

Journey Through the Bible

Exodus

Message 9: God's Desire For a Dwelling Place

Outline:

- I. **THE DESIRE OF GOD'S HEART—TO DWELL WITH AND IN MAN**
 - A. **Exodus 25:8** And let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst;
 - B. **Isaiah 66:1-2** Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest?... / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit.
 - C. **Psalms 90:1** O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations...
 - D. **Deuteronomy 33:27a** The God of old is your habitation...
 - E. **Jeremiah 50:7b** ...Because they have sinned against Jehovah, / The habitation of righteousness, / Even Jehovah, the hope of their fathers.
- II. **The Five Stages of God's Dwelling Place**
 - A. In the Heavens
 1. **1 Kings 8:39a** Then hear in the heavens Your dwelling place,
 - B. The Tabernacle in the Wilderness
 1. **Exodus 25:8-9** And let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst; (9) According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, even so shall you make it.
 - C. The Temple in the Good Land
 1. **1 Kings 6:12-14** As for this house that you are building, if you walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My commandments by walking in them, then I will establish My word with you, which I spoke to David your father; (13) And I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, and I will not forsake My people Israel. (14) So Solomon built the house and finished it.
 - D. The Church in the New Testament
 1. **1 Timothy 3:15b** ...the house of God, which is the church of the living God,
 - E. The New Jerusalem--God's tabernacle with man for eternity
 1. **Rev. 21: 2a-3a** And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,

READING EXCERPT

GOD AND MAN BEING A MUTUAL ABODE

There is a crucial thought in the Bible concerning the dwelling place of God and man. Isaiah 66:1-2 says, "Thus says Jehovah, / Heaven is My throne, / And the earth the footstool for My feet. / Where then is the house that you will build for Me, / And where is the place of My rest?... / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit." The house spoken of here refers to God's dwelling place. Although God has heaven as His throne and the earth as the footstool for His feet, they are neither His house nor the place of His rest. God cares for and looks to one who is poor and of a contrite spirit. This means that He desires to gain a group of people who are poor and of a contrite spirit in whom He can dwell. Only such a people can be His resting place. Isaiah 57:15 says, "Thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit." This verse shows further that God dwells not only in heaven, the high and holy place, but also in the contrite and lowly of spirit. These verses reveal that although God has

heaven and earth, they are not the dwelling place that He desires. The dwelling place that God desires is a group of people who are contrite and lowly of spirit, who seek Him and who are gained by Him. In brief, God desires to gain man as His dwelling place.

The Bible also says that God is man's dwelling place. In Psalm 27:4 the psalmist says, "One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / ...To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah." The psalmist longed to dwell in the house of God; he considered the house of God as his dwelling place. Actually, only God is man's eternal resting place. Moses, a man who knew God, says, "O Lord, You have been our dwelling place / In all generations" (90:1). The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah says, "They have sinned against Jehovah, / The habitation of righteousness, / Even Jehovah, the hope of their fathers" (Jer. 50:7). These verses indicate that the habitation of the Israelites was the righteous God. However, because the Israelites sinned against God, they were devoured by their adversaries and driven out of the good land. Between the heavens and the earth man has no real dwelling place apart from God; only God is man's genuine resting place. When a man departs from God, he becomes a fugitive and a homeless person.

There are two aspects related to the dwelling place that is revealed in the Bible: man is God's dwelling place, and God is man's dwelling place. Without man God is homeless, and likewise, without God man also is homeless. In the universe God and man are a mutual abode; God is man's dwelling place, and man is God's dwelling place.

THE BUILDING UP OF GOD'S DWELLING PLACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—THE TABERNACLE AND THE TEMPLE

Genesis 1 and 2 are a full record of God's creation. After God created man, He placed man in a garden (2:8); in the middle of the garden was a river that went forth to water the garden, and in the river were gold, bdellium, and onyx stone (vv. 10-12). In these two chapters we see a garden and some precious materials. These materials are the basic elements related to God's building (Rev. 21:11, 18-21). In the first two chapters of Genesis, however, there is no direct mention of a dwelling place or of building. The book of Exodus, however, explicitly speaks of the matter of building. In chapter 25 God commanded Moses to speak to the children of Israel, saying, "Let them make a sanctuary for Me that I may dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, even so you shall make it" (vv. 8-9). The fact that Exodus immediately follows Genesis implies that God's creation is for His building.

