

Rest in Christ

Longing for More

Lesson #11 for September 11, 2021

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Leviticus 4:32-35; John 1:29; Hebrews 4:1-11; Psalm 95:8-11.

1. 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.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath, September 4.
2. Scripture is full of metaphors, similes, and miniature models of activities and institutions that all point to larger heavenly realities. We will focus on Hebrews 4 in this study.
3. Paul said some very challenging words in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11.

1 Corinthians 10:1-11: I want you to remember, my brothers and sisters, what happened to our ancestors who followed Moses. They were all under the protection of the cloud, and all passed safely through the Red Sea. ²In the cloud and in the sea they were all baptized as followers of Moses. ³**All ate the same spiritual bread ⁴and drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from the spiritual rock that went with them; and that rock was Christ himself.** ⁵But even then God was not pleased with most of them, and so their dead bodies were scattered over the desert.

⁶ **Now, all this is an example for us, to warn us not to desire evil things, as they did, ⁷nor to worship idols, as some of them did.** As the scripture says, "The people sat down to a feast which turned into an orgy of drinking and sex." ⁸We must not be guilty of sexual immorality, as some of them were—and in one day 23,000 of them fell dead. [Numbers 25:9] ⁹We must not put the Lord to the test, as some of them did—and they were killed by snakes. [Numbers 21:5-6] ¹⁰We must not complain, as some of them did—and they were destroyed by the Angel of Death. [Numbers 16:41-49]

¹¹ **All these things happened to them as examples for others, and they were written down as a warning for us.** For we live at a time when the end is about to come.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 1 Corinthians 10:1–11). New York: American Bible Society.^{†‡}

4. Twice in this passage from 1 Corinthians, Paul used the Greek word *typos*, which suggests some kind of symbolic representation or model of something else. So, what models are we talking about in this lesson?

Hebrews 8:5: The work they do as priests is really only a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven. It is the same as it was with Moses. When he was about to build the **Sacred Tent**, God said to him, "Be sure to make everything according to the **pattern** you were shown on the mountain."—*Good News*

Bible.†*

5. How much of this ceremony is going on in heaven? No animals are being killed in heaven. We are now in the antitypical day of atonement. How does all of that affect us?
6. While considering what it says in Hebrews 8, we need to remember these words from Hebrews 10:1-4.

Hebrews 10:1-4: ¹The Jewish Law is not a full and faithful model of the real things; it is only a faint outline of the good things to come. The same sacrifices are offered for ever, year after year. How can the Law, then, by means of these sacrifices make perfect the people who come to God? ²If the people worshipping God had really been purified from their sins, they would not feel guilty of sin any more, and all sacrifices would stop. ³As it is, however, the sacrifices serve year after year to remind people of their sins. ⁴For the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sins.—*Good News Bible.*†* [Italic type is added for emphasis.][‡]

7. If the sacrifices of the Old Testament never really purified people from their sins and all that it did was to remind them of their sins, what should that teach us? Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle or tent according to the pattern he was shown by God. What should that tell us about what is actually happening in heaven?
8. Did God not only give Moses some picture of a model of what the sanctuary was supposed to look like, but also a lot of details about how the worship services were supposed to be carried on? Is that what we have in the book of Leviticus?
9. Look back at the story of the Israelites wandering those 40 years from Egypt to Canaan. We have recorded many separate incidents of things that happened. How many of them are “examples” for us? Are there some good examples as well as some bad examples?
10. Why were the Hebrew men (and women?) so easily attracted by the fertility cult services which the pagans followed? About 27,000 died as a result of becoming involved on two separate occasions. (See Exodus 32:28 and Numbers 25:9.) What do you think they actually died of?
11. If you review the details of the first seven chapters of Leviticus and consider what was going on, it seems that there were a lot of rituals repeated again and again and again. Do you wish that we still had some of those ritual ceremonies today? Could you sacrifice a lamb in order to get forgiveness of sin? Did they really feel forgiven after doing that?

