

Longing *for* More



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *1 Cor. 10:1–11, Lev. 4:32–35, John 1:29, Heb. 4:1–11, Ps. 95:8–11.*

Memory Text: “Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did” (*1 Cor. 10:6, ESV*).

The Queens Museum of Art in New York, United States, houses the world's largest architectural model of a city, depicting all of the buildings of New York. On a scale of 1:1,200 (where 2.5 centimeters or 1 inch corresponds to 33 meters or 100 feet) it covers nearly 870 square meters (9,335 square feet). It was originally completed in 1964 by 100 craftsmen who had worked for more than three years to complete the project. It has been updated to the 1990s and does not reflect the 2021 cityscape. It is an amazingly intricate and detailed copy of the original.

In the end, though, it is still just that: a copy, a model, a representation of something grander, bigger, deeper, and much more intricate than the model itself.

That's how all models are, actually. They are not the original but function only as symbols of the originals. A model helps us grasp the essence of the original, but it can never replace it. Rather, it is there to help people better understand what the original is all about.

Scripture itself is full of miniature models of activities and institutions that all point to larger, heavenly realities. Hebrews 4 helps us discover one of these realities as it relates to the biblical question of rest.

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 11.

Baptized Into Moses

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1–11. What did Paul want to communicate to his readers in Corinth when he referred to “examples”?

The Greek term used in 1 Corinthians 10:6 (and also adapted in a similar form in 1 Corinthians 10:11), translated as “example” in most English translations, is *typos*. In English, the word *type* is based on this Greek noun. A type (or example) is never the original but some kind of symbol or representation of it. It is a model of something else.

Hebrews 8:5 offers a good example of this kind of relationship: “They [the priests of the Old Testament temple service] serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, ‘See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain’ ” (*ESV*).

This passage in Hebrews highlights the direct link between heavenly and earthly realities, and then it quotes Exodus 25:9, where God told Moses to build the wilderness sanctuary “according to . . . the pattern” that he had seen on the mountain. The point is that the earthly sanctuary, with all its rituals and procedures, were “examples,” symbols, and models of what is going on in heaven, with Jesus as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

With this in mind, we can better understand what Paul was talking about in 1 Corinthians 10. In these verses Paul revisits some of the key experiences of God’s people in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. “Our fathers” refers to their Jewish ancestors who left Egypt, were under the cloud, passed through the sea, and, thus, were all baptized into a new life of freedom from slavery.

Paul considers these important stations of the wilderness journey a type, or an example, of individual baptism. In the footsteps of Paul’s logic, the reference to “spiritual food” must refer to manna (*compare with Exod. 16:31–35*). Israel drank from the rock, which Paul identifies as Christ (*1 Cor. 10:4*). Think of Jesus, for example, as the “bread of life” (*John 6:48*) and as the “living water” (*John 4:10*), and this all makes perfect sense. Thus, what we see here is Paul’s use of Old Testament history as an example of revealing spiritual truths that can be applied to individual Christians today.

Think back on the experience of the Israelites in the Exodus. What spiritual lessons can we learn from their “examples,” both the good and the bad that they left us?

Ritual and Sacrifices

The Old Testament system of ritual and sacrifices, such as found in Leviticus, offers more examples of what we saw yesterday—Old Testament symbols pointing to New Testament truths. Though modern readers of the Bible often pass over these rituals, they do contain many important spiritual truths that can be of great value to those who study them.

Read the instructions for the sin offering for a regular Israelite in **Leviticus 4:32–35**. What can we learn from this ritual, even though we don't have a sanctuary or temple with an altar where we can offer sacrifices for our sins? Connect this ritual with **John 1:29** and **1 Peter 1:18–21**.

A ritual is an excellent communicator of important values and information, and it needs to be understood in its context. It usually requires a specific time, a particular location, and a predetermined sequence of actions to be efficacious. Indeed, when we read through the biblical injunctions in the Old Testament regarding sacrifice, it becomes clear that God gave very specific details about what could be sacrificed—and about when, where, and what ritual and procedure to follow.

Central to many of the rituals, of course, was blood and the spilling and the sprinkling of blood. This was not pretty, nor was it supposed to be, because it was dealing with the ugliest thing in the universe, and that is sin.

What exact role did the blood play, and why did it have to be put on the horns of the altar? While most of the rituals associated with the sanctuary appear in prescriptive forms (i.e., they give instructions on how to do it), they do not always include all the explanations. Perhaps that's because the people already understood what it all meant. After all, people in Israel understood the significance of blood (*Lev. 17:11*).

