

LESSON 9



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MAY 27 2023

making rooms for God

Scripture Story: Exodus 25–40; Leviticus 4; 16.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 30.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

Every time humanity stumbled in their faithfulness, God initiated reconciliation and provided a clear and effective way for recovery. God’s plan to restore the fallen human race is the central subject of the tabernacle the Israelites carried with them on their journey to the Promised Land. It is clear in Scripture that God’s greatest desire is to “dwell with us.” Given the unbelief and the deliberate disobedience of the Israelites, the tabernacle had to be constructed to house the presence of God.

The building of such a dwelling place would take time, resources, and great care, and would ultimately mirror a sanctuary that existed in heaven (Hebrews 9:23, 24). Every detail of the tabernacle was to be constructed with precision because every aspect of the structure was filled with meaning. This is why 15 chapters in the book of Exodus are devoted to the details of erecting a tabernacle. It is possible that when studying about the sanctuary there is so much information that the story of God’s heart to save His people can sometimes get lost.

This lesson introduces the story of the sanctuary, focusing on its ultimate purpose and how God’s people responded to the opportunity to build it. The content of this week’s study focuses on the overarching theme of God’s amazing initiative of grace in the form of the tabernacle. The central passage for this study begins with the building process and ends with a fast-forward to the point where God moves into His dwelling place. The outer court, the altar of burnt offering, the laver,

the holy place, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense speak to God’s mindful plan to make all things new. The curtain that separates the holy place from the Most Holy Place stands between our sinfulness and God’s holiness with the awful reminder that we need a mediator to make things right with God. The very presence of God rested above the ark of the covenant and assumed His rightful place next to the tents of humankind. *Patriarchs and Prophets* unpacks the building process as well as conveying what each part symbolizes.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the purpose and meaning of the tabernacle. (*Know*)
- Experience a deep appreciation for God’s initiative to deal with sin and to live with people. (*Feel*)
- Endeavor to develop a personal understanding of and experience with God’s plan of salvation. (*Respond*)

III. EXPLORE

Christ’s Ministry in the Heavenly Sanctuary, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 24

“There is a sanctuary in heaven, the true tabernacle that the Lord set up and not humans. In it Christ ministers on our behalf, making available to believers the benefits of His atoning sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. At His ascension, He was inaugurated as our great High Priest and, began His intercessory ministry, which was typified by the work of the high

priest in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary. In 1844, at the end of the prophetic period of 2300 days, He entered the second and last phase of His atoning ministry, which was typified by the work of the high priest in the most holy place of the earthly sanctuary. It is a work of investigative judgment, which is part of the ultimate disposition of all sin, typified by the cleansing of the ancient Hebrew sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. In that typical service the sanctuary was cleansed with the blood of animal sacrifices, but the heavenly things are purified with the perfect sacrifice of the blood of Jesus. The investigative judgment reveals to heavenly intelligences who among the dead are asleep in Christ and therefore, in Him, are deemed worthy to have part in the first resurrection. It also makes manifest who among the living are abiding in Christ, keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, and in Him, therefore, are ready for translation into His everlasting kingdom. This judgment vindicates the justice of God in saving those who believe in Jesus. It declares that those who have remained loyal to God shall receive the kingdom. The completion of this ministry of Christ will mark the close of human probation before the Second Advent” (Lev. 16; Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6; Dan. 7:9-27; 8:13, 14; 9:24-27; Heb. 1:3; 2:16, 17; 4:14-16; 8:1-5; 9:11-28; 10:19-22; Rev. 8:3-5; 11:19; 14:6, 7; 20:12; 14:12; 22:11, 12).

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

When the sun goes down in many neighborhoods, there are automatic sensors to turn the streetlights on. It is possible to not even notice when they turn on or off—they are always there. While visiting a retirement home one evening with a group of young people, I met Damien. Damien would sit by a window in the lobby every evening at dusk, without fail. He would take his position in full view of an ordinary street that had no real beauty or points of interest—except a streetlight. He looked out the window and pointed, “Look, it’s

almost time.” Sure enough, a few seconds later the streetlight came on automatically. He smiled fondly at the technological wonder and mused about his fascination with the streetlight and how it reminded him of the way he grew up.

