

Title: **“WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?”**

Text: Exodus 25:1-9

Subject: *The Tabernacle*

Date: Tuesday Evening — November 11, 2008

Tape: Exodus #85

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Exodus 25:1-40 or Psalm
15:1-5, or Psalm 61:1-8*

Introduction:

Do you remember how perplexed you were by your children’s first questions about God? At first they seemed silly and childish; but when you took time to think about them they were simple and profound. Tonight, I want to answer the first questions I remember my daughter asking me about God. One day, after playing by herself for a good while, Faith walked into my office and asked, “Daddy, Where does God live?” That’s the question I want to answer. You will find the answer in Exodus 25:1-9.

(Exodus 25:1-9) “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (2) Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. (3) And this *is* the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, (4) And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ *hair*, (5) And rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood, (6) Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, (7) Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. (8) And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. (9) According to all that I show thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make *it*.”

The Lord God commanded Moses to gather materials from the children of Israel. The materials were gifts involving tremendous sacrifice and thoughtfulness, but gifts given with willing hearts, and gifts only from the children of Israel. Using these gifts Moses was required to make a sanctuary, an earthly dwelling place for the Lord our God; and he was required to make it exactly according to the pattern the Lord showed him in the mount.

TABERNACLE’S IMPORTANCE

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There is more written in the Scriptures about the tabernacle than there is about any other single subject, except of course the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The subject begins in Exodus 25 and ends in chapter 40. In Exodus 25-31 the Lord God gave Moses the heavenly pattern and picture by which the tabernacle its structure, furniture, and priesthood must be made. Then in chapters 32-34 we have an interval. In those chapters we are given very important words of instruction. Then, in chapters 35-40 the tabernacle is constructed.

God tells the whole story of creation in just two chapters; but when he tells us about the tabernacle, its courts, its furniture, and its rituals he does so with great and elaborate detail involving thirteen chapters. Almost the whole second half of the book of Exodus is devoted to describing the tabernacle.

Why has the Lord given us so much detail about the tabernacle? He has done so because the tabernacle, with all its furniture and priesthood, all its sacrifices and ceremonies was designed by God himself to be a picture and type of our Lord Jesus Christ and his salvation. I have no idea how much Moses knew about the things God showed him in the mount, or how much light the Lord gave him, but I am sure that he saw much and knew much, much more than most imagine about the person and work of the incarnate God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the redemption he would accomplish by the sacrifice of himself upon the cursed tree.

Again and again in the New Testament the Holy Spirit makes reference to the tabernacle and its furniture. In fact, it is impossible to understand the book of Hebrews without reference to the books of Exodus and Leviticus. The visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah involved visions of the tabernacle. And John’s visions recorded in the book of Revelation involved visions of the tabernacle. The tabernacle is central in the Revelation of God. It is central in the unfolding of God’s purpose of redemption and grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ.

THREE MEANINGS

The tabernacle has at least three typical meanings. — First, it is a type, a visible illustration, of that heavenly place in which God has his dwelling. — Second, the tabernacle is typical of Jesus Christ, who is the meeting-place between God and man. — And, third, the tabernacle is a typical picture of

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Christ dwelling in his elect, the Church, a picture of our union and communion with the Son of God.

1. **First, the tabernacle is a type of heaven, a visible illustration, of that heavenly place in which God has his dwelling** (Hebrews 9:21-24).

(Hebrews 9:21-24) “Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. (22) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. (23) *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (24) For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

The tabernacle was made to be a sanctuary, a holy dwelling place for Jehovah (Exodus 25:8). It was symbolic of God’s dwelling. It was an earthly picture of the heavenly reality. **Where does God live? He lives in Heaven.** That is the first answer.

Heaven is God’s Sanctuary, the place of his residence and manifestation of his glorious presence. Solomon, confessed, and confessed correctly, “*Behold, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee*” (2 Chronicles 6:18). Jeremiah said, “*A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary*” (17:12). The visions of Ezekiel and John set before us the heavens opened, a throne, and the appearance of a man above upon the throne. That man is the God-man, our Savior, in whom the glory of the triune God is revealed. He who sits yonder, upon the throne of heaven, he who sits upon the mercy-seat is our Divine Surety, “*He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not*” (Psalm 15:4). His dwelling place is on high (Psalm 113:5; Isaiah 33:5).

(Psalms 113:5) “*Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high*”

(Isaiah 33:5) “*The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.*”

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John said, “*And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened*” (Revelation 15:5). Heaven is his tabernacle, the holy hill upon which he resides, the place of his dwelling (Psalm 24:3). — “*Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy*” (Psalm 99:9).

2. **Second, the tabernacle is a type of the Lord Jesus himself** (John 1:14).

“*The Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us*” (John 1:14). — The tabernacle had particular reference to our Savior’s incarnation and his dwelling among men here on earth during the days of his humiliation. Just as the tabernacle was Jehovah’s dwelling-place in the midst of Israel so are we told that “*God was in Christ reconciling a world unto himself*”; (2 Corinthians 5:19).

(2 Corinthians 5:18-21) “And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

We read in Colossians 2:9-10...

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

The tabernacle was not something that originated in the minds of Israel, or even of Moses. It was designed by God himself. So, too, the Manhood of our blessed Savior and the redemption of our souls by the sacrifice of Christ, was God’s work alone. The human body which enshrined his eternal Deity, was a body specifically prepared by God for the accomplishment of the great work (Hebrews 10:5). **Where does God live? He lives in Christ.** That is the second answer to our question.