The example taken from Leviticus 4:32–35, however, contains an important explanation in Leviticus 4:35: "So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him" (*NKJV*). Thus, blood was key to the whole process of atonement, the means by which we sinners can be made right with a Holy God. What we see with these sacrifices, then, is a type, a model, of Christ's death and ministry in our behalf.

Think about how bad sin must really be that it took the sacrifice, the self-sacrifice, of one Member of the Godhead, Jesus, in order to atone for it. What should this teach us about why we must rely only on grace and never works? After all, what could we add to what Christ already has done for us?

The “Example” of Rest

Besides the examples we already have looked at, this idea of types and symbols can apply to the biblical concept of rest as well. To see this, we go to the New Testament book of Hebrews.

Read Hebrews 4:1–11. What is the remaining promise of entering His rest referring to? How does Israel’s experience during the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings offer additional insights into the idea of entering into God’s rest?

The theme of perseverance and faithfulness is very important here. Though talking about the seventh-day Sabbath, the main focus of these verses (and what came before; see Hebrews 3:7–19) is really a call for God’s people to be persevering in faith; that is, to remain faithful to the Lord and the gospel.

These passages remind the reader to take the lessons learned from God’s leading in the past seriously, “so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience” (*Heb. 4:11, ESV*). Pay attention, this is an opportunity! Israel did hear the gospel, the text continues, but the Word did not profit them. Instead of having their faith strengthened by trust and obedience, they chose rebellion (*compare with Heb. 3:7–15*), and thus, they never experienced the rest that God wanted for them.

Hebrews 4:3 points to the close relationship between faith and rest. We can enter into His rest only when we believe and trust the One who promised rest and who can deliver on this promise, and that is, of course, Jesus Christ.

Read Hebrews 4:3 again. What was the main problem with the people referred to? What lesson can we take from this for ourselves, we who have had the “gospel . . . preached to us as well as to them” (*Heb. 4:2, NKJV*)?

The early Christian community accepted God’s prior revelation (what we call the “Old Testament”) and believed that Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God, the Sacrifice for their sins. And by faith in the Sacrifice, they could experience salvation in Jesus and the rest that we are offered in Him.

How can an understanding of what it means to be saved by the blood of Jesus help us enter into the kind of rest that we can have in Jesus, knowing that we are saved by grace and not by works?

“Harden Not Your Hearts”

Read Hebrews 4:4–7 and Psalm 95:8–11. What warning is given there, both in Psalms and in Hebrews, and what should it say to us today?

Hebrews 4:4–7 quotes both the Creation account and Psalm 95:11 in the context of talking about the unfaithfulness of the Israelites and, hence, their failure to enter into the rest that God wanted for them.

Indeed, Psalm 95:8–11 connects Israel’s wilderness experience with God’s rest and includes the divine oath that faithless Israel would not enter into His rest, originally associated with the Promised Land.

Of course, Israel did enter the Promised Land. A new generation crossed the border and, with God’s help, took the strongholds of the land and settled there.

They did not, however, enter into God’s rest, the idea being that many did not experience the reality of salvation in Jesus because their lack of faith was manifested by flagrant disobedience. Even though rest was associated with the land, it included more than just where the people lived.

Hebrews 4:6 suggests that those who had heard the divine promise of true rest did not enter because of disobedience. What’s the link between disobedience and not entering God’s rest?

“Today” expresses urgency. “Today” means that there is no more time to diddle around. “Today” requires a response and decision now.

Paul grabs hold of the word *sēmeron*, “today,” and really emphasizes how important it is in the context of rest. Psalm 95:7, 8, meanwhile, is a warning and a plea to God’s people not to repeat the mistakes of their ancestors and fail to enter into the true rest that is found only in the salvation God offers us.

What should it mean to us, now, when we hear the words “Today, if you will hear His voice: ‘do not harden your hearts’ ” (NKJV)? What is so important about the word “today”? After all, Psalms used it thousands of years ago. Nevertheless, why should it still be just as important for our “today” as it was for those who heard it thousands of years ago?

Conquering a Heavenly City

The logical development of the key ideas in Hebrews 4 becomes particularly evident when reading Hebrews 4:8–11. Joshua did not give Israel rest. Consequently, since God is no liar, there must be another “rest” that remains for the people of God. This group is not made up exclusively of Jewish believers. It includes all those who have accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.

Read Galatians 3:26–29 and note the characteristics of God’s post-Cross covenant people. What does it mean that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female in the context in which Paul is writing?

