

Where Does God Dwell

Written by Joel McNabb

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David had fought all his battles and was finally at peace. Now, this shepherd boy who became king of Israel had a great desire to build the God of Israel a house. After all, he lived in a house, and he thought that God should have one too. Is it possible for the God of creation to have a need for a place to dwell here on earth? Is not heaven where God dwells and even rests? God is in heaven on His throne, and has all the host of heaven around Him. They are His wife: Heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of us all (Gal.4:26).

If God dwells in heaven and has a need for a place here on earth, what is it, where is it, and are we able to see it? Most Christians today believe that the building where they assemble is the place where God's home is. That is true, if it is a place where His Spirit can come and abide with those saints that worship Him. As David said, "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psa. 22:3). Maybe all of us who are believers have heard the words of Jesus, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). The Spirit of God was sent by Jesus after He ascended to the right hand of God and gave gifts to men. Now, when we worship and God acknowledges our worship, He sends His Spirit. We feel His presence, and God dwells with us, as he inhabits our praises.

God called Abraham out from his father's house, and made a covenant with him that He would make him a great nation. When the famine came to the land in the days of Joseph, God told Jacob that he was the heir to that promise, saying, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 46:3). Our Lord sent Moses into Egypt to bring a nation out from another nation (Deut.4:34). And Israel came out of Egypt "a nation, great, mighty, and populous" (Deut. 26:5).

God had a desire to have a people for His name, among whom He would dwell. After the I Am had destroyed Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt, He gave Moses His laws and the pattern of a place where He would come and dwell among men. "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Ex. 25:9). God showed Moses a pattern of the place where He dwelt in heaven: His throne.

The Apostle Paul said that the law was a shadow of good things to come. That means that all the things, the tabernacle and the things in the tabernacle, were not the real thing, but a shadow, an example, of how God does things and will always do things. I work in construction, and there is always a blue print for the building that we are going to construct. Many of these prints go into great details, and you can see that it is well thought out. It may be years in the planning process, before the building is actually built. Then you have to sign all the contracts,

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and the building has to be built according to the prints. God did the same thing with Moses: before the foundations of the world, God made His plans and blue prints. Now it had come time to set it up and build it.

If the tabernacle is a pattern or blue print of where God dwells, we should at least know how it is made and what is in it. After all, it is a diagram of what God has in heaven. A tabernacle is a tent – a temporary dwelling. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years, as nomads, having doubted that God was able to give them the land of promise.

The tabernacle had two major parts: the holy place and the most holy place. The most holy place, or holy of holies, was in the holy place – a tent inside of a tent. This tent was ten feet by ten feet, in which the Ark of the Covenant was to be placed, and this is the place where God dwelt with His people.



The holy place is God's throne on earth. It is from here that God conducts His business when He comes to earth. The Ark of the Covenant is His throne, and it has a seat on it. It was basically a box in which the law of God, the Ten Commandments, was placed. Exodus 25:10-21 describes the Ark: it was a box built of shittim wood, 2 ½ cubits long (about three feet), 1 ½ cubits high and wide (about two feet), and covered with gold inside and out. It had four rings in each corner into which the priests put rods in order to carry the Ark. On top of the Ark was placed a lid of pure gold: the mercy seat. On the mercy seat were two cherubims, all of gold, beaten out of one piece of gold. With one on each end, they faced each other, and with their wings stretched on high, they covered the mercy seat.

There is so much more detail that was in the tabernacle. This is but a taste of what the tabernacle was like, and all of the things in the tabernacle are important, revealing something about God and His throne. I want you to see that it is where God sits and dwells, here on earth.

“And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him” (Num. 7:89). Wherever the Ark of the Lord is – whether in the temporary tabernacle, or the more permanent house that King Solomon built – that is where He dwells. “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the

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children of Israel" (Ex. 25:22). (See also 1 Sam. 4:4 & 2 Sam. 6:2.)

