



Exodus 25-40

God Dwelling with Man

The LORD God is pursuing an intimate love relationship with you. He will not end that pursuit until He has accomplished His eternal purpose in your life.

From Genesis to Revelation, we can see God progressively moving closer and closer to the heart of man.

We hear God walking with Adam in the late afternoon in Genesis. He also walked with Enoch, talked to Abraham, communed with Moses and the prophets.

GOD AMONG MEN

It is most interesting that more space is devoted to the account of the Tabernacle in the Scriptures than any other single object. Exodus chapters 25-40 give details of the plans and construction of the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting. Moreover, the New Testament makes figurative reference to the Tabernacle and its furnishings, and the Epistle to the Hebrews cannot be understood without a knowledge of the books of Exodus and Leviticus. Hebrews is the best commentary on Leviticus.

In the Tabernacle, we find God dwelling among His chosen people. "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, *as* the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct *it*" (Exodus 25:8-9). The Tabernacle symbolized the dwelling place of God in the midst of His people. "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel" (v. 25). Saphir says, "The Tabernacle was a symbol of God's dwelling. There is a Sanctuary, wherein is the especial residence and manifestation of the glorious presence of God. . . Almost all expressions which are employed in describing the significance of the Tabernacle are also used in reference to Heaven."

The Tabernacle was a temporary place of convenience where God met with His chosen people. It was simply a tent of meeting. It was for use in the wilderness wandering of His people. The thing of importance is that it was God's dwelling place. It was there in the midst of His people that He took up abode and met with them between the Cherubim, on the mercy-seat. In the holy of holies God manifested His presence by means of the Shekinah glory, and His grace on the mercy seat or place of propitiation.

The holy of holies found its anti-typical fulfilment in the person of the Holy

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The holy of holies found its anti-typical fulfilment in the person of the Holy One of God, His Son, Jesus Christ. The glory of God was seen on the Mount of Transfiguration. The apostles said, "We beheld His glory." Christ is the meeting place between a holy God and sinful man. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6). The apostle Peter concluded a message saying, "And there is salvation is no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). There is but one Mediator between God and men--the God-Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). He spanned the gulf between the holy Deity and sinful humanity because He was both God and Man. "God was in Christ reconciling a world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

The Tabernacle was the way in which a sinner might approach a holy God. It reminded men that sin separated him from God. The Tabernacle was God's dwelling place among men. It was a place of grace for the sinner. The sinner in his sins could not go to heaven, so God in the person of His Son came from heaven to earth, and died the Just for the unjust "that He might bring us to God" (1 Pet. 3:18). The Tabernacle was the evidence that God had graciously brought the redeemed people into a place of nearness to Himself. We who were a far off from Him because of our sin have been made near by the precious blood of Christ (Eph. 2:13).

The Tabernacle moved about the wilderness with the people. Yahweh became a pilgrim with His pilgrim people. He occupied a tent with tent dwellers. The tent of meeting symbolized God in the midst of His people dwelling among them leading, guiding, providing and protecting. Moses tells us "the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34-35).

This Tabernacle in the wilderness was a copy of the real one in heaven. Seven times we are told that Moses was commanded to make the Sanctuary after the pattern of it which was shown him in the Mountain (Ex. 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5). Nothing was left to chance or human ingenuity. The construction was according to the Divine model God gave to Moses.

"Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own" (Hebrews 9:23-25).

In Solomon's Temple God came and dwelt in a permanent dwelling place with His people in the Promised Land.

Land.

"It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:11-12).

However, when the people of Israel turned to idols, the LORD destroyed Solomon's Temple and gave His people over to Babylonian captivity for seventy years. King Nebuchadnezzar was only an instrument in the hands of Yahweh.

The Temple was rebuilt under Zerubbabel (Ezra 3:12; 6:15, 16). It seems that God did not dwell in Herod's Temple that replaced Zerubbabel's. There was no Ark of the Covenant and Shekinah glory in it. By Jesus' day, the Temple had become a den of thieves. The Roman General Titus in A. D. 70 destroyed Herod's Temple.

THE KEY TO THE TABERNACLE IS CHRIST.

