

# The Superiority of Christ's Sacrifice

**MEMORY VERSE:** “*But this man [Jesus Christ], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:12–14).

“Paul and his fellow workers proclaimed the doctrine of righteousness by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. They presented Christ as the one who, seeing the helpless condition of the fallen race, came to redeem men and women by living a life of obedience to God’s law and by paying the penalty of disobedience. And in the light of the cross many who had never before known of the true God, began to comprehend the greatness of the Father’s love.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 207, 208.

**Suggested Reading:** *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 156-166. (At the bottom of this page)

## 1. THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF ANIMAL SACRIFICES

*Sunday, March 3*

**a. Why were the sacrifices offered in the earthly sanctuary unable to forgive sins? Hebrews 10:1–4.**

### Hebrews 10:1-4

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. **2** For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. **3** But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. **4** For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

“The blood of beasts could not satisfy the demands of God as an atoning sacrifice for the transgression of His law. The life of a beast was of less value than the life of the offending sinner, therefore could not be a ransom for sin. It could only be acceptable with God as a figure of the offering of His Son. . . .

“God made man perfect and upright, and after his transgression there could be no sacrifice acceptable to God for him, unless the offering made should in value be superior to man as he was in his state of perfection and innocency.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 24.

“The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour’s death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event

toward which they had pointed for ages was consummated.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 165.

## 2. THE FULLY QUALIFIED HIGH PRIEST

Monday, March 4

### a. Who only could redeem the sinner, and why? Hebrews 10:5–10.

#### Hebrews 10:5-10

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: **6** In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. **7** Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. **8** Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; **9** Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. **10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

“Upon Christ no requirements were laid. He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again. No obligation was laid upon Him to undertake the work of atonement. It was a voluntary sacrifice that He made. His life was of sufficient value to rescue man from his fallen condition.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 24.

### b. What gave Christ authority to be our High Priest? Hebrews 10:11–14.

#### Hebrews 10:11-14

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: **12** But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; **13** From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. **14** For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 755.

### c. Why, being fully innocent, did Christ die on the cross? 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:5, 6, 8, 11.

#### 2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

### Isaiah 53:5, 6, 8, 11

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. **8** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. **11** He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

“It was not alone by dying on the cross that Christ accomplished His work of saving men. The ignominy and suffering and humiliation was a part of His mission. [Isaiah 53:5 quoted.] This penalty Christ bore for the sins of the transgressor; He has borne the punishment for every man and for this reason He can ransom every soul, however fallen his condition, if he will accept the law of God as his standard of righteousness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments]*, vol. 4, pp. 1147, 1148.

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

## 3. FREE ACCESS TO THE THRONE OF GRACE

*Tuesday, March 5*

**a. Having Christ as our High Priest, how can we approach the throne of grace? Ephesians 2:17, 18; Hebrews 4:16; 10:19, 22.**

### Ephesians 2:17-18

And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. **18** For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

### Hebrews 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

### Hebrews 10:19-22

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; **21** And having an high priest over the house of God; **22** Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

“Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will, our feelings, desires, interests, and honor identified with the prosperity of Christ’s kingdom and the honor of

His cause, we constantly receiving grace from Him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us.

“When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ; His righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We have access to God through Him; we are accepted in the Beloved.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 229.

“Let each one of you search his own heart, cleanse the defiled soul temple, and watch unto prayer. Be determined you will seek Jesus until you find Him; release not your grasp until His love dwells in your heart and you have His spirit subduing your life and fashioning your character. Then believe, and with boldness you may approach His throne, knowing that He will hear your prayers.”—*Ibid.*, p. 132.

## **b. What will be the result of our connection with Christ? Hebrews 10:23–25.**

### **Hebrews 10:23-25**

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) **24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: **25** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

“Those who do not feel the necessity of seeking the assembly of the saints, with the precious assurance that the Lord will meet with them, show how lightly they value the help that God has provided for them.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [E. G. White Comments]*, vol. 7, p. 934.

“Jesus stands in the holy of holies, now to appear in the presence of God for us. There He ceases not to present His people moment by moment, complete in Himself. But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin. We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith.

“Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God’s Word. In amazement he hears the message, ‘Ye are complete in Him.’ Now all is at rest in his soul.”—*Faith and Works*, pp. 107, 108.