And that brings me back where I started, with David's desire to build God a house that God said that he was not to build, but his son Solomon would build. Before David was king of Israel, in the days of Eli the priest of the Lord, the Ark was stolen from Israel by the Philistines. They took it to the city of Ashdod and placed it in the house of their god, Dagon. Every morning, when they went into the temple of Dagon, their god was found on the floor face down before the Ark. When God smote them with hemorrhoids, they finally got the point and sent the Ark of the Lord, with gifts, back to Israel.

Israel had problems also when it was brought back, because they had worshipped the gods of that land and had forgotten the Lord who had delivered them out of bondage. Samuel the prophet told them to put away the strange gods and prepare their hearts unto the Lord. For twenty years, the Ark of God was in the house of a man named Abinadab, and he sanctified his son Eleazar to keep the ark; and all the house of Israel was in mourning to the Lord.

The Ark of God is mentioned once more before David became King, when the first king of Israel, Saul, tried to use it in battle. After that, we do not hear anything of the Ark until King David had taken Jebus and built Jerusalem (Zion, the city of God). In 2 Sam. 6, we see him wanting to bring the Ark from Abinadab's house in Gibeah to Jerusalem.

Remember, it had been in his house for twenty years, and it looks as though they forgot God's law for carrying the Ark. Instead of being borne by priests, it was placed on a new cart pulled by oxen. When the cart shook a little, one of David's men put his hand on the Ark, trying to keep it from falling. God was angry and smote Uzzah, and he died. This upset King David, and he took the Ark to the house of Obededom until he received an answer from God. While the Ark was there, God blessed Obededom and all his household.

After three months, King David went and got the Ark. He took with him the priests that were supposed to bare the Ark with its staves, and there was great joy on the way to Jerusalem. With great joy David and those who were with him danced and sang before the Ark of the Lord; with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. David danced with all his might, so much that his wife thought he had made a fool of himself. He told her that he did not care how foolish he looked if he was giving glory in welcoming God's throne to Jerusalem, where the Lord could dwell among men again. In 2 Sam.6:17, they put the Ark of the Lord in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it, and King David offered burnt offerings before the Lord

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and had a great feast with the people. All was well now that God's throne, the mercy seat, was in Jerusalem.

Jesus said that all of the Old Testament was prophecy (Matt. 11:13). David and all that he did serves to prophesy of what is going to happen. Most Christians today could quote Isa.9:6-7, especially around Dec. 24th and 25th. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." This is, of course, spoken of Jesus, the fulfillment of the promise of God to David. As Peter preached on the day the Holy Ghost fell, "God had sworn with an oath to [David], that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:30).

It is commonly taught among Christians today that Jesus is coming to take us to Heaven. Heaven is where God's throne is and where he dwells. Jesus is there, sitting at His right hand, until the time of restitution of all things (Acts 3:19-21). God will send Jesus, Emmanuel, back to earth to sit on his throne, answering the prayer our Lord taught us, that His kingdom should come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus will have a throne like His Father's in Heaven. "And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness" (Isa 16:5). What did we discover was in the tabernacle that David pitched? That is right: the Ark of the Lord, with the mercy seat, and the two cherubims that overshadowed it. That is where Jesus will sit with His two witnesses on His right and left side.

As David had great joy as the trumpet sounded, and the Ark was placed in the tent he set, when the tabernacle of David that is fallen down is rebuilt, we too will be glad and rejoice that there is a place that Jesus can come to and dwell among men again, not as Lamb this time, but as King of kings and Lord of lords. Even those that pierced Him will be raised to see Him sit as King of the whole earth.

The Bible says that the tabernacle of David will be built again, and all the Gentiles on whom His name is called will seek after the Lord. Knowing that the tabernacle of David was also a shadow of good things to come, and having the promise that it will be built in the last days, we need to look around and see if we can find something like that being done, so that, when Jesus comes to it, we will be there and be a part of it. I want to do my part in ushering in that kingdom. I hope that you will join me in seeing that God's will be done on this earth. The Lord bless you

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and give you understanding. Amen.