

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 19 2026

cleaning up

Scripture Story: Hebrews 8:1-6; Hebrews 9:11-15, 18-25.
Commentary: *The Great Controversy* (or *Love Under Fire),* chapters 23, 24.
Key Text: Daniel 8:14.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

It probably bears mentioning that this week's lesson encompasses one of the signature truths of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. More than that, it represents the very heart of the gospel—the good news of salvation—because it explains how God through Jesus extends mercy to fallen humanity while satisfying the demands of justice. The heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly was a type, shows us God's "way" of saving humanity (Psalm 77:13).

Understanding the workings and significance of the ancient Jewish sanctuary service is challenging for adults, let alone teenagers. It was a misunderstanding of the sanctuary service that led the early Adventists to believe that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel 8:14 would happen at the second coming of Jesus. What in fact occurred, as you'll study this week, was something different. As Leviticus 16 explains, on the ancient Day of Atonement, the high priest would cleanse the sanctuary of all the sin which had been transferred to the sanctuary—and to himself—through the sprinkling of blood on the veil separating the holy place from the Most Holy Place. Daniel's 2300-day prophecy pointed to this event in the heavenly sanctuary.

While the intricacies of this truth may be challenging for your teens to grasp, there is much here that they can understand. For instance, you might choose to emphasize that this cleansing of the sanctuary from sin is a work of judgment. Before Jesus cleanses the sanctuary and removes the sins of His people once and for all, He will examine our records and share with the universe who through repentance and faith in Christ is entitled to enter His eternal kingdom. You may also choose to focus on Jesus' indispensable sacrifice of blood, the "coin of the realm" as it were, which washes away all sin.

The truth of Christ's ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is fertile spiritual ground for young Christians living in and through the closing scenes of earth's history.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Know that the current work of Jesus in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary is the final work to be performed before Christ returns. *(Know)*
- Understand their need to search their hearts and ask God to show them what needs to be made right with Him. *(Feel)*
- Sense their responsibility to share the good news of salvation, and warn the world of God's impending judgment. *(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" (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.*

This fictional scenario is one that people around the world face on a daily basis. In the hour of judgment, people react differently. If the rulings of earthly judges can cause us to fear, how much more should we be concerned about the Great Judge of all, whose decisions are truly final. This activity is meant to make the point that while Christ is examining the records of those who profess to love Him, His followers should be doing a work of deep introspection, searching their hearts and seeking peace with God—not simply to avoid eternal punishment, but because they love God.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Dwight L. Moody told of the young man who did not want to serve in Napoleon Bonaparte's army. When he was drafted, a friend volunteered to go in his place. The substitution was made, and some time later the surrogate was killed in battle. The same young man was, through a clerical error, drafted again. "'You can't take me,' he told the startled officers. 'I'm dead. I died on the battlefield.'

"The officers argued that they could see him standing right in front of them, but he insisted they look on the roll to find the record of his death. Sure enough, there on the roll was the man's name, with another name written beside it.

"The case finally went to the emperor himself. After examining the evidence, Napoleon said, 'Through a surrogate, this man has not only fought, but has died in his country's service. No man can die more than once, therefore the law has no claim on him.'

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

"Two thousand years ago, Jesus went to a cross to bear the penalty that rightly belonged to us. He died in our place. And through Him, our names are written in the book, beside His."

Many people today take the sacrifice of Jesus for granted. God's awesome act of grace—shedding the precious blood of His Son for the remission of sins—is not something that God did so that we humans could keep on sinning. Christ's sacrifice is supposed to lead us to repentance, restoration, and to love God.

Just as the ancient Jews who rejected Jesus and crucified Him were shut out of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, just as they lost their unique status as God's chosen people, men and women today face a similar fate. Jesus' current ministry in the Most Holy Place is a careful examination of the record of every human being. This reality should make us think carefully about the current condition of our hearts.

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.*

- The apostle Paul, believed to be the writer of Hebrews, goes to great lengths to show that the earthly sanctuary was a "copy" or "type" of the heavenly sanctuary. Here we see an essential truth, which is: God planned for the salvation of humanity. Make the point that humanity's salvation was no afterthought. The plans for what happened on earth were first set in motion in heaven.
- Paul notes that Jesus' sacrifice supersedes that of innocent animals, because Jesus was sinless. Not only does He contribute His innocent blood for the remission of sins; He also gives us His spotless life as a substitute for our sinfulness and then lives that life out in us through the Holy Spirit. It is this aspect of Christ's ministry that makes the new covenant better than the old.
- What point about sin was the earthly sacrificial system designed to make in the mind of the sinner? Did it work? (It is serious; it is costly; it is messy.)
- Explore with your students what it means to maintain a healthy hatred for sin, and what it means to nourish one's love for God and the sacrifice Christ made for us.

