They did not venture forth to challenge the nations with the claims of Christ until they were endowed with Christ’s all-conquering Spirit. What happened as a result is recorded in the book of Acts.

**THINK IT THROUGH:** If the exalted Christ is so anxious to give the Holy Spirit to His followers, why do we not see results similar to those that were seen in the apostles’ day?

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 47-56.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

**“I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:28).**

Actually, Jesus shares His life with us. No earthly potentate or power can grant life. Angels cannot give life. But Christ has life within Himself. He is the Source of life. Basically Christianity consists of Christ’s sharing His life with His followers, thus creating on earth a fellowship of believers—a community energized by the life He gives. The quality of this life is that of the Source.

**Colossians 1:13 speaks about Christians being “translated . . . into the kingdom of his dear Son.” How does this transformation take place? John 3:3-7.**

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The born-again Christian has a new life source—a new beginning, a new genealogy. When we were sinners we were rebels. We were outside the commonwealth, the community. The Priest-King works a miracle. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit He makes rebels over again. We break with the past and cut the old ties, the alliances that bound us to the enemy’s service. Conversion is the forging of a new alliance, a new relationship, a new status. The mediatorial ministry of Christ makes this astounding change possible—indeed, effects it.

**What other terms illustrate the conversion or born-again experience? Titus 3:4-6.**

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Conversion, new birth, regeneration, and renewing are used interchangeably. Shades of meaning may be involved, but the idea of radical, but positive, change is inherent. From His throne our Priest-King mediates His own life, a life equal to the life of God, to the community of His followers. The phrase “through Jesus Christ our Saviour” ordinarily refers specifically to the work of the Mediator, to His dynamic ministry. Our High Priest has “obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb. 9:12).

**APPLICATION:** Melchizedek means “King of Peace.” Has He brought peace into your life?

Are you concerned about a relationship or program in your church congregation in which there are tensions?

Select one area where a lack of harmony is recognized. Outline a procedure that you believe would meet Christ’s plan for resolving the conflict. How can you, as one member, introduce and promote this resolution in accordance with Christ’s method of working?



# 11

December 9-15  
Adult Lesson

## Mediator and Judge

**MEMORY TEXT:** “The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him” (Dan. 7:26, 27).

The biblical concept of judgment centers around a throne, or, we might say, two thrones—one authentic, the other a rival throne of pretension. “The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all” (Ps. 103:19). “A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary” (Jer. 17:12). The Bible also speaks of a “throne of iniquity” (Ps. 94:20) and graphically describes the enemy’s intention to establish it. (See Isa. 14:13, 14.)

Thrones are authority symbols, and closely connected with authority is dominion. One of the key words in Daniel’s prophecy is *dominion*, which comes from the Hebrew word for the “right to rule.” Who shall sit upon the throne of universal dominion? A usurper, a crafty and cunning pretender, has made charges against that throne. He initiated them in the very precincts of glory, among those that stood by—the angels. But the One seated upon the throne has chosen His time to bring the matter into court—to settle the issue. Sufficient evidence now has been accumulated to prove that the pretender prince is a liar, a cheat, and a scoundrel; the root cause of every difficulty that has plagued the human family.

As Daniel in vision saw sin running riot, apparently unchecked for century after century; as he viewed the rise and fall of the empires; as he saw the saints suffer persecution and even death; as he saw truth crushed to the ground and the priestly ministry of our great High Priest obscured by counterfeit, earthly priesthood; he wondered, “How long?” His unspoken question was voiced by one of the holy ones and was answered with the time prophecy of Daniel 8:13, 14.

The biblical concept of judgment has three dimensions: (1) Satan must be condemned decisively, (2) God’s name and character must be vindicated, and (3) the saints also must be cleared (pass the loyalty test) and be accepted as citizens of the kingdom. Since 1844 this work of judgment has been in progress. In 1844 the focus of Christ’s ministry moved beyond the veil into the holy of holies. As the literal translation of Daniel 7:22 assures us, Christ there will pronounce judgment in favor of the saints.

## Part 1 — A Day Appointed

**“He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31.)**

The idea of a day of universal judgment is accepted by most Christians. Paul’s statement indicates that God has specified a certain time when it is to take place. Jewish/Christian thought envisions an end to time. There will be a conclusion to human history. Jesus is God’s agent to bring earth back into oneness with the creation. The entire process is in His hands. History is His story. He is the hinge of history and time. His role as Saviour and Mediator is pivotal. He is commissioned to restore, to bring back, to adjust, to make things right, and to judge.

**What assurance does Jesus give us in John 10:17, 18, and how does this assurance fit into the judgment picture?**

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The resurrection of Jesus gives each of us the assurance that He is adequately equipped to take care of the dilemma caused by sin. Only the God who can raise the dead can deal with the past and its terrible record of injustices and inequities. He must be Master of time and the spheres—past, present, and future. Jesus’ resurrection proves that He can connect the ages. His judgment is more than a review; it is a settlement of every issue. Death cannot prevent or preempt Christ’s work of judgment. He will carry the matter forward to a final, irreversible conclusion. And this will be done in righteousness, with the strictest integrity.