Damien went to school during the day and worked in a sawmill in the afternoon. After work, Damien would make his way home along the familiar country roads as the sun went down and the sky slowly began to darken. His house was located beyond a small gatehouse occupied by his aunt and uncle, who would read and talk by the light of the fireplace. The light from the fireplace signaled that they were home and he was welcome. The light beaming from the window was enough to enable Damien to see the path to their door and to make his way home afterward. After visiting, he would leave the warmth of the gatehouse and make his final trek home.

The light was always there. They were always home. He was always welcome.

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

In the same way a lamp on a stand or a fire in the fireplace lights our way and lets us know that someone is home, the tabernacle was a clear, vivid indication that God was with His people. The many visual reminders were hard to miss—from pillars of fire and clouds that would house the presence of God to the Shekinah glory that filled the Most Holy Place. The story of the construction of the sanctuary is introduced in this week’s lesson. As you study the selected passages and work through the study questions, keep in mind God’s plan to be there for His people in their time of need.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.

- What are some of the key words and phrases in this passage?
- What is the ultimate purpose for building the sanctuary?
- Why do you think God instructed individuals to give to the building of the sanctuary as their heart prompted them to give? (See Exodus

25:2.) What was the response of the Israelites? (See Exodus 35:29 and 36:6, 7.)

- Why do you think God was so specific with the instructions for building the sanctuary?
- As you read through the beginning and the end of the building of the sanctuary, what part of this passage caught your attention? Why?
- Describe how you think the Israelites must have felt when the tabernacle was finished?
- Fifteen chapters in Exodus are devoted to the tabernacle and the services performed in it. Scan these chapters and see if you can identify any recurring themes that seem to be emphasized.
- If you were to choose one verse that captures the essence of the tabernacle, which would you choose and why?

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The word “tabernacle” means a place of meeting or a dwelling place. While it is possible to get lost in all the elements of the sanctuary, such as the different apartments, furniture, materials, and even the many different types of rituals that occurred within the confines of the sanctuary, it is important to not miss the purpose of the tabernacle. It is pointing to, and an expression of, Christ’s work on behalf of humanity. Even more, all its aspects are embodied in the person



Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Creating Metaphors

A metaphor is a symbol or a figure of speech used to make a comparison. Often a metaphor will cause people to think about how two ideas are connected—what their commonalities are that might make them similar. For example: “He was drowning in money” or “Life is like a bowl of cherries.” Students can compare their experiences in life to types of weather or their personalities to styles of music. Metaphors effectively stretch the thinking process out of the normal pathways and into a more creative framework.

In this lesson, discuss some of the symbolic metaphors for Jesus that are found in the sanctuary.

of Christ. Notice:

John 1:14 declares that “the Word became flesh and *dwelt among us*” (NKJV). The very name *Christ* is given in Matthew 1:23 is Immanuel, which means “God with us.” Jesus continued this theme in the Gospel of Matthew when He says, “For where two or three gather in my name, there am *I with them*” (Matthew 18:20, NIV). When Jesus commands the disciples with the gospel commission, He urges them on, saying, “Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20, NIV). And finally, the

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson. Invite students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Key Text**

Invite the students to share the Key Text with the class if they have committed it to memory.

- **Flashlight**

Read the Flashlight statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week’s story found in the book Patriarchs and Prophets. Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from Out of the Story.

- **Punch Lines**

Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week’s story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.

- **Further Insight**

Ask them how the quote in Further Insight conveys the point of the story in this lesson.

last book of the Bible conveys the same theme: “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’ ” (Revelation 21:3, NIV). Again, the theme of the sanctuary message is about people being with God, a condition that was severed by sin’s effects.