## **4. KEEPING GOD’S GOODNESS FOREMOST IN OUR MIND**

*Wednesday, March 6*

### **a. What will be the result if we neglect such a great salvation? Hebrews 2:3; 10:26–31.**

#### **Hebrews 2:3**

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

#### **Hebrews 10:26-31**

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, **27** But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. **28** He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: **29** Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? **30** For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. **31** It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

“God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit’s work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed. The transgressor has cut himself off from God, and sin has no remedy to cure itself. There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner. ‘Let him alone’ (Hosea 4:17) is the divine command.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 405.

**b. Why should we ever recall God’s deliverances for us—and what example do the Advent pioneers give in this regard? Hebrews 10:32, 33.**

**Hebrews 10:32-33**

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; **33** Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

“The dealings of God with His people should be often repeated. How frequently were the waymarks set up by the Lord in His dealings with ancient Israel! Lest they should forget the history of the past, He commanded Moses to frame these events into song, that parents might teach them to their children. They were to gather up memorials and to lay them up in sight. Special pains were taken to preserve them, that when the children should inquire concerning these things, the whole story might be repeated. Thus the providential dealings and the marked goodness and mercy of God in His care and deliverance of His people were kept in mind. We are exhorted to call to ‘remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions.’ Hebrews 10:32. For His people in this generation the Lord has wrought as a wonder-working God. The past history of the cause of God needs to be often brought before the people, young and old. We need often to recount God’s goodness and to praise Him for His wonderful works.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 364, 365.

“In referring to our past experience, we are carrying out the exhortation of the apostle to the Hebrews: [Hebrews 10:32 quoted.]

“Our lives are interwoven with the cause of God. We have no separate interest aside from this work. And when we see the advancement that the cause has made from a very small beginning, coming up slowly yet surely to strength and prosperity; as we see the success of the cause in which we have toiled, and suffered, and nearly sacrificed our lives, who shall prevent or forbid our boasting in God? Our experience in this cause is valuable to us. We have invested everything in it.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 319.

**a. How can we be safe on the way to life eternal? Hebrews 10:35–39.****Hebrews 10:35-39**

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. **36** For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. **37** For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. **38** Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. **39** But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

“It is not he that putteth on the armor that can boast of the victory; for he has the battle to fight and victory to win. It is he that endureth unto the end that shall be saved. . . . If we do not go forward from victory to victory, the soul will draw back to perdition. We should raise no human standard whereby to measure character. We have seen enough of what men call perfection here below. God’s holy law is the only thing by which we can determine whether we are keeping His way or not. If we are disobedient, our characters are out of harmony with God’s moral rule of government, and it is stating a falsehood to say, ‘I am saved.’ No one is saved who is a transgressor of the law of God, which is the foundation of His government in heaven and in earth.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 315.

**b. What are the main characteristics of God’s people in these last days? Revelation 12:17; 14:12.****Revelation 12:17**

And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

**Revelation 14:12**

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

“There are only two parties upon the earth—those who stand under the blood-stained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, p. 161.

“At this time the church is to put on her beautiful garments—‘Christ our righteousness.’ There are clear, decided distinctions to be restored and exemplified to the world in holding aloft the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”—*Christian Experience and Teachings*, p. 207.

“Faith in the ability of Christ to save us amply and fully and entirely is the faith of Jesus.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 172.



1. Why wasn't the blood of beasts adequate for salvation?
2. Explain, as far as we can grasp, the depth of Christ's sacrifice for us.
3. What do you appreciate most about Christ's ministrations for you?
4. Why should we recall old experiences in our religious life?
5. What do many today fail to realize about salvation?

**Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 156-166.**

The priests and rulers were called to be the representatives of God to the nation; they should have corrected the abuses of the temple court. They should have given to the people an example of integrity and compassion. Instead of studying their own profit, they should have considered the situation and needs of the worshipers, and should have been ready to assist those who were not able to buy the required sacrifices. But this they did not do. Avarice had hardened their hearts. **(DA 156.1)**

There came to this feast those who were suffering, those who were in want and distress. The blind, the lame, the deaf, were there. Some were brought on beds. Many came who were too poor to purchase the humblest offering for the Lord, too poor even to buy food with which to satisfy their own hunger. These were greatly distressed by the statements of the priests. The priests boasted of their piety; they claimed to be the guardians of the people; but they were without sympathy or compassion. The poor, the sick, the dying, made their vain plea for favor. Their suffering awakened no pity in the hearts of the priests. **(DA 157.1)**

