CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 19 2026

Scripture Story: Hebrews 8:1-6; Hebrews 9:11-15, 18-25.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire*), chapters 23, 24.

cleaning up



Photo by Alden Ho

flashlight

"In the typical service, when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, all Israel were required to gather about the sanctuary and in the most solemn manner humble their souls before God, that they might receive the pardon of their sins and not be cut off from the congregation. How much more essential in this antitypical Day of Atonement that we understand the work of our High Priest and know what duties are required of us" (*The Great Controversy,* pp. 430, 431).

keytext

"And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.'"

(Daniel 8:14, NKJV)

what do you think?

Consider the following scenario carefully before responding. Pretend that you were convicted of a very serious crime. Your guilty verdict means that you are subject to the death penalty, life imprisonment without parole, or some other remedy open to the judge's discretion. On the day of sentencing, the judge asks your lawyer and the prosecutor to join him in his chambers for a discussion regarding the verdict.

Which of the following would you do while awaiting the sentencing for your crime? *Place a checkmark* below by the statement that best describes what you would do.

_____ Cry hysterically for your mother.
_____ Pray earnestly for God to have mercy on you and set you free.
_____ Sit calmly and wait for your lawyer to return and give you an update.
_____ Take a nap.
_____ Ask God to forgive you.

did you know?

In the ancient Jewish sacrificial system, sins were washed away by the shedding of blood. A sinner would bring an animal to the Temple, confess his or her sin on the head of the animal, the animal would then be killed, and its blood taken by the priest and sprinkled on the veil separating the holy place from the Most Holy Place. In doing this, the sinner's sin would be transferred to the innocent animal, and then to the sanctuary itself. Jesus was the animal—lamb—slain for our sins.

Did you also know that in some cases sins were transferred to the priest himself? God commanded that the priests eat some of the sacrificial animals so that they would symbolically "bear the guilt of the congregation" (Leviticus 10:17, NKJV).

INTO THE STORY

"What I mean is that we have a high priest who sits at the right side of God's great throne in heaven. He also serves as the priest in the most holy place inside the real tent there in heaven. This tent of worship was set up by the Lord, not by humans. Since all priests must offer gifts and sacrifices, Christ also needed to have something to offer. If he were here on earth, he would not be a priest at all, because here the Law appoints other priests to offer sacrifices. But the tent where they serve is just a copy and a shadow of the real one in heaven. Before Moses made the tent, he was told, 'Be sure to make it exactly like the pattern you were shown on the mountain!' Now Christ has been appointed to serve as a priest in a much better way, and he has given us much assurance of a better agreement."

"Christ came as the high priest of the good things that are now here. He also went into a much better tent that wasn't made by humans and that doesn't belong to this world. Then Christ went once for all into the most holy place and freed us from sin forever. He did this by offering his own blood instead of the blood of goats and bulls. According to the Law of Moses, those people who become unclean are not fit to worship God. Yet they will be considered clean, if they are sprinkled with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a sacrificed calf. But Christ was sinless, and he offered himself as an eternal and spiritual sacrifice to God. That's why his blood is much more powerful and makes our consciences clear. Now we can serve the living God and no longer do things that lead to death. Christ died to rescue those who had sinned and broken the old agreement. Now he brings his chosen ones a new agreement with its guarantee of God's eternal blessings!"

"Blood was also used to put the first agreement into effect. Moses told the people all that the Law said they must do. Then he used red wool and a hyssop plant to sprinkle the people and the book of the Law with the blood of bulls and goats and with water. He told the people, 'With this blood God makes his agreement with you.' Moses also sprinkled blood on the tent and on everything else that was used in worship. The Law says that almost everything must be sprinkled with blood, and no sins can be forgiven unless blood is offered.

"These things are only copies of what is in heaven, and so they had to be made holy by these ceremonies. But the real things in heaven must be made holy by something better. This is why Christ did not go into a tent that had been made by humans and was only a copy of the real one. Instead, he went into heaven and is now there with God to help us. Christ did

not have to offer himself many times. He wasn't like a high priest who goes into the most holy place each year to offer the blood of an animal."

(Hebrews 8:1-6; Hebrews 9:11-15, 18-25, CEV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Mark the parts of this Bible passage that are new to you.

When you think of Jesus, do you ever picture Him as a High Priest, decked out in all the priestly garments? Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____

Place a checkmark by those verses where you see the love of Jesus.