In the garden of Eden in Genesis there was no tabernacle. Even though they were both in the garden, neither God nor man obtained a dwelling place at that time. In Exodus, however, God asked the children of Israel to build Him a sanctuary, that is, to build a tabernacle so that He might dwell in their midst by means of that tabernacle. Thus, the tabernacle can be considered God's dwelling place. During that time, building the tabernacle was the primary matter in the living of the children of Israel. When the building of the tabernacle was complete, those who sought God could meet with Him in the tabernacle, indicating that although God dwelt in the tabernacle, His intention was to dwell in the midst of the children of Israel, to have them as His dwelling place. Similarly, after the tabernacle was finished, the children of Israel encamped around the tabernacle, and they lived and moved completely with the tabernacle as their center. This indicated that they took God as their dwelling place, their habitation.

After the children of Israel entered into the land of Canaan, the moveable tabernacle became an established, solid temple. David was raised up by God to be the king of the nation of Israel because he feared God. He highly regarded the building of God's dwelling place. Thus, he swore

to God and vowed, saying, "I shall not go into the tent of my house; / I shall not go up onto the couch of my bed;... / Until I find a place for Jehovah, / A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob" (Psa. 132:3 , 5). God delighted in David because he highly regarded the building of God's dwelling place. David gave his all to prepare the materials for the building of the temple, and later his son Solomon completed the building of the temple (1 Chron. 29:1-5 ; Acts 7:46-47). Regrettably, the children of Israel gradually became degraded and fell away from God. Then they were chastised by God and attacked by the Gentiles. The result of this degradation and chastisement was the destruction of the temple. The children of Israel also lost their nation and were carried away to Babylon; they could no longer live peacefully in the land of Canaan.

The history in the Bible shows that God always intended to build the temple as His dwelling place in the midst of the children of Israel. However, Satan did all that he could to destroy the children of Israel and tear down the temple. In the Old Testament the tabernacle and the temple typify not only the resting place that God intended to gain among men but also the resting place that man desired to gain before God. From the time that God created man, He has been continually working to gain a dwelling place among men. The psalmist who wrote Psalm 23 says that God is man's Shepherd; He makes man lie down in green pastures and leads man beside waters of rest. The psalm continues to say that man needs to walk on the paths of righteousness, pass through battles, and overcome adversaries with the ultimate goal of dwelling in the house of God for the length of his days. This psalm reveals that God's concern is to gain a dwelling place among men. His leading and provision for man are for this dwelling place, which is also the eternal habitation that man longs to gain. Such a dwelling place is both God's habitation and man's habitation; it is the mutual habitation of God and man.

CONCERNING THE BUILDING UP OF GOD'S DWELLING PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT—CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Christ as the Tabernacle Being the Mutual Habitation of God and Man

The Gospels in the New Testament also speak concerning the building of God's dwelling place. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word...the Word was God," and verse 14 says, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." God, who is the Word, became flesh; that is, God put on the flesh and became a man, dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh. This was the tabernacle of God among men, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament the tabernacle was God's dwelling place and the place where God and His people met. Hence, the tabernacle was God's dwelling place and man's dwelling place. The tabernacle in the Old Testament typifies Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Jesus Christ was the reality of the Old Testament tabernacle; He was the tabernacle of God set up among men, the place where man and God could meet together and have rest. Although people today may live in mansions and beautiful houses, they do not have genuine rest if they do not have Christ.

In John 15:4 the Lord Jesus said, "Abide in Me and I in you." This verse reveals that the Lord is our dwelling place and that we are His dwelling place. I often travel to different places for the ministry of the word and people ask, "Where do you live?" Apparently, I travel to many places and thus stay at different places, having no permanent resting place. Actually, I have a dwelling place anywhere I am because Christ is my true dwelling place and rest. Christ is the tabernacle of God pitched among men. He is a living tabernacle, and we can dwell in Him at any time and in any place and thereby have rest.

Questions:

1. Explain in your own words the 5 stages of God's dwelling place.
2. What were the two things that God accomplished at Mount Sinai?
3. What does the phrase "God's desire" mean to you now after this message?
4. What is God's building in the New Testament?

Scripture Reading:

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 2:19-21 Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then the Jews said, This temple was built in forty-six years, and You will raise it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body.

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Ephesians 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 You yourselves also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house into a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.