**Summarize what the apostles were commanded to preach with respect to this work of judgment. Acts 10:42.**

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Apostolic proclamation is basic. Our preaching and teaching is firmly rooted here; it derives from the original testimony and witness of the men who lived and worked with Christ.

**SEARCH AND LEARN: Study the second chapter of Romans in order to understand better why Paul includes the judgment of the secrets of men in what he terms “my gospel.”**

Rather than divorcing judgment and gospel, Paul’s gospel embraces every aspect of Christ’s mediatorial ministry. It is all part of the good news, whether we consider forgiveness of sin or the final annihilation of sin.

## Part 2 — A Question About the Appointed Day

**“Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?” (Dan. 8:13).**

This heavenly conversation concerns the length of time for “the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot.” “How long shall be the vision?” The *vision* is the prophetic overview of an important segment of the great controversy. Its background is found in chapter 7, where the rise and fall of empires, the vivid judgment scene, and the career and activity of the mysterious “little horn” were shown Daniel. Chapter 8 brings the vision into sharp focus.

**Notice the activities and developments of the little horn that are foretold in Daniel 8:9-12.**

The little horn (1) waxed exceeding great; (2) expanded its empire toward the south, the east, and toward the pleasant land; (3) cast some of the hosts and stars to the ground and stamped on them; (4) magnified himself to the prince of the host; (5) took away the daily sacrifice; (6) cast down the place of God’s sanctuary; and (7) cast down the truth to the ground.

**How do many Protestant interpreters understand the beast-symbols of Daniel 8?**

Many agree that (1) the ram is the Medo-Persian Empire, (2) the he-goat is Greece, (3) the four horns are the divisions of the Grecian Empire, and (4) the little horn which waxed great is both pagan and papal Rome.

**What activity of the little horn power caused Daniel the greatest concern? Dan. 8:11.**

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The prince of the host is Jesus Christ. (See Dan. 9:25; 10:13, 21; 12:1.) The activities of the little horn range far beyond the desecration of the earthly sanctuary. In its pagan phase, Rome destroyed the Jewish temple. In its papal phase, Rome introduced a substitute priesthood and services that made the ministry of Christ ineffective. The taking away of the daily sacrifice, in this case, is the intrusion of an earthly mediatorial ministry between God and man. As Daniel saw the truth about Christ and His mediatorial work crushed and “cast to the ground,” he was astonished. To add to his alarm, this persecuting power continued to prosper.

The question of Daniel 8:13 must have been in his heart: “How long shall be the vision?” Will the destroying power hold sway forever? When will relief come? When will the sanctuary be restored to its rightful place?

## Part 3 — The Answer

**“He said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:14).**

After what seems to be an eternity of waiting on the part of angels and the inhabitants of other worlds, God, in His appointed time, set the process in motion that would settle the sin problem. The opposing power has done its worst; truth, including the mediatorial ministry of Christ, has been obscured. God’s response is positive and specific within a predetermined time frame. Here is one of those times and seasons that the Father has within His power. “Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Even the truth about Christ’s mediatorial ministry is to be restored. God’s ways and His sanctuary are to be vindicated and justified. The sanctuary and the 2300-day vision point to the fact that Christ our Mediator has entered the final phase of His work. The *vision* (Dan. 8:1-14) brings us down to the year 1844. The countdown has been activated. There can be no turning back of the prophetic clock. “The hour of his judgment is come” (Rev. 14:7).

**How was the vision explained to Daniel? Dan. 8:15, 16.**

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**Read Daniel 8:17-27.** Daniel apparently understood all the symbols in the vision. But he seemed to be having difficulty understanding why so much time would be involved before the sanctuary could be cleansed or restored. Evidently he thought that this might mean a delay in the time when the Jews were to return to their own land and rebuild the sanctuary in Jerusalem. God did not answer right away, but the vision of Daniel 9 was intended to help Daniel understand what he was having difficulty in grasping.

**How was this difficulty cleared up in the vision of Daniel 9? (Note in particular verses 22, 23.)**

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Daniel had pondered the matter for a long time. As the result of his prayer recorded in Daniel 9, additional understanding was given him.

It is not our purpose in these lessons to deal in detail with the 2300 days. Suffice it to state that the time span began in 457 B.C. and ended in A.D. 1844. Seventy weeks, or 490 years, were set aside for the Jewish nation, during which the items outlined in verse 24 would be fulfilled. The remainder of the time indicates the period until Christ’s final judgment ministry begins.

**FURTHER STUDY:** For details of interpreting the time prophecies study *The Great Controversy*, pp. 326-329, 398, 399.

## Part 4 — In His Court

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Dan. 7:9, 10).