The author of Hebrews in chapters 8 and 9 tries to make the connection between the sanctuary service given to Moses and the Israelites and the sanctuary in heaven. Do you see that connection? *Underline* the verses where you see the author comparing the two.

According to the Scripture story, why is blood important to our salvation?

_____
_____
_____

What does it mean to be free from sin?

_____
_____
_____

Write two lessons that this week's passage has taught you.
Lesson 1: _____
_____
_____
Lesson 2: _____
_____
_____

punch lines

"Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?" **(Psalm 77:13, NKJV).**

"But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" **(Hebrews 7:24, 25, NKJV).**

"This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you" **(Leviticus 16:29, NKJV).**

"Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" **(Romans 8:34, NKJV).**

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" **(Colossians 2:9, 10, NKJV).**

further insight

"It is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf."—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy,* p. 430

Sabbath

Read Matthew 12:36, 37; John 5:24.

Did you complete the *What Do You Think?* activity? If not, go back and do so now.

The thought of facing a life sentence or, God forbid, the death penalty, has reduced many people to utter depression. Even the most hardened criminals break down on death row.

What do the verses in Matthew mean to you? Do they scare you? If so, explain why. (Remember, you have Notes pages in the back of your study guide to write longer answers.)

Does the verse in John give you hope? Explain your answer.

What powerful message does the verse in Romans 8:1 give you?

Sunday

Read Isaiah 53:6.

Read the *Into the Story* section of this week's lesson, and respond to the *Out of the Story* questions. You probably noticed that the sacrificial system was a messy process—animals were being killed, blood spilled and sprinkled. Why do you think God instituted such a system to cleanse people of sin?

If you had a pet that you loved dearly and something you did caused that pet to die, how would you feel?

Jesus died for our sins, and every time we sin, His blood covers us. That is what He is doing in heaven for us right now.

Monday

Read Leviticus 16:9.

Did you check out this week's *Key Text*? Think about what you learned about the earthly sanctuary yesterday. Blood was sprinkled on the inside of the sanctuary in a symbolic gesture transferring the person's sin to the actual sanctuary itself. Can you imagine the sounds that were heard around the Temple? Can you picture the sight of priests with blood spots on their clothing?

Once a year the high priest would petition God on behalf of the nation to clear all sins away from the sanctuary. From our reading today, we can now understand what Daniel is talking about in this week's *Key Text.* But there's one catch to Daniel's prophecy. The Temple that Daniel wrote about was lying in ruins at the time, so his prophecy pointed forward to a time when God would cleanse another. Based on this week's Scripture story, where is this sanctuary located?

This work of cleansing is currently going on. What should we be doing while Jesus is revealing to heavenly intelligences those deemed worthy through Christ to be saved?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 22:1-14.

This week's *Flashlight* quotation is a very serious one. Read it carefully. Do you understand what it is saying?

Why was the king upset with the guest who came dressed in the wrong clothes?

The king had provided proper attire for the guests, but this guy chose to wear what he wanted to wear. When you go before a king, you don't always get to do what you want to do.

During the Day of Atonement, the people of God had to be sure that they were "dressed" to meet their king; they had to have on the wedding garment of righteousness provided by God. They couldn't just wear whatever they wanted to wear. Are you ready for your big moment? What will you wear?

Wednesday

Read Psalm 77:13.

Which of the *Punch Lines* catches your attention? Take a closer look at Psalm 77:13. What "way" do you think King David is talking about? What "way" do we learn about when we look at God's sanctuary?

To better understand King David's statement, read Psalm 77:7-11. King David wondered if God would cast him off forever. The answer? No. How did he know that? He looked at what happened in the sanctuary service. In that service, God provided a way to remove sin, to get right with Him again, to be freed of guilt. This act of love touched David's heart, and it should yours too.

Thursday

Read John 15.

Knowing all the details about the sanctuary and what Jesus is doing on our behalf in heaven is good to know. But knowing Jesus is more important than simply knowing His roles.

Read John 15 and then ask yourself: How would my life be different if Jesus and I were really, really close?

Friday

Read Matthew 22:37-40.

Do you fear the final judgment? Why not pray and ask God to show you how to make your life right with Him now.

In two sentences, describe briefly how you would look, feel, and live if you did not fear God's final judgment.

this week's reading*

The Great Controversy (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 23, 24.

**Love Under Fire* is a special adaptation of *The Great Controversy*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.