As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the unfair transactions. He saw the distress of the poor, who thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins. He saw the outer court of His temple converted into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange. **(DA 157.2)**

Christ saw that something must be done. Numerous ceremonies were enjoined upon the people without the proper instruction as to their import. The worshipers offered their sacrifices without understanding that they were typical of the only perfect Sacrifice. And among them, unrecognized and unhonored, stood the One symbolized by all their service. He had given directions in regard to the offerings. He understood their symbolical value, and He saw that they were now perverted and misunderstood. Spiritual worship was fast disappearing. No link bound the priests and rulers to their God. Christ's work was to establish an altogether different worship. **(DA 157.3)**

With searching glance, Christ takes in the scene before Him as He stands upon the steps of the temple court. With prophetic eye He looks into futurity, and sees not only years, but centuries and ages. He sees how priests and rulers will turn the needy from their right, and forbid that the gospel shall be preached to the poor. He sees how the love of God will be concealed from sinners, and men will make merchandise of His grace. As He beholds the scene, indignation, authority, and power are expressed in His countenance. The attention of the people is attracted to Him. The eyes of those engaged in their unholy traffic are riveted upon His face. They cannot withdraw their gaze. They

feel that this Man reads their inmost thoughts, and discovers their hidden motives. Some attempt to conceal their faces, as if their evil deeds were written upon their countenances, to be scanned by those searching eyes. **(DA 157.4)**

The confusion is hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. It is as if they were arraigned before the tribunal of God to answer for their deeds. Looking upon Christ, they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge will stand at the last day,—not now encircled with the glory that will then attend Him, but with the same power to read the soul. His eye sweeps over the multitude, taking in every individual. His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance. He speaks, and His clear, ringing voice—the same that upon Mount Sinai proclaimed the law that priests and rulers are transgressing—is heard echoing through the arches of the temple: “Take these things hence; make not My Father’s house an house of merchandise.” John 2:16. **(DA 158.1)**

Slowly descending the steps, and raising the scourge of cords gathered up on entering the enclosure, He bids the bargaining company depart from the precincts of the temple. With a zeal and severity He has never before manifested, He overthrows the tables of the money-changers. The coin falls, ringing sharply upon the marble pavement. None presume to question His authority. None dare stop to gather up their ill-gotten gain. Jesus does not smite them with the whip of cords, but in His hand that simple scourge seems terrible as a flaming sword. Officers of the temple, speculating priests, brokers and cattle traders, with their sheep and oxen, rush from the place, with the one thought of escaping from the condemnation of His presence. **(DA 158.2)**

A panic sweeps over the multitude, who feel the overshadowing of His divinity. Cries of terror escape from hundreds of blanched lips. Even the disciples tremble. They are awestruck by the words and manner of Jesus, so unlike His usual demeanor. They remember that it is written of Him, “The zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up.” Psalm 69:9. Soon the tumultuous throng with their merchandise are far removed from the temple of the Lord. The courts are free from unholy traffic, and a deep silence and solemnity settles upon the scene of confusion. The presence of the Lord, that of old sanctified the mount, has now made sacred the temple reared in His honor. **(DA 158.3)**

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny open to every soul. But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of



the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,—from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.” Malachi 3:1-3. **(DA 161.1)**

“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. No man can of himself cast out the evil throned that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple. But He will not force an entrance. He comes not into the heart as to the temple of old; but He says, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him.” Revelation 3:20. He will come, not for one day merely; for He says, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; ... and they shall be My people.” “He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” 2 Corinthians 6:16; Micah 7:19. His presence will cleanse and sanctify the soul, so that it may be a holy temple unto the Lord, and “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:21, 22. **(DA 161.2)**

Overpowered with terror, the priests and rulers had fled from the temple court, and from the searching glance that read their hearts. In their flight they met others on their way to the temple, and bade them turn back, telling them what they had seen and heard. Christ looked upon the fleeing men with yearning pity for their fear, and their ignorance of what constituted true worship. In this scene He saw symbolized the dispersion of the whole Jewish nation for their wickedness and impenitence. **(DA 162.1)**