In 1844 the temple in heaven became a courtroom. Thrones were set in place. “This judgment throne was set at a very special time. The thrones had not always been placed; the court did not always sit. . . . The term *throne* is the Hebrew word *korse*. It means a throne of a very special type, reserved for special occasions. . . . Since this court scene takes place in the heavenly sanctuary, we must look for the beginning of a new phase of the sanctuary ministration that involves a work of judgment.”—Edward Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, pp. 111, 112.

**What makes the work of the heavenly sanctuary so vital?**

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“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.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 488.

**What is the nature of the judgment? Dan. 7:22-26.**

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The judgment is concerned with the saints. It also has to do with the beast power that opposes God and His people. The message of the judgment is that relief is on its way. Decisions are made in the courtroom setting. Awards are given and punishments are meted out. The thing to remember is that judgment is rendered in favor of and on behalf of the saints. They are vindicated and rewarded. They benefit from Christ’s mediatorial ministry. God’s saving righteousness wins the day in court.

“The judge is addressed as the helper or redeemer of the party that considers itself wronged. The mere fact that a case is taken up by a court in session (in the gate, in the royal palace or in the sanctuary) can be called justification or righting the wrong. . . . The juridical event includes the recognition and acceptance of the judgment by the affected parties and by everyone else who hears of the judgment.”—Markus Barth, *Justification* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 19, 20.

We can be sure that God’s court will not make a mistake. There will be no mistrial. Every verdict will be seen and acknowledged as just and true.



## Part 5 — Our Representative

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him” (Dan. 7:13).

Daniel was shown myriads of angels, a fiery throne, and the Ancient of days taking His seat. The court was called in session. The books were opened, meaning full disclosure. Now comes the climactic moment. The Son of man, who has been in the presence of the Father, assumes a new role. He comes now as the Representative of humanity before the throne of judgment. He stands there as our Substitute and Surety, in our stead. He is there to obtain acquittal and also the kingdom for those He represents.

**Note how this reinforces the fact that it was essential to the plan of salvation that Jesus must become a human being.**

“Jesus became a man that He might mediate between man and God. He clothed His divinity with humanity, He associated with the human race, that with His long human arm He might encircle humanity, and with His divine arm grasp the throne of Divinity.”—Ellen G. White, Letter 121, 1897.

“By His appointment He [the Father] has placed at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature. . . . Christ intercedes in behalf of those who have received Him.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 363.

Jesus appears in court on our behalf. In the same way that the ancient priest bore the names of Israel on the breastplate and the ephod, the Son of man carries us up to the very throne of God. He is the Representative of humanity in general, but especially represents those who trust in Him.

The intercession of Christ is made more effectual by His close identity with us. It is as though He represented His people in a class-action suit. The members of the class are considered one and the same. The fate of the class and the Representative who takes the case to court is the same. If Jesus is exonerated, we are. This is why Ellen White says, “We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute.”—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 113.

**How does the book of Hebrews describe this ministry of Christ? Heb. 9:24.**

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There are two phases to Christ’s ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. Daniel 7 describes what took place as the second phase began. In the ancient sanctuary there were two apartments in the tabernacle. In the first apartment the daily or continual ministry took place. The Day of Atonement services took place in the most holy. Jesus did not abandon His first-apartment ministry when He began the second-apartment work.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

**“There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14).**

The idea of the kingdom of God is prominent in Daniel. Closely connected with the concept of kingdom is dominion, the right to rule or sovereignty. “This judgment determines who has the right to rule, the right to exercise sovereignty over all nations, tongues, and peoples. Christ comes to the Father to receive this dominion.”—Edward Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, p. 123.

**With whom does Christ share this kingdom? Dan. 7:27.**

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It is Christ’s highest delight to share His kingdom with His followers. “He [Christ] asks for His people not only pardon and justification, full and complete, but a share in His glory and a seat upon His throne.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 484.

**What picture are we given of Christ standing up for His people during the last great crisis? Dan. 12:1.**

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Michael is Christ. (Compare Jude 9; Rev. 12:7.) It is the name that describes best His role as a mighty conqueror who wins back the long-lost kingdom. Dan. 12:1 states literally that Michael mounts guard over His people. As Mediator, He must protect and secure those whom His blood has redeemed. Deliverance is promised the people of God.

**What major attempt does Satan make to destroy the people of God and thus thwart Christ’s purposes? Rev. 12:12, 17.**

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Satan unleashes one final, furious attack on the saints. He is well aware that the mediatorial ministry of Christ is near successful conclusion. He is determined to prevent it. But the mediatorial kingdom cannot be shaken.

**APPLICATION:** The promises of the Bible speak of the kingdom’s being kept for us, held in reserve. While there is a time of trouble before us, we are not to be preoccupied with it. We are to place ourselves in the hands of the One who holds the kingdom in trust. Christians should not concentrate on the power of the enemy. They should magnify the power of their Mediator-King.



# 12

December 16-22  
Adult Lesson

## When Mediation Ceases

**MEMORY TEXT:** “The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled” (Rev. 15:8).

Mediation can be thought of as Christ shielding sinners. The question then might be raised, “Shielding them from what?” The biblical answer is “the wrath of God.” What, then, is God’s wrath? Does God get angry as we do and lose His temper? Does He sometimes act out of fits of rage?

