

In the Throne Room of God



SABBATH—MAY 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Isaiah 6:6–8; Genesis 3:21–24; Ezekiel 1:4–14; Numbers 2:3, 10, 18, 25; Ezekiel 28:11–17; Isaiah 14:12–14.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then I heard the Lord’s voice, saying, ‘Who can I send? Who will go for us?’ So I said, ‘Here I am. Send me!’ ” (Isaiah 6:8, ERV).



God plans to make us new so that we may show His praise to everyone in heaven.

GOD MADE EVERYTHING (REVELATION 4:11). So, everything He made is under His control. God loves us and everything He made. When we learn more about God’s love, we start to understand why sinners can’t be good enough to earn it.

This week, we continue to study about God’s love and His throne. As we do, we will think about how we, as sinners, can have a relationship with a holy God. We will look at how Jesus makes us new and brings us back to God’s throne. God plans to make us new so that we may show His praise to everyone in heaven. As we read the Bible, we find important hints that help us understand better the important and holy work that God gives to us.

God will end sin and fighting against His holy law. Then we will understand God’s love even more than we do now. God never planned for us to fall into sin. He never wanted sin to happen or for Jesus to die. At the same time, the cross shows us God’s love in the most wonderful and amazing way.

HERE I AM. SEND ME! (Isaiah 6:6–8)

When Isaiah saw God's throne in a dream, he was frightened. He said " 'Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure [clean] enough to speak to God, and I live among people who are not pure enough to speak to him. But I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful' " (Isaiah 6:5, ERV). God's light is bright enough to show us all our sins and to help us understand that we are lost. For sure, we would feel the same if we had this dream. But Isaiah is in for a big surprise.

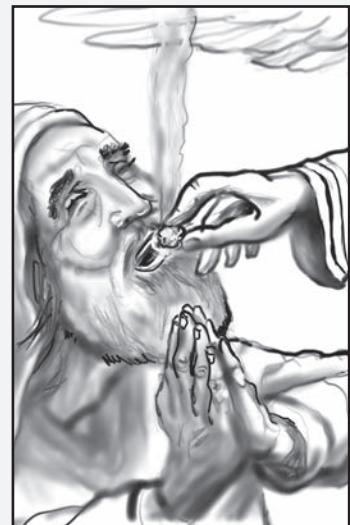
Read Isaiah 6:6–8. Isaiah knows that sin will destroy us. Sin causes death. But God doesn't leave us to die. His love brings us closer to Him. What happened during Isaiah's meeting? Why is that so important?

An angel took a burning stone from the altar and touched Isaiah's mouth with it. Then Isaiah was made clean. This altar was the altar of sweet-smelling perfume (Revelation 8:3, 4). The smoke burning from the special perfume on the altar mixed with the prayers of God's people. The smoke and the prayers went up to God. God forgave Isaiah's sins. Now he was allowed to stand in front of God. More than that, God commanded Isaiah to show who He was to the people on the earth.

The Hebrew word for angel in Isaiah 6 means "burning one." Look at Jesus' words in John 5:35 about John the Baptist and the work he did for God: " 'John was like [the same as] a burning and shining lamp. And you were happy to enjoy his light for a while' " (ICB). Of course, John was a sinner who needed God's saving mercy, too. At the same time, John's work helps us to see Jesus. Jesus is the only One who can give us mercy and save us.

Jesus was perfect. He showed us the Father's love and glory. The prophet or special messenger who announced Jesus was John. God gave John a job to do that was much the same as one of heaven's angels. John's job was to help people get their hearts ready to see Jesus.

After Isaiah knew that his sin was removed, he said, " 'Here I am. Send me!' " (Isaiah 6:8, ERV). Jesus' blood makes us clean and removes our sin. How can this knowledge help us to answer God as Isaiah does?



An angel took a burning stone from the altar and touched Isaiah's mouth with it. Then Isaiah was made clean.