A Better Perspective When Your World Is Falling Apart

I have often wondered, “How does the message of God’s sanctuary really help young people when they are down and discouraged or disillusioned about life?” Consider what Asaph said in Psalm 73:

In verse 1 Asaph claims, “Surely God is good to Israel” (NIV). It almost sounds as if Asaph is saying what should be said when you consider what comes next. The next 15 verses contain a scathing, even scary, description of his frustration with the way evil people prosper and good people get burned. Asaph says, “My feet . . . almost slipped” (verse 2, NIV). But when Asaph gathers all of his frustrations about what God is doing and what He is not doing, he finally gets some perspective. Where does he get it from? Verses 16, 17 say: “When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply *till I entered the sanctuary of God*; then I understood their final destiny” (NIV).

An understanding of the work of the sanctuary is relevant to all people, because in it we see God’s plan to deal with sin and make all things new.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Chapter 30 of *Patriarchs and Prophets* contains brief descriptions of the different elements of the sanctuary service. Divide the students into pairs and give them a section of the sanctuary descriptions to read about. There are approximately one to three paragraphs on each major aspect of the sanctuary. Instruct the groups to draw a picture of what is happening in their section of the sanctuary. One group might have the outer court and the altar and the laver. Challenge the students to be ready to describe what each part represents and how it points to Christ as you display their artwork to the rest of the class. They may not understand all of the symbolism, so be ready to say, “This tabernacle is going to show up several times in the coming weeks, and we will get to know it better as we move through the Old Testament.”

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The beauty and the complexity of the sanctuary system cause some people to dive into the details and drive some away. Often, the problem is that they don’t see the meaning and the purpose of building the sanctuary. It was necessary. The blatant sins of Israel caused a deep wall of separation between God and His people. But God wanted desperately to commune with them. So God devised a way for them to dwell together and to communicate His great plan of salvation to them. It was genius the way God sought to tie the most important work for their salvation to everyday life so they wouldn’t forget. Maybe that is what Christians today should find a way to do: Integrate the work of Calvary into every aspect of their life. It is necessary, and it is so easy to forget.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 30.



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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Exodus 25–40; Leviticus 4; 16.

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making rooms for God



Photo by Alden Ho

flashlight

“With deep emotion the people beheld the token that the work of their hands was accepted. There were no loud demonstrations of rejoicing. A solemn awe rested upon all. But the gladness of their hearts welled up in tears of joy, and they murmured low, earnest words of gratitude that God had condescended to abide with them” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 350).

keytext

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”

(Exodus 25:8, 9, NIV)

what do you think?

The following is a list of truths about the plan of salvation that are taught by the ministry of the sanctuary. Rank them according to which speak to you personally (1 being the most, 5 being the least).

- ___ The cost of sin required the blood of an innocent sacrifice.
- ___ The sanctuary is meaningful because it shows how God made a way for us to dwell with Him.
- ___ Every Old Testament sacrifice pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
- ___ In the same way that the priest was a mediator for Israel, Christ is our mediator with God.
- ___ While the daily sacrifice offers forgiveness, the judgment (day of atonement) covers us and pronounces us “not guilty.”
- ___ The earthly sanctuary was a model of a heavenly sanctuary.

did you know?

The word “temple” is used 15 times in the book of Revelation. The Old Testament sanctuary was patterned after a heavenly sanctuary, which seems to be a theme in the last book of the Bible. In fact, the original purpose of the sanctuary was so God could “dwell” with

His people. God’s ultimate purpose for the sanctuary emerges as the crowning event of Scripture. “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’ ” (Revelation 21:3, NIV). Maybe there is more to the sanctuary than just a bunch of symbols to remember!

Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills. . . . Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you. . . . They are to make them just as I commanded you.’ ”

INTO THE STORY

The completion of building the sanctuary

“Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.”

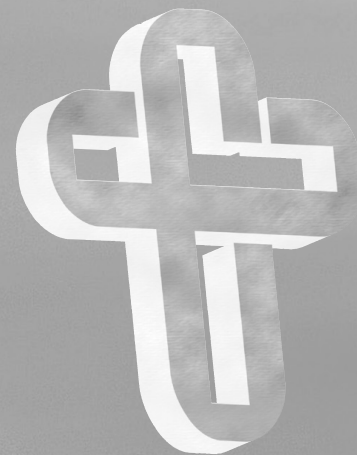
(Exodus 25:1-9; 31:1-3, 6, 11; 40:33-38, NIV)

The beginning of building the sanctuary

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.’ ”

The talent for building the sanctuary

“Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘See, I have chosen



OUT OF THE STORY

What are some of the key words and phrases in this passage?