In the first place, God is not a man. We must be careful not to transfer human characteristics to the Godhead. God’s wrath, someone has said, is the temperature of His love. It is His irreconcilable attitude toward evil. We can know that this attitude toward sin is predictable and constant. “I am the Lord, I change not” (Mal. 3:6). His wrath is not something that is temporary and stirred up only when humans commit evil acts. His anger is against sin. He alone sees in all dimensions the terrible evil that transgression has brought on the human family. So God is set to exterminate the “plague.” He cannot compromise here. But mercy pleads that the sentence be deferred in order that the sinner may have opportunity to accept Christ.

When the plan of salvation was explained to the heavenly host, all volunteered to join in the rescue mission. Think of the vast enterprise—the redemption of the lost planet and all its doomed inhabitants! From age to age the plan unfolds. Human history documents the mission. Prophecy gives a hint as to its duration. There are limits. The mission does not go on ad infinitum. From time to time the curtain is pulled back just enough to reveal what would happen if the shield between humanity and God’s wrath were removed. A glimpse of God’s wrath was given at the time of the Flood and in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. A little glimpse also can be seen in the lives of certain evil characters such as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. These glimpses are sufficient to impress us with the way it will be when mediation ceases.

The smoke-filled temple which no one can enter indicates the end of Christ’s pleading—no more intercession, no warding off the consequences of disobedience. Every human being must stand before his Maker without the intercessory ministry of Christ or the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. Does this mean that Jesus no longer serves as our Protector? No! Michael stands up for His children during the great time of trouble and provides them a double guard of angels. (See *Early Writings*, p. 271.)

## Part 1 — Saving Gospel—Warning Message

**“I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” (Rev. 14:6, 7).**

The heavenly sanctuary is the divine communication center from which messages of salvation are beamed toward earth. Mediation is not complete until it has touched human lives. The purpose of Christ’s mediatorial work is to extend the kingdom of God by establishing a community of loyal subjects on earth—a community in which His name is honored and through whom His will is done.

**Notice that two aspects of Christ’s saving message stand out in Revelation 14:6, 7.**

1. There is a strong element of warning. The announcement “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come” is a sobering fact. Most of God’s major messages to earth are characterized by this warning aspect. Think of the messages of Noah, Elijah, Jonah and John the Baptist.

2. Next comes the good news of redemption and safety. The warning is given to point out the danger. However, coupled with the warning is the invitation to salvation. Both must be made plain. Notice that the first angel proclaims the everlasting or eternal gospel. The announcement was first made in Eden (Gen. 3:15), and its final sounding is given in the end time. As the end nears the signal becomes clearer and more intense.

**SEARCH AND LEARN: Study all of Revelation 14 and pick out the indications you can find stated or implied of the worldwide spread of the three angels’ messages. Determine for yourself why such widespread proclamation is necessary.**

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No other generation has the urgency that is laid on this one. Earth’s population must be informed about the dangers, about counterfeit worship, about the inadequacy of salvation by human effort without Christ, and about the religious lawlessness that will characterize the last days.

## Part 2 — Grace Not Unlimited

**“The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years” (Gen. 6:3).**

The people before the Flood were given a time limit. The effectiveness of the Holy Spirit’s wooings and pleadings is determined by human response. It is left with us to say Yes or No. But there comes a time when pleadings unheeded are not repeated.

**How does the work of the Holy Spirit relate to the sealing? Eph. 4:30.**

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Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are joined together in the great effort to save humanity. The fact that Jesus became a man ensures representation for us in heaven. The Father gave His Son, and the Holy Spirit makes effective what Father and Son have done. Part of His office work is to testify of righteousness and judgment and to point us to the sanctuary where the work of salvation continues. The Spirit, through His work of leading us to repentance and the new birth, starts the new Christian on the path that leads to ultimate salvation. The Spirit, by His power, keeps us on that path.

The Holy Spirit conveys Christ’s life to us. While the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ may be distinguished as Persons, Their ministry to the human soul is indistinguishable. “Christ in you” is the “hope of glory” (Col. 1:27), and He (the Holy Spirit) shall be in you. He will abide in you. Thus, the ministry of the Holy Spirit absolutely is indispensable. The cross and Christ’s ministry in the sanctuary must be worked out in human experience. The Holy Spirit does this.

**What indication does Jesus give that grace is not unlimited? Matt. 12:31, 32.**

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Without the aid of the Holy Spirit it is impossible for a person to repent, to experience the new birth, to resist sin, to understand the Word of God, or to witness effectively; and we could go on. Christ sends the Holy Spirit to bring conviction and draw us to Him. If we reject the Holy Spirit’s work, Christ’s mediation for us is in vain.

“With unerring accuracy the Infinite One still keeps an account with all nations. While His mercy is tendered, with calls to repentance, this account will remain open; but when the figures reach a certain amount which God has fixed, the ministry of His wrath commences. The account is closed. Divine patience ceases. There is no more pleading of mercy in their behalf.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 208.