The key to our understanding of the Tabernacle is Christ. It was a symbol, or picture and prophecy of the man in whom God would become incarnate and dwell with His people. He will be the final and eternal dwelling place (Hebrews 2:14-18). Hebrews contrast the pattern in heaven and the copy in Jerusalem. In summary the author of Hebrews said, "the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (Hebrews 8:1-2).

Moreover, God came even nearer to man in the person of His Son Jesus Christ. He is God with us. The apostle John describes God coming near to His people in these words. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. . . No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*" (John 1:14, 18). Paul wrote, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9).

Jesus began His ministry by cleansing Herod's Temple and the religious leaders wanted an explanation. Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body" (John 2:19-21). The LORD God tabernacled Himself in the person of His Son Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the incarnation is stated by the apostle Paul, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). The Tabernacle was the manifestation of God in order to bring Israel into communion with Himself. As Saphir says, "In the Tabernacle man's fellowship with God was symbolized through manifold mediations, sacrifices, offerings. But in Jesus we have the perfect and eternal fulfilment."

The Tabernacle was the place where sacrifice was made. Outside the court stood the brazen altar where the animals were brought, and on which they were slain. There the blood was shed and atonement was made for sin. Moreover, Jesus Christ fulfilled in His very own person the typical significance of this brazen altar. The body in which He tabernacled on earth was nailed to the Cross outside the city walls. The Cross was the altar upon which God's Lamb was slain, where His precious blood was shed, and where complete atonement was made for our sin.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ rose from the dead to live within you. Probably the greatest and most thrilling mystery revealed to Paul was this marvelous truth. It is "the mystery which has been hidden from the *past*

mystery revealed to Paul was this marvelous truth. It is "the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:26-27). Imagine that. A Jewish God taking up residence in a bunch of Gentiles! (Cf. Eph. 2:21-22; 1 John 4:4).

The Tabernacle in the Wilderness was the place where the priestly family was fed (Lev. 6:16-26). Christ is the food for all of the priesthood of believers today (1 Pet. 2:5). He is the Bread of Life and we must learn to feast upon Him moment by moment if we are to be effective priests in His Kingdom. He is the one upon our soul delights.

YOU ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD!

You are the Temple of God! "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). From the moment you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior He came by His Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart. He now wants to settle down and make Himself at home (Ephesians 3:14-19). The apostle Paul uses a word for "dwell" meaning to settle down in a dwelling, to dwell firmly in a place. The idea is to live in a home. To settle down and feel completely at home as a permanent residence. Where does He have His residence? It is "through His Spirit in the inner man" (v. 16). It is that part of the believer that has experienced spiritual renewal by the Spirit of God. This took place at the new birth when the Holy Spirit regenerated us. Our bodies are the Temple of the Holy Spirit where Christ dwells because Christ purchased us at the price of His own blood (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

All of these earthly tabernacles and temples were short lived in time. All were destroyed. Even these old frail bodies will turn to dust one day. However, there is an eternal Temple that shall not be corrupted by death. It is eternal, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1).

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ sets us free from the power of sin and death. The only condition for us to have that eternal dwelling place for Him is to believe on Christ as our Savior.

We are part of something even greater in God's eternal plan of redemption. Ephesians 2:19-22 tells us God is building His Temple and it involves you, me, and every believer down through the history of the church. "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." The New Testament church is a living, growing organism and new believers are included in God's Temple (cf. 1 Peter 2:5). Both Jewish and Gentile believers are being "joined together" into this "holy temple." Here the word for temple is *naos* which always refers to the sanctuary or holy of holies as is true in John 2; 1 Cor. 3; 6. Paul is not referring to the entire Temple area with its open courts (*hieron*).

God chooses and places individual believers into His Temple. He builds it. What is His purpose? It is to "become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit."

God came down and met with His people in the *Shekinah* glory over the Temple. Now He dwells in His new temple which is constructed of spiritually living regenerated believers in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit

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temple which is constructed of spiritually living regenerated believers in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells each individual believer who is His temple (John 14:17; Romans 5:5; 8:9, 11). His *corporate* dwelling place is composed of all believers both Jewish and non-Jewish.

When is the last time we read of the Tabernacle in the Bible? Revelation 21:3 is a picture of the new heaven, new hearth and the New Jerusalem. The apostle John says he heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them."

He goes on to tell us, "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Revelation 21:22-23).

Are you ready for that great and wonderful day when He shall come with trumpet sound?

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