THE TWO ANGELS (Genesis 3:21–24)

After Adam and Eve sinned, God commanded them to leave the Garden of Eden. At the same time, God offered them the hope of a coming Savior (Genesis 3:15). Then God put two angels at the gates of Eden. A bright light shone between the angels. Do you see how this scene with the shining angels helps us remember the ark of God's promise (Exodus 25:18)? The ark of God's promise is a symbol for His throne.

Read about the angels in Genesis 3:21–24. What job did God give to the angels? Why did God give them this job?



The angels God put at the gates of the Garden of Eden were cherubim. Cherubim are connected with God's throne and His holy Name.

The angels were responsible for keeping sinners from eating fruit from the tree of life (Genesis 3:22). The angels also were a symbol of hope and promise. God promised that one day humans would live in the Garden of Eden again. "The Garden of Eden stayed on the earth long after Adam and Eve were forced to leave it. Sinners were allowed to look at their lost home. But the angels blocked them from entering into the garden again. At this gate, the shining angels showed God's glory. Adam and his sons came to worship God at these gates, too. They promised to obey the law they broke. When Adam broke this law, humans were forced to leave Eden. . . . When God makes the skies and the earth new again (Revelation 21:1), He will make the Garden of Eden new, too. Then the garden will be more beautiful than the time when God first made it in the beginning."—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 62, adapted.

The words in Genesis 3:24 also are interesting. The Bible says that God "put" the angels to the east of Eden. The word "put" comes from the Hebrew word "shakan." The word for the holy tent where God lived with His people during their time in the desert also comes from the word "shakan" (Exodus 25:9; Numbers 3:26). The word for God's shining bright glory is "Shekinah." This word isn't in the Bible, but it also comes from the Hebrew word "shakan."

In the Bible, special angels named cherubim are connected with God's glory (1 Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1; Isaiah 37:16). The angels God put at the gates of the Garden of Eden were cherubim. Cherubim are connected with God's throne and His holy Name. This information helps us better understand the chapter about God's throne in Revelation 4. We sing God's praises because God forgave our sins.

BURNING STONES OF FIRE (Ezekiel 1:4–14)

As we saw yesterday, cherubim were special angels who were connected with God's throne. We can read about living cherubim (Ezekiel 10:8) or gold symbols of these angels (Exodus 25:18) all through the Old Testament. Often cherubim stand right next to God's throne. They shine with God's glory in front of everyone in heaven. Cherubim also are sewn into the curtain in front of the Most Holy Room (Exodus 26:1). In the book of Psalms, God is pictured with cherubim. These angels carry God across the sky. This word picture helps us see God's control over everything He made (Psalm 18:10). God commanded Moses to put two gold cherubim on the top of the mercy seat on the ark of God's Promise: "The wings of these angels should spread up toward the sky. The angels should cover the Box with their wings and face each other, looking toward the mercy-cover [lid]" (Exodus 25:20, ERV, also read verses 18, 19, ERV).

Read Ezekiel 1:4–14. What happens in these verses that is much the same as what happens in Isaiah 6:1–6 and in Revelation 4:1–11?

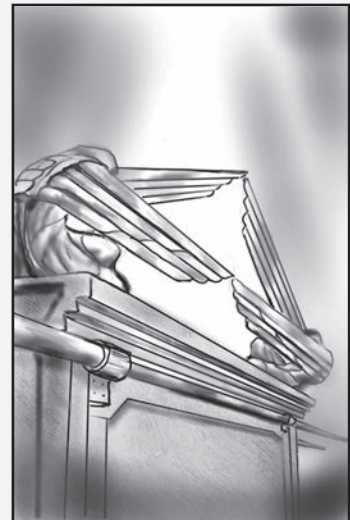
Ezekiel sees a powerful scene. As he looks up, Ezekiel sees God's throne above everything.

Do you see how Ezekiel's dream is much the same as other dreams in the Bible about God's throne? The living things that Ezekiel sees have the same faces as the living things in John's dream in Revelation: a lion, an eagle, an ox, and a man.