### Part 3 — An Open and Shut Door

**“To the angel of the church of Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth” (Rev. 3:7).**

Through Jesus' mediation the door is kept ajar, probation is extended, and humans are given another chance. As long as He stands before the Father clothed in His priestly vestments, Jesus is the door of access. We cannot come to the Father except by Him and through Him. Noah's day is the classic example. The huge door to the ark could be opened and shut only by divine hands. However, we must not conclude that Jesus is more anxious for our salvation than is the Father or the Holy Spirit. Remember, the Father provided the sacrifice; He placed the Son before His throne as Advocate, and He declared Jesus a Priest forever. The Father knew what was needed and provided just that. In some mysterious way all Heaven appeals for and to humanity through Christ. (See 2 Cor. 5:20.)

**What does Christ's heart cry as He realized that His earthly ministry was closing reveal about His concern for us? Matt. 23:37, 38.**

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Christ kept the door of mercy ajar for Israel as long as He possibly could. The nation was given extension after extension of time. Now their probation was running out. He pleaded with them in the streets and in the temple. His voice called His generation to repentance. Then the fateful day came, and with it came the cry from a heart breaking with love.

**In what way do the parable of the fig tree and Christ's act in cursing the fig tree apply to the church and individual Christians? Luke 13:6-9; Matt. 21:19, 20.**

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“The parable of the fig tree, spoken before Christ's visit to Jerusalem, had a direct connection with the lesson He taught in cursing the fruitless tree. For the barren tree of the parable the gardener pleaded, Let it alone this year, until I shall dig about it and dress it; and if it bear fruit, well; but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. Increased care was to be given the unfruitful tree. It was to have every advantage. But if it remained fruitless, nothing could save it from destruction. In the parable the result of the gardener's work was not foretold. It depended upon that people to whom Christ's words were spoken. They were represented by the fruitless tree, and it rested with them to decide their own destiny. Every advantage that Heaven could bestow was given them, but they did not profit by their increased blessings. By Christ's act in cursing the barren fig tree, the result was shown. They had determined their own destruction.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 584.

## **Part 4 — The Final Refusal**

**“The third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:9-11).**

The third angel’s message is the most solemn of all. It is proclaimed with a loud voice. It concerns worship. The issues are made clear in this final warning. What draws the wrath of God is the persistent refusal of His gracious offer of salvation and the deliberate choice of the counterfeit. Make no mistake about it, God will not brand anyone for eternal condemnation until He has given ample opportunity to understand the issues and the consequences. Those who finally reject the third angel’s message actually refuse for all time the invitation to citizenship in the kingdom of the Mediator.

**What significance do you see in the attitude that characterized the citizens in the parable of the nobleman? Luke 19:14.**

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Obedience and submission to Christ’s authority are involved. In fact, it has always been the question of whom we really serve. What is our ultimate allegiance? To whom do we give supreme loyalty? This principle is expressed with crystal clarity in Paul’s words: “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16). Christ’s mediation and sacrifice avail nothing for the deliberately disobedient.

**What is the ultimate condition of those who refuse light persistently? 2 Cor. 4:3, 4.**

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Every gift that is ours comes via the Mediator. The knowledge of God and spiritual illumination are mediated through Jesus Christ. Only through the light that shines in Christ can we grasp the saving knowledge of God. When this light is refused, darkness and eternal loss result.

**What final pronouncement settles all issues? Rev. 22:11.**

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## **Part 5 — The Sealing**

**“I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads” (Rev. 7:1-3).**

The final moments of Christ’s mediatorial ministry are filled with busy activity. Angels of God are seen ascending and descending, carrying messages of hope and salvation, supporting the faithful, and encouraging and strengthening the beleaguered saints. The social and political atmosphere that surrounds individuals, families, and nations becomes more and more threatening. The ripening of sin’s harvest brings out all that is cruelest in humanity. As more and more people are given over to Satan’s control, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit is lessened. Not that the power of God is in any way diminished, but constant rejection has decreased the ability of many to respond to the Spirit’s pleading. It is Noah’s day, antediluvian society revisited.

**Notice two things that the seal of God denotes. 2 Tim. 2:19.**

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1. “The Lord knoweth them that are his.” The seal denotes ownership. In the ancient world when merchants purchased timber, they placed their seal or mark on their purchase. It was their brand, their sign of ownership. Those who finally are sealed by God are His property indeed.

2. “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The seal also denotes purity. Because they have yielded themselves with undivided allegiance, the blood of mediation is constantly applied for their cleansing. (See 1 John 1:7.)

**What part does obedience play in the process of sanctification? 1 Peter 1:22; John 17:17.**

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Obedience is the hallmark of loyalty. God’s requirements have not changed since Eden. Under the terms of the new covenant the law is written on the heart, engraved in the mind. And Jesus is the Mediator of this new covenant.

**What part does the Sabbath play in the sealing? Ex. 31:13; Eze. 20:12, 20.**

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The Sabbath becomes the great outward sign of faith to all who follow the Lamb in obedience.