What was the ultimate purpose for building the sanctuary?

Why do you think God instructed individuals to give to the building of the sanctuary as their heart prompted them to give? (See Exodus 25:2.) What was the response of the Israelites? (See Exodus 35:29 and 36:6, 7.)

Why do you think God was so specific with the instructions for building the sanctuary?

Describe how you think the Israelites must have felt when the tabernacle was finished.

Fifteen chapters in Exodus are devoted to the tabernacle and the services to be performed in it. Scan these chapters and see if you can identify any recurring themes that seem to be emphasized.

If you were to choose one verse that captures the essence of the tabernacle, which would you choose and why?

punch lines

“Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God” (Exodus 29:45, NIV).

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God’ ” (Revelation 21:3, NIV).

“Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the LORD: ‘The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death’ ” (Psalm 102:18-20, NIV).

“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split” (Matthew 27:50, 51, NIV).

“Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being” (Hebrews 8:1, 2, NIV).

(See also: John 1:1-5, 14.)

further insight

“Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world (Manuscript 56, 1899).”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible*

Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1113.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Matthew 1:23 and John 1:1-5, 14.

Rank the statements of truth listed in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson and explain your number one ranking and your number five ranking. What are some other truths or teachings about the sanctuary that are not in the list? Compare the passages from today's reading with God's purpose for making a sanctuary. In what way and to what degree is the sanctuary connected to the person of Christ?

Sunday

Read Exodus 25-40.

What information do you find between the beginning and the end of making the tabernacle. Read *Into the Story* and answer the *Out of the Story* questions. Why do you think the significance of the sanctuary story and its message is held by so few Christian denominations?

Monday

Read John 10:10.

Read the *Key Text* in Exodus 25:8, 9 several times and take note of the key ideas that grow out of this passage. How do you respond to the notion that God desperately wants to commune with people who barely even know that He exists? Is this theme evident elsewhere in Scripture? Where? What does the image of a heavenly sanctuary look like in your mind? How is it similar to or the same as the earthly sanctuary and how might it be different?

Tuesday

Read Exodus 29:45.

The *Flashlight* quotation for this week is a beautiful description of the state of the heart of Israel when God moved into the sanctuary they had worked for months to build. Do you know someone who feels as keenly the presence of God with a heart of gratitude? How do they express their joy in their relationship with God?

Wednesday

In the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson is a list of a few verses that convey different aspects of God's plan of salvation as seen in the sanctuary service. If you had to pick one of the verses given, which one best captures the work of salvation from your perspective? What are some elements all of these verses have in common? If you had to give a Bible study to someone else on the meaning and purpose of the tabernacle, where would you begin and what would you focus on? Why?

Thursday

Read Romans 12:1.

Chapter 30 in *Patriarchs and Prophets* walks the reader through the various parts of the tabernacle service in rich and clear detail. Read this chapter and highlight the parts of the chapter that bring you a new understanding of the sanctuary. Take a moment to reflect on how important this theme is to understanding the gospel of grace. Consider the need to have bloodshed, a sacrifice, a mediator, cleansing, and, ultimately, judgment. How are all these ideas tied to Christ? How do they impact your relationship with Christ right now?

Friday

Read 1 Timothy 2:1-6.

God has always had a plan for our redemption. When sin entered the landscape of human life, God had already made provision for the needs of those on earth. The sanctuary in the desert was patterned after God's system in heaven. It was not an afterthought or a quick-fix bandage for our situation. God had a plan to redeem and restore humanity that is the focus of the work that goes on in heaven.

Today's reading sums up the whole plan. Take some time today to reflect on the work of the tabernacle and what it says about the One to whom it was pointing. The sanctuary simply makes no sense without Jesus, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, NIV).

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 30.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URLhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.