Leviticus 4:32-35: ³² If a man brings a sheep as a sin offering, it must be a **female** without any defects. ³³He shall put his hand on its head and kill it on the north side of the altar, where the animals for the burnt offerings are killed. ³⁴The priest shall dip his finger in the blood of the animal, put it on the projections at the corners of the altar, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar. ³⁵Then he shall remove all its fat, just as the fat is removed from the sheep killed for the fellowship offerings, and he shall burn it on the altar along with the food offerings given to the LORD. **In this way the priest shall offer the sacrifice for the man’s sin, and he will be forgiven.**—*Good News Bible.*†*

12. Did rituals serve as very good “educators” or education tools for the children of Israel? Apparently not! (See Micah 6:6-8.) Surely, if a ritual was practiced again and again, the people would have become quite familiar with it. What do you think about the very specific details regarding the many sacrifices? They were told when, where, and what procedural details needed to take place for each sacrifice.
13. In modern times, we feel that many rituals deteriorate into mindless practices. Surely, that

is not what God wanted! And it is obvious that in these rituals there was a great deal of killing, the shedding of blood, and the sprinkling of the blood on various places in the tabernacle. This was a very messy process. It was ugly. **It was not supposed to be attractive because it represented the results of sins.**

14. What do you suppose was the reason for putting the blood on the horns of the altar? Did the children of Israel understand clearly exactly what each one of those sacrifices was supposed to mean? And the significance of blood? (Leviticus 17:11)

Leviticus 17:11: The life of every living thing is in the blood, and that is why the LORD has commanded that all blood be poured out on the altar to take away the people's sins. **Blood, which is life, takes away sins.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [How does this fit with Hebrews 10:1-4,11? Blood is not fully alive!][‡]

15. One of the shocking things about reading the book of Leviticus is that there is virtually never any explanations for why they were doing what they were doing! Is it really possible that a group of slaves recently taken from a grossly pagan society would automatically understand the significance and explanation of each of those sacrifices? Wouldn't a clear explanation be the most important part of the ritual? So, why all the details of the ritual with virtually no explanation in the Bible? Was Israel also given explanations verbally?
16. **But, we already looked at Hebrews 10 which said that these sacrifices never take away sin! How do we reconcile these two passages?**
17. The *Bible Study Guide** for Monday says: "Blood was key to the whole process of atonement, the means by which we sinners can be made right with a Holy God." Do you agree with that statement? Was the blood important because it cost a life and was intended to impress upon the people how serious sin was?
18. All the way back in the days of Adam and Eve, that first sacrifice—and even the first few sacrifices—must have been heart-wrenching. **Did the children of Israel come to understand that sin directly leads to death? Was that the point?**
19. Do we, today, looking back to the sacrifice of Christ, understand the implications of His death?

Hebrews 4:1-11: ¹Now, God has offered us the promise that we may receive that rest he spoke about. Let us take care, then, that none of you will be found to have failed to receive that promised rest. ²**For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, they did not accept it with faith.** ³We who believe, then, do receive that rest which God promised. It is just as he said:

"I was angry and made a solemn promise:

'They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest!'

He said this even though his work had been finished from the time he created the world. ⁴For somewhere in the Scriptures this is said about the seventh day: "God rested on the seventh day from all his work." ⁵This same matter is spoken of again: "They will never enter that land where I would have given them rest."

⁶**Those who first heard the Good News did not receive that rest, because they did not believe.** There are, then, others who are allowed to receive it.

⁷This is shown by the fact that God sets another day, which is called "Today". Many years later he spoke of it through David in the scripture already quoted:

"If you hear God's voice today,

do not be stubborn.”

⁸ If Joshua had given the people the rest that God had promised, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹As it is, however, there still remains for God’s people a rest like God’s resting on the seventh day. ¹⁰For those who receive that rest which God promised will rest from their own work, just as God rested from his. ¹¹Let us, then, do our best to receive that rest, so that no one of us will fail as they did because of **their lack of faith**.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

20. In what sense did they lack faith? Today, we believe that *faith* implies a special relationship with God. What was their problem so that they did not have a meaningful relationship with God?
21. Before getting to Hebrews 4, the writer of Hebrews gave a very serious warning in Hebrews 3:7-19.

Hebrews 3:7-19: ⁷ So then, as the Holy Spirit says:

“If you hear God’s voice today,

⁸ do not be stubborn, as your ancestors were when they rebelled against God, as they were that day in the desert when they put him to the test.

⁹ There they put me to the test and tried me, says God, although they had seen what I did for forty years.

¹⁰ And so I was angry with those people and said,

‘They are always disloyal and refuse to obey my commands.’