And why did the priests flee from the temple? Why did they not stand their ground? He who commanded them to go was a carpenter's son, a poor Galilean, without earthly rank or power. Why did they not resist Him? Why did they leave the gain so ill acquired, and flee at the command of One whose outward appearance was so humble? **(DA 162.2)**

Christ spoke with the authority of a king, and in His appearance, and in the tones of His voice, there was that which they had no power to resist. At the word of command they realized, as they had never realized before, their true position as hypocrites and robbers. When divinity flashed through humanity, not only did they see indignation on Christ's countenance; they realized the import of His words. They felt as if before the throne of the eternal Judge, with their sentence passed on them for time and for eternity. For a time they were convinced that Christ was a prophet; and many believed Him to be the Messiah. The Holy Spirit flashed into their minds the utterances of the prophets concerning Christ. Would they yield to this conviction? **(DA 162.3)**

Repent they would not. They knew that Christ's sympathy for the poor had been aroused. They knew that they had been guilty of extortion in their dealings with the people. Because Christ discerned their thoughts they hated Him. His public rebuke was

humiliating to their pride, and they were jealous of His growing influence with the people. They determined to challenge Him as to the power by which He had driven them forth, and who gave Him this power. **(DA 162.4)**

Slowly and thoughtfully, but with hate in their hearts, they returned to the temple. But what a change had taken place during their absence! When they fled, the poor remained behind; and these were now looking to Jesus, whose countenance expressed His love and sympathy. With tears in His eyes, He said to the trembling ones around Him: ‘Fear not; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. For this cause came I into the world.’ **(DA 162.5)**

The people pressed into Christ’s presence with urgent, pitiful appeals: ‘Master, bless me.’ His ear heard every cry. With pity exceeding that of a tender mother He bent over the suffering little ones. All received attention. Everyone was healed of whatever disease he had. The dumb opened their lips in praise; the blind beheld the face of their Restorer. The hearts of the sufferers were made glad. **(DA 163.1)**

As the priests and temple officials witnessed this great work, what a revelation to them were the sounds that fell on their ears! The people were relating the story of the pain they had suffered, of their disappointed hopes, of painful days and sleepless nights. When the last spark of hope seemed to be dead, Christ had healed them. ‘The burden was so heavy,’ one said; ‘but I have found a helper. He is the Christ of God, and I will devote my life to His service.’ Parents said to their children, ‘He has saved your life; lift up your voice and praise Him.’ The voices of children and youth, fathers and mothers, friends and spectators, blended in thanksgiving and praise. Hope and gladness filled their hearts. Peace came to their minds. They were restored soul and body, and they returned home, proclaiming everywhere the matchless love of Jesus. **(DA 163.2)**

At the crucifixion of Christ, those who had thus been healed did not join with the rabble throng in crying, “Crucify Him, crucify Him.” Their sympathies were with Jesus; for they had felt His great sympathy and wonderful power. They knew Him to be their Saviour; for He had given them health of body and soul. They listened to the preaching of the apostles, and the entrance of God’s word into their hearts gave them understanding. They became agents of God’s mercy, and instruments of His salvation. **(DA 163.3)**

The crowd that had fled from the temple court after a time slowly drifted back. They had partially recovered from the panic that had seized them, but their faces expressed irresolution and timidity. They looked with amazement on the works of Jesus, and were convicted that in Him the prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled. The sin of the desecration of the temple rested, in a great degree, upon the priests. It was by their arrangement that the court had been turned into a market place. The people were comparatively innocent. They were impressed by the divine authority of Jesus; but with them the influence of the priests and rulers was paramount. They regarded Christ’s mission as an innovation, and questioned His right to interfere with what was permitted by the authorities of the temple. They were offended because the traffic had been interrupted, and they stifled the convictions of the Holy Spirit. **(DA 163.4)**

Above all others the priests and rulers should have seen in Jesus the anointed of the Lord; for in their hands were the sacred scrolls that described His mission, and they knew that the cleansing of the temple was a manifestation of more than human power. Much as they hated Jesus, they could not free themselves from the thought that He might be a prophet sent by God to restore the sanctity of the temple. With a deference born of this fear, they went to Him with the inquiry, “What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?” John 2:18. **(DA 164.1)**