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Leviticus 16; Daniel 7 and 8; Hebrews 9:22; Exodus 25; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; Malachi 3:1-5.

Sharing Context and Background

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

1. Why the book of Hebrews. The book of Hebrews was written to clarify the Old Testament symbols that illustrated the plan of salvation and the reality of Christ's ministry on behalf of sinners since the cross. In the early apostolic church, devout Jews wondered whether they should continue observing the ceremonial laws. A group of believers, led by the apostle Paul, argued that the ceremonial laws had met their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Sometime around A.D. 49, a council met in Jerusalem to settle the issue. The finding of the council was that they did not need to be, but many Jews refused to give up the ceremonial laws with their requirements for sacrifice, etc. The apostle Paul is believed to have written the book of Hebrews to clarify Jesus' priestly ministry in heaven for us.

2. Sanctuaries. When God gave Moses the command to make a sanctuary that He might dwell among His people (Exodus 25:8), Moses complied and a traveling structure was built. This sanctuary was replaced by another sanctuary once the children of Israel settled in Canaan. It was furnished like the first sanctuary and it had the same dimensions. During the time of Daniel it lay in ruins because of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem, but it was not completely destroyed until the Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70. This was the only earthly sanctuary spoken of in the Bible and it represented the first covenant God made with His people.

What was that covenant? You can find it in Exodus 19:5-8. Israel broke its first covenant (Psalm 78:10, 11) through disobedience to God's laws and forgetting God's goodness. So God instituted a new, better covenant, one that would transform them from within by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-28). This new covenant also has a sanctuary, but, as Paul notes in Hebrews 7–9, its sanctuary is in heaven where Jesus is now mediating on our behalf.

3. Duplication says it all. The earthly sanctuary was a duplicate of the heavenly in every way. One of the most powerful teachable portions of this lesson surrounds the furniture present in the Most Holy Place of both the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries. Consider, for instance, that God's immutable law, the Ten Commandments, were present both in the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary and in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly sanctuary. This ought to tell us how sacred God's law is. It is not only the rule by which we humans are being judged; it is the very backbone of heaven's system. It is so sacred that Jesus had to die to meet its demands (Romans 6:23). For this and other reasons we should obey God's precepts. They are sacred, even in an environment in which sin does not exist!

4. Revelation 14. The messages of the angels of Revelation directly tie in with the work of Christ during the current investigative judgment underway in heaven. While Christ is examining the record of men and women, boys and girls, a final warning is to be

Teaching From the Lesson

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite 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* The Great Controversy. *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.*

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Move Them Around

Respected educator and researcher Gary Anderson notes that "teenagers are discovering their (often awkward) bodies, so use movement by giving students an opportunity to move around during class."

This week's subject matter may offer an opportunity to get your students moving. If time permits, encourage your students to put together a way to share the three angels' messages with someone this week. They can work on their own or in groups.

given to the world. God's end-time followers are called to deliver three distinct messages: (1) Respect God and worship Him who made all things. Intrinsic to this message is the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. (2) Babylon, the world's corrupt system of sin, is fallen, broken, and dead. (3) Those who persist in following the world and religious systems that do not teach the truth of the Bible or live up to all its dictates will be marked for destruction.

These messages are to be delivered in love, and out of a love for God and a love for our fellow human beings as we see the hour of God's judgment approaching.

III. CLOSING

Activity

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

Give each student a 3" x 5" card and a pencil or pen. Ask them to discretely complete the following statement using at least two sentences:

I know that Jesus is currently examining the life record of every human being to reveal who through their dependence on Christ is worthy to be sealed. I want Jesus to know that . . .

_____

_____

_____

After the students have finished, allow them a moment of silent prayer to God, asking Jesus to forgive them of any known sin in their lives, and to reveal those that they do not see.

Close with a prayer dedicating your students to God and thank Him for saving each of them!

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Jesus is the central figure in the plan developed by God to save fallen human beings. Jesus volunteered to come and die for our sins, leaving the perfection of heaven. While on earth, He suffered all that we would ever suffer, and never committed a sin. He laid down His life willingly at the cross, paying the penalty for our sins, and was raised back to life breaking the power of death, hell, and the grave.

Given what Jesus has done for us, and the reality of the serious work currently under way in the Most Holy Place, what kind of people ought we to be? What message should we be sharing with the world? Now is the time to humble our souls, search our hearts, put away all sin, and share the good news of salvation—and warning—with a dying world.



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

LESSON 12

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

SEPTEMBER 19 2026

STUDENT LESSON

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.