¹¹ I was angry and made a solemn promise:

‘They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest!’ ”

¹² **My fellow-believers, be careful that no one among you has a heart so evil and unbelieving as to turn away from the living God.** ¹³Instead, in order that none of you be deceived by sin and become stubborn, you must help one another every day, as long as the word “Today” in the scripture applies to us. ¹⁴For we are all partners with Christ if we hold firmly to the end the confidence we had at the beginning.

¹⁵ This is what the scripture says:

“If you hear God’s voice today,

do not be stubborn, as your ancestors were when they rebelled against God.”

¹⁶ **Who were the people who heard God’s voice and rebelled against him? All those who were led out of Egypt by Moses.** ¹⁷**With whom was God angry for forty years? With the people who sinned, who fell down dead in the desert.** ¹⁸**When God made his solemn promise, “They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest”—of whom was he speaking? Of those who rebelled.** ¹⁹**We see, then, that they were not able to enter the land, because they did not believe.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

22. It seems quite clear that **the children of Israel did not believe in or trust God enough to faithfully follow His directions**. Would that be true of us also? As we read Hebrews 4:2-3 again, there seems to be specifically a relationship between rest and faith.

Hebrews 4:2-3: ²For we have heard the Good News, just as they did. They heard the message, but it did them no good, because when they heard it, **they did not accept it with faith.** ³We who believe, then, do receive that **rest** which God promised. It is just as he said:

“I was angry and made a solemn promise:

‘They will never enter the land where I would have given them rest!’ ”

He said this even though his work had been finished from the time he created the world.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

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?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Tuesday, September 7. [We are saved by a gracious God.] [Italic type is added for emphasis.][‡]

23. Do we understand what it means to be “saved by the blood”?
24. There is a very interesting parallel between Hebrews 4:4-7 and Psalm 95:8-11. These two passages seem to suggest that a lack of faith led to people being stubborn! Why would that be? And the author of Hebrews contrasted God’s rest on the seventh day of creation to the lack of rest that the children of Israel experienced in the wilderness. What is the comparison between those two?
25. Of course, we know that because of their lack of faith and their rebellion against God, that generation of people who left Egypt—everyone over the age of 20 except Caleb and Joshua—perished in the wilderness. Moses, of course, was given a vision of Canaan and then died, was resurrected, and was taken to heaven before the Israelites entered Canaan.
26. Notice that the author of Hebrews picked up the expression *today* as if something needed to be done right away. But, that idea was first suggested a thousand years before Christ. Does it have any urgency for us today? It has been 3,000 years since David wrote!
27. People have used Hebrews 4 to argue both for the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath and against it. Those who want to argue against the keeping of the Sabbath suggest that whatever it means, it was only for the Jewish people. Paul dealt with that issue in Galatians 3:26-29.

Galatians 3:26-29: ²⁶ It is through faith that all of you are God’s children in union with Christ Jesus. ²⁷You were baptized into union with Christ, and now you are clothed, so to speak, with the life of Christ himself. ²⁸**So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus.** ²⁹**If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and will receive what God has promised.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

28. The real issue in Hebrews 4 is not whether we should keep the seventh-day Sabbath or not; **the real issue is that the rest God wants us to focus on is that eternal perfect rest that God has planned for faithful believers since the time of the creation. But, the seventh-day Sabbath is supposed to be a tiny foretaste of that perfect end-time rest.** So, what does it mean to rest in Christ? In our modern world, it seems that people are encouraged to be self-made, hard-working, go-getters no matter what their field might be. Doesn’t rest sound out of tune with that idea?

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, par. 4. Compare *LHU* 277.4.

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, *Youth's Instructor*,* January 28, 1897, par. 12.† Compare *Our High Calling** 368.2. [Was there any reason for Jesus to come the first time if He does not plan to come back?][‡]

29. We have often discussed the fact that atonement means “at-one-ment,” or reconciliation, and it is talking about our return to a right relationship with God. Do you have an idea of what it means to be reconciled to God? What difference would that make in your life?
30. We recognize that our situation is very different from that of the children of Israel, wandering the wilderness for those 40 years. What kind of challenges do we face today that might be comparable to some of the challenges they faced? Notice these words from the Bible study guide:

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.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 145.