At times, Hebrews 4 has been used to emphasize the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, while others have used it to challenge the validity of this Sabbath rest, in light of the fact that there is another (end-time) rest. Neither position reflects the biblical text well. Instead, the text suggests that the end-time focus on God’s special rest has been present since Creation and that the celebration of Sabbath rest offers a small, weekly taste of that end-time rest. Indeed, for the Jews the Sabbath has been understood to be a small precursor of the “*olam haba*” (“the world to come”).

The Sabbath-like rest that remains for the people of God, echoing God’s rest on the first Sabbath in earth’s history, means that we can cease from our own works and trust Him to fulfill His promise of salvation for us.

Contrary to arguments of some interpreters, the context does not support the suggestion that the Sabbath commandment had been fulfilled in the rest of salvation that Christ brought, making it unnecessary for Christians to obey it. The ultimate rest we are promised through what Christ has done for us does not replace the biblical seventh-day Sabbath; on the contrary, it enhances it.

In a world that highly values self-made people, hard work, and getters, resting in Jesus and trusting that His grace is sufficient to save and transform us is truly countercultural.

How can you help others find rest in Jesus when they think that their sins have been too grievous, that their hearts cannot be changed, and that their cases are truly hopeless? What biblical reference would you share with them?

Further Thought: “We are not always willing to come to Jesus with our trials and difficulties. Sometimes we pour our troubles into human ears, and tell our afflictions to those who cannot help us, and neglect to confide all to Jesus, who is able to change the sorrowful way to paths of joy and peace. Self-denying, self-sacrificing gives glory and victory to the cross. The promises of God are very precious. We must study his word if we would know his will. The words of inspiration, carefully studied and practically obeyed, will lead our feet in a plain path, where we may walk without stumbling. Oh, that all, ministers and people, would take their burdens and perplexities to Jesus, who is waiting to receive them, and to give them peace and rest! He will never forsake those who put their trust in him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, March 17, 1887, p. 161.

“Can you, dear youth, look forward with joyful hope and expectation to the time when the Lord, your righteous Judge, shall confess your name before the Father and before the holy angels? The very best preparation you can have for Christ’s second appearing is to rest with firm faith in the great salvation brought to us at His first coming. You must believe in Christ as a personal Saviour.”—Ellen G. White, *Our High Calling*, p. 368.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 What’s so special about the seventh-day Sabbath that it prefigures God’s heavenly rest for His people? That is, how does the Sabbath rest give us a foretaste of eternity?
- 2 *Atonement* means reconciliation and indicates the way back to God. Think about this important statement found in Romans 5:11: “And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (NKJV). If someone were to ask you, “What does it mean to be reconciled to God, and what difference has this reconciliation made in your life,” what would you answer?
- 3 How can we avoid majoring in minors in our Christian life? What keeps us focused on the big picture offered in God’s Word?
- 4 Think again about all the mistakes made and the lack of faith the children of Israel manifested in the wilderness. Though the details of their challenges are different from ours (we’re not wandering through a vast desert), what common principles are there? That is, how in our own Christian walk might we be confronted with the same challenges they were, and how can we learn from their mistakes?

Stepping Out in Faith

By TERRI SAELEE

In Iraq, someone told Father about Jesus. Father fell in love with Jesus and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Mother, however, decided to remain with her traditional religion. After some time, life became difficult for the family in Iraq. Father, fearing for the safety of Mother and their two young daughters, moved the family to live as refugees in the United States.

In California, Father and Mother sent their daughters to public school. But Father prayed that the girls would be able to study at an Adventist school. He did not have the money to pay for church school, and even if he did, he did not know any Adventists who could tell him where to find one.

One day, Father visited a food bank that distributed supplies to needy families. While waiting to receive food, Father began talking with a volunteer and discovered that the food bank was organized and run by a Seventh-day Adventist church that happened to own a church school. Father and Mother had been carefully saving money so that they could return to school and get better jobs. They decided to pay for their daughters' tuition.

A short time later, Father arrived at the church school with Mother and their 9-year-old and 11-year-old girls. They sat in the principal's office, their faces shining, as they waited for information about what to do next.

The principal and church pastor, who sat across from them, glanced at each other. The eagerness on the faces of the parents and the girls tugged at their hearts. But the money that Father and Mother had saved up was not enough. "We very much want the girls to study here," the principal said. "But unfortunately, there is not enough money to cover the tuition."

The principal paused and glanced at the pastor again. She saw compassion in his eyes and felt encouraged to continue.

