



so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also”

(John 14:1-4). We can have confidence that, one day, perfect fellowship with God will be realized. We will have the ability to dwell in the presence of the most high God. Certainly we will experience and behold His glory.

Near the end of the book of Revelation, John gives us two images to which we are to look forward. First, he depicts the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10-27). As he sees this great vision, John records, “I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the

Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Revelation 21:22). God once inhabited a temple to display His presence with His people. No longer will that be necessary, because the presence of the Lord God and the Lamb are the temple. Second, John depicts the river and the tree of life. He writes, “**Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb... On either side of the river was the tree of life... There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face”** (Revelation 22:1-4). Notice how the imagery mirrors what was seen in the garden of Eden. We can look forward to the tree of life and the presence of God! Those are the exact things that were lost to man in the garden.

Do you desire to dwell with God? God has demonstrated throughout history that He longs for fellowship with His creation. How much more should we long to dwell in the presence of our glorious Creator! If you want to live in the presence of God you must pay careful attention to the words of Christ: “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.**” How stark the contrast will be when “**the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’... Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels’”** (Matthew 25:34, 41). Will God invite us into His presence, or determine that we are unfit to dwell with Him?



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Welcome Visitors

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BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

October 20,
2013

Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM
10:20 AM
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM



Elders:
Pat Ledbetter
Jeff Nunn
Kyle Pope

Deacons:
Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Steve Dixon
Jack Langley
Neil Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Walker McAnear
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott

Evangelists:
Kyle Pope
Andrew Dow

God Dwelling With Man

By Andrew Dow

The Bible is full of themes. A theme is simply an idea that dominates and unifies something. For instance, themes are often used in music. We might recognize a melody that continually reappears throughout a piece of music or a movie score. These are called musical themes and are used throughout to show unity. In the same way, the Bible is full of various themes. These are ideas that keep popping up throughout Scriptures, uniting the Bible, and helping us see the big picture.

One of the themes seen throughout Scripture is that of God dwelling with man. As we read through the various books of the Bible it is obvious that God desires to dwell with mankind, yet mankind refuses God’s efforts. This article will briefly examine how God dwelt with man (1) in the garden of Eden, (2) in the tabernacle and temple, and (3) in the person of Jesus Christ.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

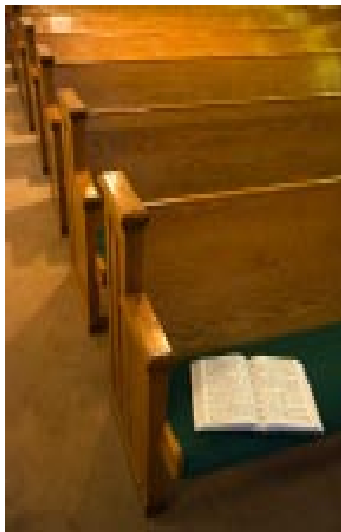
The theme of God dwelling with man begins in the first few chapters of the Bible. Following the creation account of Genesis 1-2, we read, “**then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it”** (Genesis 2:15, NASU). When everything is said and done, Adam and Eve are given a home (the garden of Eden), a work (to keep the garden), and a law (not to eat of the tree of knowledge, vs. 16-17). Man and woman live in fellowship with God.

However, as the story progresses, Adam and Eve fall to the temptations of Satan in the third chapter of Genesis. Eve eats of the tree of knowledge

and gives it to her husband to eat. Because of their sin, **“the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden... He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life”** (Genesis 3:23-24). Due to sin, God could no longer dwell with man. Despite God’s efforts to have a relationship with His creation, man turned against the law of God.

THE TABERNACLE AND TEMPLE

If we continue reading through our Bibles, we see



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God’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12; 26; 27-28). It wasn’t long, however, until the children of promise became slaves in Egypt (Exodus 1:8-14). At this point in history, God intervened through Moses and brought His people out of Egypt. Exodus 25-30 records the design of a special structure God commanded the children of Israel to build: the tabernacle.

A tabernacle is simply a tent. On a very basic level, that’s exactly what this structure was. It was a movable building that could be disassembled and reassembled at a moments notice so that the people could take it with them wherever they went. However, the children of Israel were not to construct an ordinary tent. The Lord commanded Moses, **“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them”** (Exodus 25:8). The Lord commanded this structure to be built, but He had a very specific purpose in mind. **“That I may dwell among them.”** God desired to dwell among His people and have fellowship with them.

As the book of Exodus comes to a close we read a majestic picture of the presence of God. **“Now in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected... Thus Moses finished the work. Then 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... The cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel”** (Exodus 40:17, 33-38). At this point, God is undoubtedly dwelling with His people. He is among His people day and night, and they see His glorious presence.

When the children of Israel finally conquered the promised land (Joshua 23:14), it came about that they built the Lord a permanent dwelling place: the temple (2 Samuel 7:1-7). After the Temple’s completion the Lord showed His acceptance and presence among His people. **“Now when Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house”** (2 Chronicles 7:1-2).

Unfortunately, just as in the garden of Eden, this fellowship would not last. It was not long until the people rebelled against God and His patience was worn thin. **“Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim... and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the Lord’s house, and the glory of the God of Israel hovered over them”** (Ezekiel 10:18-19). What a sad picture when compared to the glory that formerly came into the Temple. It is no coincidence that God stationed cherubim to the east of the vacant Temple in the same way that he placed the cherubim at the east of the vacant garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). Once again, God could no longer dwell with His people.

JESUS CHRIST

The Old Testament foretold and foreshadowed the coming of Christ, but the glorious coming of our Savior certainly surpassed even what the Prophets could comprehend (1 Peter 1:10-12). John begins his gospel with these powerful words, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God”** (John 1:1-2). Thus, John begins by harkening back to the beginning of the world, the beginning of mankind, and the beginning of God’s relationship with man. John continues, **“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth”** (John 1:14).

It is worth pointing out that the Greek word translated “dwelt” literally means, *“tabernacled, fixed, or had His tabernacle”* (Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol. II, pg. 51-52). A translation could accurately read, **“And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us”** (John 1:14, YLT). In the same way that the Lord dwelt among His people in the tabernacle, our Savior came and tabernacled with His creation. In the same way that the people of Israel could physically see the glory of God, John said, **“we saw His glory.”** The glory of the Lord filled the tent of a human (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1).

Even though God chose to dwell with man through His only begotten son, again, man rejected God. Each of the four gospels recount the terrible ways Jesus was afflicted and how He was ultimately murdered. We recall that three days later he was resurrected, showed himself to many people, and finally **“He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight”** (Acts 1:9). Just as the fellowship was broken in the garden, and just as the glory of the Lord left the temple, Jesus was taken back into heaven.

CONCLUSION

We have only briefly examined one theme that is found running throughout the Bible. We have looked at how God dwelt with man in the garden of Eden, in the tabernacle and temple, and finally in Jesus Christ. In each instance, man rejected God. However, thanks be to God, this is not the end of the story.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus made a promise to His disciples. **“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not**