## Part 6 — Focus and Application

**“He that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”**

**“And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe” (Rev. 14:16, 18).**

The principle of the harvest is taught clearly in Scripture. There is sowing and there is reaping. There is the development of the seed from germination to maturity—sickle time. From the parable of the sower we learn that there are two harvests ripening. (See Matt. 13:24-30.) The one is a harvest of the good seed and the other the harvest of the evil. The enemy sows tares. However, in the parable it was not apparent which plants were tares until “the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit.”

**What major lesson can you draw from Jesus’ explanation of the parables found in Matthew 13:1-43?**

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It is by inserting the principles of His kingdom like leaven in the hearts of human beings that Jesus propagates His kingdom. In like manner, Satan introduces the principles of His kingdom, hoping to steal away subjects for himself. The history of planet Earth is the story of the development of these two opposing principles.

**Who alone is qualified to separate the wheat from the tares? Matt. 13:30, 41, 42.**

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Notice that the time comes when there will be a separation. This is determined by order of the heavenly tribunal. No earthly court has jurisdiction here. The time comes when God pronounces a final judgment on every human being, living and dead. This takes place before Christ takes His seat upon the throne of His glory. (See Matt. 25:31; 13:39.)

**APPLICATION:** It is human to procrastinate. We need the impetus of schedules and deadlines to assign priorities. These provide incentives to finish the task. The close of probation is a deadline in a very real sense. To help us avoid presumption, the final date has not been announced.

The assignment this week is a serious one. It is to reaffirm priorities. In what areas of your life have you resisted Christ’s mediatorial ministry?

1. List three that you feel are significant.
2. Outline a plan by which you will allow Christ’s mediation to accomplish its service for you.



# 13

December 23-29  
Adult Lesson

## No More Gulf

**MEMORY TEXT:** “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:24, 25).

Jeremiah spoke of a time when the earth “was without form, and void; and the heavens . . . had no light. . . . The mountains . . . trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. . . . The birds . . . fled. . . . All the cities thereof were broken down. . . . The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end” (Jer. 4:23-27).

The millennium is not the full end. Satan is “bound” to this desolate globe to behold the end result of his rebellion. All the wicked, the rejecters of God’s love, are slain; the righteous are in the New Jerusalem. But there remains a major episode in the story. The nations, Gog and Magog, all who have lived out their lives on planet Earth, will be brought to make a united admission that God is fair and correct in the way He has dealt with them. Both saved and unsaved will agree. “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10). “Every knee” must bow and “every tongue” confess (Rom. 14:11). This is done in the most public manner possible. “In that day of final punishment and reward, both saints and sinners will recognize in him who was crucified the Judge of all living.”—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1898.

The replay of the entire great controversy in vast panoramic view reveals to every human being how his or her life stands up under the scrutiny of God’s law and in the light of God’s gracious offer of salvation. The lost would prefer death to viewing this scene. But they have fixed their own destiny.—(See *The Great Controversy*, p. 543.)

The wicked admit to God’s justice—even Satan bows. All creatures great and small give homage to Him that sitteth on the throne. The redeemed are ecstatic in their praise to the Lamb. Then comes the end. The wicked are destroyed. Christ, the Champion of God, who was given the task of bringing the planet back, presents a united creation to His Father. Rebellion has been eliminated completely. There is no possibility of future defections. The mission has been accomplished. However, we must keep in mind that Christ’s death and the resurrection are the final, unanswerable arguments that ensure total victory. Eternity will never exhaust the challenge to finite minds to advance to a deeper understanding of this infinite mystery.

## Part 1 — The “Not Yet”

“Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom” (Heb. 1:8).

Some theologians use the phrase “between the already and the not yet.” The “already” is what Christ has accomplished in salvation history—His incarnation, sinless life, death on the cross, resurrection, ascension, and priestly ministry. The “not yet” points to the future—to His second coming and the setting up of the kingdom of glory.

The kingdom of grace is being firmly established now. Those who accept Christ as Saviour are incorporated into that spiritual realm. Citizenship in this kingdom prepares us for citizenship in the kingdom of glory that is yet to come.

**What distinguishes the purposes of the two advents? Heb. 9:28.**

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The Mediator first had to deal with sin, to remove the accursed thing from His people. In the plan of salvation there is a sequence, a divine order. First comes the cross, then the crown. Jesus had to be the “man of sorrows” before He could become the “king of glory.” We live out our days in anticipation of the “not yet,” but in deep gratitude for the “already.” What Christ has done establishes our faith. There is ample evidence for belief. We trust now “that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6, NIV). Christianity is a revealed religion based on historical events. Unlike many of the religions of the East, it is more than philosophy. Jesus was a great and wise Teacher. His sayings are basic and foundational. But Jesus is more than a Scholar-Teacher; He is a Redeemer. He is task oriented. He does something. He is active in human history.