31. Would you consider the book of Leviticus to be the instructions which God gave to Moses about how things were to be done in the sanctuary? Paul said on more than one occasion that the events that happened back then are supposed to be examples for us. Try to imagine yourself back there, observing in imagination what happened at the sanctuary.

Leviticus 5:5-6: ⁵ When a person is guilty, he must confess the sin, ⁶and as the penalty for his sin he must bring to the LORD a female sheep or goat as an offering. The priest shall offer the sacrifice for the man's sin.—*Good News Bible*.*

32. The children of Israel had just come out of slavery and were very concrete in their thinking. **The sanctuary service was a “sandbox illustration” of the plan of salvation.** The people could go to the tabernacle with their lamb and confess their sins on the head of that lamb. They were told that their sins were transferred through the blood of the lamb to the sanctuary. On the Day of Atonement, those sins were **in symbol** transferred to the head of the scapegoat. They could watch the scapegoat be taken into the wilderness, never to be seen again. This was a very concrete way to try to describe the plan of salvation.

33. Notice these words from Ellen White.

The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered daily in the holy place, while once a year the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary. 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. "Without shedding of blood," says the apostle, there is no remission of sin. "The life of the flesh is in the blood." Leviticus 17:11. The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred *in figure* to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying: "God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation." Leviticus 10:17. **Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.**—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy** 418.1.† [Italic type is added for emphasis.]‡

34. Imagine yourself returning home to your tent after having completed that ceremony. Would you feel relief? Would you feel forgiven?
35. We, of course, believe that in our day, the life and death of Christ takes the place of our offering lambs.

Christ's grace is unmerited, undeserved, unearned. *Jesus died the agonizing, painful death that lost sinners will die.*—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 147. [Italic type is added for emphasis.]‡

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. "With His stripes we are healed."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 25.2.

36. Notice this more detailed **description of what actually happened at the cross** in *The Desire of Ages*.

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. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father's mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. **So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.**

Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's

acceptance of the sacrifice. **He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race.** It was the sense of sin, bringing the Father's wrath upon Him as man's substitute, that made the cup He drank so bitter, and broke the heart of the Son of God.

With amazement angels witnessed the Saviour's despairing agony. The hosts of heaven veiled their faces from the fearful sight. Inanimate nature expressed sympathy with its insulted and dying Author. The sun refused to look upon the awful scene. Its full, bright rays were illuminating the earth at midday, when suddenly it seemed to be blotted out. Complete darkness, like a funeral pall, enveloped the cross. "There was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour." There was no eclipse or other natural cause for this darkness, which was as deep as midnight without moon or stars. It was a miraculous testimony given by God that the faith of after generations might be confirmed.

In that thick darkness God's presence was hidden. He makes darkness His pavilion, and conceals His glory from human eyes. God and [754] His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His presence was not revealed. Had His glory flashed forth from the cloud, every human beholder would have been destroyed. **And in that dreadful hour Christ was not to be comforted with the Father's presence. He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Him.**

In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son. All who had seen Christ in His suffering had been convicted of His divinity. That face, once beheld by humanity, was never forgotten. As the face of Cain expressed his guilt as a murderer, so the face of Christ revealed innocence, serenity, benevolence,—the image of God. But His accusers would not give heed to the signet of heaven. Through long hours of agony Christ had been gazed upon by the jeering multitude. Now He was mercifully hidden by the mantle of God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 753.1-754.1. † [Italic type is added for emphasis.]‡

37. Consider the fact that the life and death of Jesus give us a choice: (1) We can choose to live a life as near as possible like the life He lived and be saved with Him in the kingdom of heaven; or, (2) We will die the death which He died. Does that give you comfort?
38. What does it mean to *enter Christ's rest*? The Sabbath is connected to what are probably the three most important events in salvation history: Creation, the cross, and the second coming of Christ. Do we understand the relationship among the Sabbath and those three events? Every Sabbath, are we experiencing what it means to enter into Christ's rest?

© 2021, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution of all or a portion of this material such as to a Bible study class is encouraged. *Electronic version. †Bold type is added. ‡Text in brackets is added. §Italic type is in the source. Info@theox.org

Last Modified: July 18, 2021

Z:\My Documents\WP\SSTG-Hart\Rest in Christ\SS-11-Rest in Christ-2021_09_11-Fin+.wpd