"We will enroll the girls in the school," she said. "Let's step out in faith."

The four adults and two girls knelt on the floor and bowed their heads.

"Dear God, we need Your help," the pastor prayed. "Please provide money for the education of these two precious girls."

Shortly after the family left, the principal received a phone call. It was from the coordinator of the Adventist Refugee and Immigrant Ministries for the Seventh-day Adventist Church's North American Division. She was calling to announce that she had money to help pay for the tuition of refugee children. The money, she said, came from a Thirteenth Sabbath Offering in 2011.

The principal could hardly believe her ears. Quickly, she called Father to announce that money had been found for his daughters' tuition.

"I knew God would answer our prayers!" Father exclaimed.

Part of the Thirteenth Sabbath Offering this quarter will help refugees in the North American Division again. May God use your gifts to answer more prayers like Father's. Imagine meeting someone in heaven who learned more about God and decided to serve Him because you gave.

Part I: Overview

The Old Testament is filled with types, shadows, and rituals that, although often neglected by twenty-first-century Christians, have deep spiritual significance. The lessons taught in these types are rich with meaning. Understood correctly, they enhance our spiritual lives immensely.

The entire history of Israel is an example of our Christian walk with God. As the Israelites were miraculously delivered from Egyptian bondage, passed through the Red Sea, ate manna in the wilderness, and drank from the rock on their journey, we, too, are on a spiritual journey. Christ providentially delivers us from sin's slavery, leads us through the waters of baptism, nourishes us by the manna of His Word, and quenches our raging thirst in the desert of this world through His own life.

God instructed Israel to construct a sanctuary in the wilderness that He might “ ‘dwell among them’ ” (*Exod. 25:8*). This sanctuary was to be built according to the “pattern” of the heavenly reality (*Exod. 25:40*). Everything about its construction and services reveals eternal truths about the living Christ. Jesus is represented in every offering. The entire priesthood, every article of furniture, and every service point forward to Christ. The sacrificial system of the shedding of blood foreshadows the shed blood of Christ.

The goal of Israel's deliverance and journey out of Egypt was arrival in Canaan. The Promised Land would provide them Heaven's rest. The Sabbath rest foreshadowed this larger rest in Christ and was a precursor of the rest God intended for them in the Promised Land (*Heb. 4:1–11*).

Part II: Commentary

The apostle Paul often referred to the experience of the Israelites in their journey to the Promised Land as an example for Christian believers. In 1 Corinthians 10:11, he states, “Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (*NKJV*). The examples of the Old Testament provide valuable insights for Christian living.

In our imagination, let's visit the sanctuary. We watch a man with a

lamb approach the altar and place his hand upon the lamb. Leviticus 4:33 makes the meaning clear: “Then he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering” (*NKJV*). The laying of his hand upon the lamb implies confession—and genuine confession is specific. Leviticus 5:5, in its description of the trespass offering, points this out: “He shall confess that he has sinned in that thing” (*NKJV*).

In symbol his sin has been transferred from himself to the lamb. And so, the lamb must die. Why must the lamb die? What has the lamb done wrong? Nothing, absolutely nothing. But here is a central message of the sanctuary. When we confess our sins, they are, in fact, transferred to Jesus, the Lamb of God. Who slays the sacrifice? The repentant sinner who has transferred his sin to the substitute. “And he shall . . . slay it for a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering” (*Lev. 4:33*). Notice the steps involved.

The book *The Great Controversy* describes the scene this way: “Day by day the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim’s head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain.”—Page 418.

The priest then took the blood from the slain animal and sprinkled it before the veil in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary. In some special instances, the priest ate the flesh and then entered the sanctuary. The sin was then transferred in the body of the priest who had eaten the flesh. The common person, of course, was unable to enter the sanctuary. When that individual’s sins were transferred to the sanctuary, they were hidden from human view. No one could see them. They were covered by the blood of Christ.

Therefore, David exclaims in Psalm 32:1, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” The word “blessed” means “happy, contented, fulfilled, at peace, or at rest.” When we come to Jesus and confess specific sins, our hearts are at peace. Our sins are transferred in fact to the heavenly sanctuary. So, the psalmist can joyfully exclaim, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (*Ps. 103:12, NKJV*). We no longer bear the burden, the guilt, the shame, the condemnation of sin. It has been transferred to our dying Lamb. Our Living Priest bears it through the blood to heaven’s sanctuary.