The living things with four faces aren't given a name at first. But later, in another dream about God's throne (Ezekiel 10:1–21), these living things are named "cherubim." We also see the burning stones from Isaiah's dream about the angels. The living things have the same faces as the living things in John's dream.

What does all this information tell us? Whenever we see God's throne, the cherubim are **always** there. They are connected in a special way with God's throne. God made angels and people to show His glory and love.

Ezekiel saw a picture of God's shining glory. Compare your glory to God's. How much do you have? What does your answer tell you about your need for the Good News about Jesus?



God commanded Moses to put two gold cherubim on the top of the mercy seat on the ark of Promise.

GOD AMONG HIS PEOPLE (Numbers 2:3, 10, 18, 25)

God would come down into the Most Holy Room of the tent and live among His people.

A cloud led the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land. God was in the cloud. When the cloud stopped, the Israelites stopped and set up God's holy tent. Then the 12 tribes of Israel, or family groups, put their tents around the holy tent. Three tribes camped on each of the four sides of the tent. Then God would come down into the Most Holy Room of the tent and live among His people.

The four most powerful tribes camped on each side of the four sides of the holy tent. Numbers 2 talks about these tribes. Who were they?

Numbers 2:3 (East): _____

Numbers 2:10 (South): _____

Numbers 2:18 (West): _____

Numbers 2:25 (North): _____

Notice that each of the four most powerful tribes flew its own special flag. The flag showed who they were. The Bible doesn't say exactly what was on each flag. But Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33 give us more information about the different tribes. "Some Jewish thinkers believe that a lion was on the flag for the tribe of Judah. A man's head or body was on the flag for the tribe of Reuben. An ox was on the flag for the tribe of Ephraim. And an eagle was on the flag for the tribe of Dan. So, then, the four living things or angels that Ezekiel sees in his dream were shown on these flags."—Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, volume 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2011), page 660, adapted.

We can compare this information with what the Bible says about the New Jerusalem. When we do, we will see something interesting: there are 12 gates with three gates on all four sides of the city. Each gate is a symbol for a tribe (Revelation 21:12, 13). The information about the camp of Israel and the New Jerusalem helps us to see an interesting idea: God wants to bring all people close to His throne. The book of Revelation teaches us that "I did not see a temple in the city. The Lord God All-Powerful and the Lamb were the city's temple" (Revelation 21:22, ERV).

LUCIFER'S FALL (Ezekiel 28:11–17)

It is hard to believe that Lucifer, now Satan, was the angel who used to be closest to God and His throne. Part of his job was to help show God's glory to everyone in heaven. But Lucifer was interested in his own glory. Lucifer did not want to give glory to the God who made him. Lucifer felt that he wasn't getting enough honor and praise.

Read Ezekiel 28:11–17 and Isaiah 14:12–14. What caused Lucifer to sin? Compare these verses with Revelation 14:1–12. Also compare Lucifer's fall into sin with the honor that Jesus gives us. How do these ideas help you understand what happens in Revelation 14?

God removed Lucifer from the holy mountain. Do you see that the saved will stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb of God? Lucifer was in Eden. Humans lived in Eden before they sinned. Lucifer will never live in Eden again. But we will live in Eden because of Jesus (read Revelation 22:1–3).

The following quote from Ellen G. White helps us to understand these ideas more: "God will win. The people that the Lord saves will replace Satan and his angels."—*The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 29, 1900, adapted.

The saved will be in heaven only because of the Good News about Jesus. The Good News is the most important topic in Revelation 4 and 5. The angels sing this song to Jesus: " 'You are worthy to take the scroll [rolled up book] and to open its seals [locks], because you were killed, and with your blood sacrifice [offering] you bought people for God from every tribe [family group], language, race [group] of people, and nation [country]' " (Revelation 5:9, ERV). This verse shows us the Bible truth about the Good News. Jesus died to save the human family!

Do you also see how the words of the angels' song are much the same as the words we read in the first angel's message? God commands us to preach the everlasting Good News to "every nation [country], tribe [family group], language, and race [group] of people" (Revelation 14:6, ERV). Jesus died for every person who is alive now or who lived in the past. Our job is to accept His gift of forgiveness and mercy.