Jesus had shown them a sign. In flashing light into their hearts, and in doing before them the works which the Messiah was to do, He had given convincing evidence of His character. Now when they asked for a sign, He answered them by a parable, showing that He read their malice, and saw to what lengths it would lead them. “Destroy this temple,” He said, “and in three days I will raise it up.” John 2:19. **(DA 164.2)**

In these words His meaning was twofold. He referred not only to the destruction of the Jewish temple and worship, but to His own death,—the destruction of the temple of His body. This the Jews were already plotting. As the priests and rulers returned to the temple, they had proposed to kill Jesus, and thus rid themselves of the troubler. Yet when He set before them their purpose, they did not understand Him. They took His words as applying only to the temple at Jerusalem, and with indignation exclaimed, “Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days?” John 2:20. Now they felt that Jesus had justified their unbelief, and they were confirmed in their rejection of Him. **(DA 164.3)**

Christ did not design that His words should be understood by the unbelieving Jews, nor even by His disciples at this time. He knew that they would be misconstrued by His enemies, and would be turned against Him. At His trial they would be brought as an accusation, and on Calvary they would be flung at Him as a taunt. But to explain them now would give His disciples a knowledge of His sufferings, and bring upon them sorrow which as yet they were not able to bear. And an explanation would prematurely disclose to the Jews the result of their prejudice and unbelief. Already they had entered upon a path which they would steadily pursue until He should be led as a lamb to the slaughter. **(DA 164.4)**

It was for the sake of those who should believe on Him that these words of Christ were spoken. He knew that they would be repeated. Being spoken at the Passover, they would come to the ears of thousands, and be carried to all parts of the world. After He had risen from the dead, their meaning would be made plain. To many they would be conclusive evidence of His divinity. **(DA 165.1)**

Because of their spiritual darkness, even the disciples of Jesus often failed of comprehending His lessons. But many of these lessons were made plain to them by subsequent events. When He walked no more with them, His words were a stay to their hearts. **(DA 165.2)**

As referring to the temple at Jerusalem, the Saviour’s words, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up,” (John 2:19) had a deeper meaning than the hearers perceived. Christ was the foundation and life of the temple. Its services were typical of the sacrifice of the Son of God. The priesthood was established to represent the

mediatorial character and work of Christ. The entire plan of sacrificial worship was a foreshadowing of the Saviour's death to redeem the world. There would be no efficacy in these offerings when the great event toward which they had pointed for ages was consummated. **(DA 165.3)**

Since the whole ritual economy was symbolical of Christ, it had no value apart from Him. When the Jews sealed their rejection of Christ by delivering Him to death, they rejected all that gave significance to the temple and its services. Its sacredness had departed. It was doomed to destruction. From that day sacrificial offerings and the service connected with them were meaningless. Like the offering of Cain, they did not express faith in the Saviour. In putting Christ to death, the Jews virtually destroyed their temple. When Christ was crucified, the inner veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, signifying that the great final sacrifice had been made, and that the system of sacrificial offerings was forever at an end. **(DA 165.4)**

“In three days I will raise it up.” In the Saviour's death the powers of darkness seemed to prevail, and they exulted in their victory. But from the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Jesus came forth a conqueror. “Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them.” Colossians 2:15. By virtue of His death and resurrection He became the minister of the “true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.” Hebrews 8:2. Men reared the Jewish tabernacle; men builded the Jewish temple; but the sanctuary above, of which the earthly was a type, was built by no human architect. “Behold the Man whose name is The Branch; ... He shall build the temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne.” Zechariah 6:12, 13. **(DA 165.5)**

The sacrificial service that had pointed to Christ passed away; but the eyes of men were turned to the true sacrifice for the sins of the world. The earthly priesthood ceased; but we look to Jesus, the minister of the new covenant, and “to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” “The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: ... but Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, ... by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Hebrews 12:24; 9:8-12. **(DA 166.1)**

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25. Though the ministration was to be removed from the earthly to the heavenly temple; though the sanctuary and our great high priest would be invisible to human sight, yet the disciples were to suffer no loss thereby. They would realize no break in their communion, and no diminution of power because of the Saviour's absence. While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth. He is withdrawn from the eye of sense, but His parting promise is fulfilled, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20. While He delegates His power to inferior ministers, His energizing presence is still with His church. **(DA 166.2)**

“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, ... Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us

therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16. **(DA 166.3)**