**What attitude and what characteristics mark Christ’s followers during this “not yet” period? Titus 2:13, 14.**

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Our blessed hope focuses on the day when Christ will have accomplished His mission. He fully intends to, and has demonstrated already that He is able to, rescue the lost planet and restore it to full harmony with the universe. This is the message of reconciliation, the message Seventh-day Adventists are commissioned to give to the world. It is based on the “already” (the great salvation events of history) and points forward with the assurance to the “not yet” (Christ’s coming kingdom and reign). The message also tells those of us living “between the already and the not yet” how to look to the sanctuary for help and sustenance.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 600-602.

## Part 2 — The Mediator Becomes a Mighty Warrior

“I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God” (Rev. 19:11-13).

This passage is rich in symbolism. The rider under the first seal of Revelation 6 rides on a white horse. Clearly the idea conveyed by this symbol is that of triumph or accomplishment of purpose. The identity of the rider in Revelation 19 is certain. He is called “Faithful and True.” He is also a righteous judge. Remember Jesus’ words: “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22). The Son is therefore God’s agent or emissary. It is given to Him to wage war against the forces of evil and to bring the rebellious to judgment—in short, to settle accounts. The fact that He is crowned with many crowns indicates that universal dominion is now His. He is Lord of history (past, present, and future), of nations and kingdoms; all systems, social and political, come under His rule. There is nothing in all creation that is excluded from His realm.

**What details are added by the prophet Isaiah? Isa. 63:1-6.**

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Edom is symbolic of the enemies of God’s people who have harassed them through the centuries of time in one form or another. A victorious conqueror coming from Edom would mean relief for Israel. In this passage also the identity of the conqueror is certain—“I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save” (Isa. 63:1). The striking similarity between the Isaiah and Revelation descriptions is continued with reference to the blood-stained garments or vesture of the conqueror. Redemption—to purchase back, to retrieve what was lost—requires strength. The Lamb is also the Lion. In fact, the wrath of the Lamb is a terror to the enemies of the Lord. The thought to keep in mind here is that mediation, as far as salvation history is concerned, is not complete until the rebellion is effectively put down.

The Mediator accomplishes all of this alone. The disciples forsook Him and fled. On the cross darkness enshrouded Him, intensifying His loneliness. He accepted His baptism of blood and trial by fire that countless millions might gain everlasting life. The triumph becomes all the more rewarding for it. As He sees the travail of His soul, He is satisfied.

**FURTHER STUDY:** *The Great Controversy*, pp. 641-644.

## Part 3 — Law, Order, and Peace

**“The armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:14-16).**

Adam forfeited his right to rule as God’s vicegerent on earth when he sinned. Every earthly government has since failed to measure up to God’s standard of righteousness and fairness. This is because human beings’ best efforts and attempts are riddled with selfishness and pride. Lord Acton once said, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” The best systems of government have checks and balances against unwanted power. However, the fact that so many prophetic symbols for nations are bloodthirsty beasts provides an indication that the ideal is not to be expected. Only the Son of man can be trusted with absolute, undiluted power. (See Eze. 21:25-27.)

**What distinguishes the rule of Christ from that of earthly powers? Isa. 11:4, 5.**

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The rule of Christ is the rule of righteousness and law. He will restore order in the natural and spiritual realms. The chaos brought about by sin will be overcome by His righteous rule. Peace will be established. Satan, the lawless one (2 Thess. 2:8), will be completely neutralized.

**What is the relationship between peace and law? Ps. 119:165; Isa. 48:18.**

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The law of God must be restored to its rightful place if there is to be harmony and peace in creation. At the end of His sanctuary ministry, when the atonement is completed, the way is cleared for Christ to overthrow completely the system of lawlessness.

**SEARCH AND LEARN: What is the significance of the way the rule of Christ is described in the Messianic prophecies listed below?**

Isa. 9:6, 7 \_\_\_\_\_

Micah 5:2 \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 49:10 \_\_\_\_\_

## Part 4 — The Wedding

“I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Rev. 19:6-8).

When the enemies of God are destroyed and his righteous rule established, there will be ample occasion for rejoicing. The marriage of the Lamb and the wedding reception signal the end of sin’s long reign.

Wedding customs of the ancient East were quite different from those in other parts of the world. There was the *betrothal*, in some ways a marriage contract, much more serious than engagements in Western custom. The *wedding dowry* was a part of the contract. The bride was expected to go through a time of personal preparation before the actual ceremony. It should be observed that a great deal of emphasis was placed on premarital preparatory activities. The marriage itself was not an elaborate ceremony. It consisted of some public recognition which the bridegroom gave to the bride, such as throwing his coat over her as the procession moved toward the place of the feast. The supper was the big event. It lasted for days. The father of the groom usually took this occasion to confer some special gift on his son. The greater the dignity and authority of the father, the greater the gift expected of him.