Lessons From the Lamb

In the typical service when the contrite sinner transferred his sin to the innocent lamb, it became a sin bearer. So, concerning Christ the Scriptures state, that He is the One “who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree” (*1 Pet. 2:24*). As the repentant sinner brought a substitute that died in that person’s place, so every penitent person can

come to Calvary and, looking at the crucified Son of God, say, He “loved me, and gave himself for me” (*Gal. 2:20*).

Christ’s grace is unmerited, undeserved, unearned. Jesus died the agonizing, painful death that lost sinners will die. He experienced the fullness of the Father’s wrath, or judgment, against sin. He was rejected so that we could be accepted. He died the death that was ours so that we could live the life that was His. He wore the crown of thorns so that we could wear a crown of glory. He was nailed upright in torturous pain upon a cross so that we could reign on a throne with the redeemed of all ages, wearing the robes of royalty forever. In our shame and guilt, Jesus did not reject us; He reached out in love to accept us. The dying lamb represents the bruised, battered, bloodied body of our Savior. It speaks of a love so marvelous, so amazing, so divine, that it would rather take the condemnation, guilt, and penalty of sin upon itself than to lose even one of its children eternally.

Ellen G. White explains the significance of the Cross in *The Desire of Ages*, page 753: “Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law.” This is the story of grace. This is the story of a Savior’s love beyond measure.

Sabbath Rest in Christ

True Sabbath rest is the rest of grace in the loving arms of the One who created us, the One who redeemed us, and the One who is coming again for us. Do you remember that unique phrase in Genesis 2:3: “in it [the Sabbath] He rested from all His work which God had created and made” (*NKJV*)? The Sabbath is God’s rest. He rested on the seventh day as a divine acknowledgment that His work was completed.

Hebrews 4:9, 10 likens God’s rest at the end of Creation week, when He ceased from His works, to our ceasing from our human works, entering Christ’s salvation rest. Hebrews puts it this way: “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His” (*Heb. 4:9, 10, NKJV*). According to Scripture, our Sabbath rest is an act of supreme worship in which we rest totally in Jesus for our salvation. Commenting on Hebrews 4:4, *The SDA Bible Commentary* makes this insightful statement: “As God’s original purpose for this world—His ‘rest’—remains unchanged, the seventh-day Sabbath, the day of ‘rest’ He established to be a memorial of creation and thus a reminder of His purpose in the creation of the world, likewise remains unchanged. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath thus testifies not only to faith in God as the Creator of all things, but also to faith in His power to transform the life and qualify men and

women for entering into that eternal ‘rest’ He originally intended for the inhabitants of the earth.”—Volume 7, p. 420.

There is a richness in the concept of divine rest. The book of Hebrews expands the concept quite dramatically. For the author of Hebrews, divine rest involves a faith relationship with Jesus that leads to resting in the One that created us, knowing that He will never leave us nor forsake us. It also includes resting in His finished work on the cross. Resting in Christ is trusting His grace for our salvation; but the rest in Hebrews 4 includes much more. Christ’s goal for the Israelites was to get them into the Promised Land. His purpose was not for them to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. Their hearts would always be restless until they arrived safely in their homeland. When the covenant promise was fulfilled, they would find lasting peace and heavenly rest. Whatever challenges we face on this earth, the rest that Christ offers is not temporary. Sabbath rest foreshadows the eternal rest that Jesus desires for us in heaven’s Promised Land. Then, and only then, our hearts will be in permanent peace. Our rest in Christ today is preliminary to the glorious day in which we will be at rest with Him in eternity.

Part III: Life Application

Have someone read the following anonymous poem aloud in class. Take into consideration what we studied in this week’s lesson, and answer the questions following the poem.

Just let me rest in Thee, O Lord,
 Nor strive, nor fret, nor strain
 Against the burden of the days
 That bring me tears and pain.
 Let me remember that Thy Hand
 Can lighten every load.
 And in Thy presence, I shall be
 Safe on life’s darkest road.
 For Thou hast said that Thou art near
 To all who need Thine aid.
 Then, foolish mortal that I am,
 Why should I be afraid?

Discuss the questions below in the context of today's lesson:

- What does it mean to enter Christ's rest?

- How does the ancient sanctuary service contribute to our understanding of rest in Christ?

- Reflect on these three events in salvation history—Creation, the Cross, and the second coming of Christ. How does a deeper understanding of each of these events provide the basis for peace and rest in Christ?

- What reason do Hebrews 3:9 and Hebrews 4:13 give for Israel's not entering God's rest, and how can we enter His rest?