How can we as a church and as Seventh-day Adventists let people know what Jesus did for them?



Lucifer will never live in Eden again.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Great Controversy Ended,” pages 669–671, 676–678 in *The Great Controversy*.

Jesus “looks at the people He saved. Jesus made them new. Every heart is filled with His love. Every person shows His glory. Every face shines with the beauty of Jesus, their King. Jesus suffered for them. He sees how His suffering changed them for the better. He is so happy at what He sees! Then Jesus announces in a powerful voice that both the saved and the lost can hear: ‘I have bought the saved with My blood! I suffered for them. I died for them, so that they may live with Me forever.’ The angels of God stand around the throne of God. They wear white clothes. They sing a song of praise around God’s throne: ‘The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom and strength, honor, glory, and praise!’ Revelation 5:12 [ICB].”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 671, adapted.



“Every face shines with the beauty of Jesus, their King.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① Imagine this picture in your mind: You stand in front of God. You know that God sees every sin in your heart, every mistake, every wrong act you’ve done. How do you think God will judge you? What will you earn for all your sins and mistakes? What is fair? What is your only hope? Why must sinners let God make them “right with himself through [because of] their faith in Jesus Christ” (Romans 3:22, ICB)? When God judges us, why must we put on Jesus’ holy life, the same as clothes? In short, why do we need the Good News about Jesus?

② John the Baptist did the work that angels who shine with God’s glory do. John was the same as a burning and shining lamp. Of course, John was the messenger that God sent before Jesus came to this earth. John’s job was to help people get ready to meet Jesus. In what way do we, as Seventh-day Adventists, have the same job that God gave to John the Baptist? How must we help people get ready for the Second Coming?

DEATH WISH: PART 3

Diana's husband got mad when three women continued to visit the house to study their religious books with his wife. On their wedding day, he told Diana, "Don't try to get me to go to church." Now he told Diana not to allow the women in the house and threw out the books they gave her.

The women invited Diana to their church's evening meetings. But Diana worked nights at Pizza Hut to help pay the bills. One of the three women pressured Diana to get a day job at a newspaper so she could come to the meetings.

As Diana studied, she learned that the women believed God made Jesus. They didn't believe that Jesus was everlasting. When Diana read their religious books, she saw that their Jesus didn't match the Jesus she learned about in the Bible when she was a little girl.

Then Diana and her husband separated. Diana moved with their three sons to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Diana had no child support, friends, or family. She worked full-time to pay the bills and care for her boys, who were ages 1, 3, and 5. Diana started dating a man who wasn't nice to her. Soon she started to think about killing herself again. Not long after, she dropped her sons off at daycare and school and went to a gun shop. She bought a gun. She knew how to use it from her Navy days.

Diana sat on her couch at home. She load the gun, pulled back the hammer, and pressed it to her chest. She heard a voice say, "You're a terrible person and a terrible mother." Diana gripped the trigger. Her heart pumped hard. Then a peaceful voice said, "What about your kids?" Before she could answer, the nasty voice said, "Your kids will be better off without you."

The peaceful voice said, "Your kids need you."

Diana thought about how her death would change her children's lives forever. Diana got angry. She came up with a plan to end her pain, but now she couldn't do it. She cried out, "I can't do this anymore! It's too hard."

The peaceful voice answered, "You don't need to. I'll do it for you."

Diana put down the gun. She fell on the floor and cried until she couldn't cry anymore. Then she called someone she trusted at work. Together, they drove into the desert to fire off the gun. Later, Diana took the gun back to the gun shop. But the owner refused to take the gun. He said, "The gun's used."

Diana told him he must take the gun back. She told him that she wrote him a bad check for it. Finally, the owner took the gun back and didn't report her to the police. Diana believed he understood why she really bought the gun.

Read more about Diana next week.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDRWE MCCHESENEY



Diana came up with a plan to end her pain, but now she couldn't do it.