**In what practical way do these ancient wedding customs apply to the work of redemption? Matt. 22:1-13.**

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The king in the parable represents God the Father. His Son is Jesus Christ. When a king raised his son to a position of co-ruler, it was thought of as marrying him to his subjects. In the parable God indicates His purpose to unite all things in Christ. Notice there were three calls made to the marriage supper. The first of these appeals represents the preaching of the twelve disciples and the Seventy to the chosen people. The second call was extended after the crucifixion by the apostles who were told to begin at Jerusalem. After Stephen was stoned and the chosen people finally rejected Christ’s lordship, the third call was given to the Gentile world. It should be observed, however, that the guests were inspected or reviewed (the investigative judgment) before being admitted to the banquet hall.

**Why is the attire of those who attend the feast so important? Rev. 19:8.**

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## Part 5 — The Register

**“The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.”**

**“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:24, 27).**

The Bible speaks of the number of the saved, those who make up the register. The book of life, also referred to as the Lamb’s book of life, contains the names of the saved of all ages. Christ’s work of mediation brings the family of God together under one roof. They are the redeemed, or the bought ones, the ones for whom Christ prayed in His high-priestly prayer: “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world” (John 17:24).

**How is the total vindication of the saints expressed in the book of Revelation? Rev. 22:14.**

Some versions render the text, “Blessed are those who wash their robes.” (See RSV, NEB, NASB.) Whatever the version used, the result is the same—an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. So complete is their salvation and vindication that they have a right to the tree of life. They are not slaves, but citizens of the New Jerusalem. The principles upon which Christ’s kingdom is built have become the warp and the woof of their characters. Heaven is their element, as the ocean is natural habitat for fish, and birds are at home in the air. The Puritan preacher John Brown once said, “The problem is not so much to get us into heaven, as to get heaven into our hearts.” From the sanctuary Christ actually imparts His righteousness to the believer. His righteousness not only covers us but is written on the tables of our hearts. True believers become partakers of the divine nature and are destined to develop characters that reproduce the character of Christ.

**How does the fate of those not “registered” compare with that of those who are? Rev. 20:11-15.**

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The True and Faithful Witness makes this promise concerning the overcomer: “I will not blot out his name out of the book of life” (Rev. 3:5). The converse also is true; those who turn back to a life of sin, who refuse to confess the Lord before their fellow human beings, are blotted out of the book of life. Unconfessed sin cancels the name out of the register. Both a person’s sins and that person’s name cannot remain on the books at the end. Either the sin will be blotted out or the name will.

## Part 6 — Focus and Application

**“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).**

Throughout history the sea has been a symbol of separation. There are terrors in the sea, mysterious forces which humans do not understand. Even veteran sailors are awed by its waves and currents. In order to be complete, Christ’s mediatorial work must include the conquest of every fear-inducing element. Death must be destroyed. Violence and destruction must be eliminated. In the new earth there must be nothing to hurt or annoy. Everything that would vex and disturb must itself be destroyed. Sin and righteousness do not coexist throughout eternity. The Bible teaches the total annihilation of evil and the creation of a totally new world.

**How does the fact that no temple is seen in the New Jerusalem relate to Jesus’ mediatorial ministry? Rev. 21:22, 23.**

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The temple was thought of as a dwelling place, His residence. In the book of Revelation the temple is also the place where Christ carries forward His work of mediation. From the inception of sin there has had to be a Mediator. Someone has had to stand in the gap, to speak to God on behalf of humanity, and to communicate God’s will to human beings. At the end of the millennium the Holy City comes down to earth. This calls for a reorientation of the universe, making earth the center of creation. The plan laid before the foundation of the world will then be fulfilled in every detail. Time will have been swallowed up in eternity. There will be no need for a Mediator: “The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev. 21:3). His object from the beginning was to dwell with every intelligent being from highest seraph to lowliest human. This will be accomplished when the ultimate destruction of all sin and rebellion has taken place. Redeemed humanity will look on His face and be able to see His glory, unmediated. Communication between God and all His creatures once more will be open and direct. No distance, spatial or spiritual, will separate the Father and His children. The prophet Zephaniah saw it: “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (Zeph. 3:17).

Never again will there need to be a Mediator. There will be no more curse, no more war, no rebellion!

**APPLICATION:** What barrier in relationship, which, by the grace of Christ, will be removed in the new earth society, will be most significant to you? Why?



# Lesson for First Quarter, 1985

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the first quarter of 1985 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of this series is "How Christ Meets Human Needs."

## **First Lesson:** THE TIME HAS COME

MEMORY TEXT: Mark 1:15.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY; Mark 1:1-34.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son and Servant of God, brought the good news to sinners and did so with authority and power.

- I. Wilderness Voice (Mark 1:1-11).
- II. Temptation (Mark 1:12, 13).
- III. Early Ministry (Mark 1:14-34).

## **Second Lesson:** CONTROVERSY AND CALLING

MEMORY TEXT: Mark 2:17.

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Mark 1:35 to 3:19.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Belief in and practice of truth through Jesus Christ bring healing of body and soul—but they also bring controversy and persecution.

- I. First Missionary Journey (Mark 1:35-45).
- II. Ministry in and Near Capernaum (Mark 2:1 to 3:19).

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