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3. **Third, the tabernacle was a picture of Christ dwelling in us.**

It was typical of God’s dwelling place in heaven, of God dwelling in Christ, and of God dwelling in us. **Where does God live? He lives in his people.** That is the third answer.

In the new birth, by a wondrous, mysterious work of grace, God himself takes up permanent residence in his people (John 14:16-18, 23; Colossians 1:27; 1 John 3:23-24; 4:12; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20).

(John 14:16-18) “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; (17) *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (18) I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.”

(John 14:23) “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”

(Colossians 1:27) “To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

(1 John 3:23-24) “And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. (24) And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

(1 John 4:12) “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”

(1 Corinthians 3:16-17) “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (17) If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.”

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(1 Corinthians 6:19-20) “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Once far from God and dead in sin,
No light my heart could see;
But in God’s Word the light I found,
Now Christ liveth in me.

As rays of light from yonder sun,
The flow’rs of earth set free,
So life and light and love came forth
From Christ living in me.

As lives the flow’r within the seed,
As in the cone the tree,
So, praise the God of truth and grace,
His Spirit dwelleth in me.

Christ liveth in me,
Christ liveth in me,
Oh! what a salvation this,
That Christ liveth in me.

With longing all my heart is filled,
That like Him I may be,
As on the wondrous thought I dwell
That Christ liveth in me.

REDEMPTION PORTRAYED

The tabernacle was God’s dwelling place. As such, it portrayed and typified heaven, the incarnate Christ and God dwelling in us in grace, giving us life eternal in, by, and with Christ. But the tabernacle also portrayed the whole work of redemption by which the triune God delivers his elect from sin and death by Christ.

- The High Priest — Christ our High Priest
- The Sacrifice — Christ our Passover

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- The Brazen Altar — Christ our Altar
- The Golden Laver — Christ a Fountain Opened
- The Golden Candlestick — Christ the Light of the World
- The Table of Showbread — Christ the Bread of Life
- The Altar of Incense — Christ our Acceptance
- The Ark and its Mercy-seat — Christ our Propitiation

In this tabernacle, upon the mercy-seat, the Lord God and met his people and communed with them. The ark of the covenant was not merely the throne where God manifested his holiness, but his grace also. It was called “*the mercy-seat!*” It is all covered with blood! Upon it sits the Lamb of God our Savior!

(Hebrews 4:16) “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

In all the offerings and sacrifices God was manifested as just and merciful, just as regards sin and merciful as regards the sinner. There God and the sinner met. So throughout the tabernacle there was the manifestation of God, not to terrify, but to bring his covenant people into communion with himself. In the tabernacle our fellowship with God was symbolized in the priestly mediations, the blood sacrifices, and the countless offerings that were made. But in Christ all the types are perfectly and eternally fulfilled. — “*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and thy shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God*” (Revelation 21:3)

CHRIST THE ANTITYPE

Of all that the tabernacle typified, Christ is the antitype, the fulfillment. The key to the tabernacle is Christ. In the volume of the Book of God, Christ is the subject, it is all written of him. **A. W. Pink wrote**, “As a whole and in each of its parts the tabernacle foreshadowed the person and work of the Lord Jesus. Each detail in it typified some aspect of His ministry or some excellency in His person.”

(John 1:14) “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

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The reference here is to the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first advent of God’s dear Son to this earth. The language John uses here takes us back to the book of Exodus.

1. The tabernacle was a **temporary dwelling** place. It was just a tent, a temporary convenience. The children of Israel used it for less than 35 years. — Our Lord Jesus tabernacled among us in humiliation of less than 35 years in a body of flesh that was destroyed by the hands of wicked men, but raised up a glorious body in three days by the Savior himself.

2. The tabernacle was **common, ordinary thing**, humble, and unattractive in outward appearance. There was nothing about it to attract the flesh or please the carnal eye. Nothing but plain boards and skins. — So it was with the incarnate Christ. His Divine majesty was hidden beneath a veil of flesh. He had no form or comeliness, no beauty that would cause anyone to desire him.

3. But the tabernacle was **God’s dwelling place**. It was there, in the midst of Israel’s camp, that the God of Glory took up his abode. There, between the cherubim, upon the mercy-seat he made his throne. In the holy of holies he manifested his presence in the Shekinah glory. — And the triune God dwells in the Word that was made flesh and tabernacled among men (Colossians 2:9-10), showing forth his glory in him who is our Savior; and we behold his glory!

(Colossians 2:9-10) “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

4. The tabernacle was **the place where God met with man**. If an Israelite desired to draw near unto Jehovah he had to come to the tabernacle, the place of sacrifice, the place of atonement. God said, “*And thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee*” (Exodus 25:21-22). — How perfect the picture! Christ is the meeting-place between God and man. — “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6). There is but one Mediator between God and men, the Man

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Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the One who spans the gulf between the holy Lord God and fallen humanity!

5. The tabernacle was **the place where the law was preserved**. The first two tables of stone, on which Jehovah had inscribed the Ten Commandments were broken (Exodus 32:19); but the second set was placed in the ark, beneath the mercy-seat, in the tabernacle for safe keeping (Deuteronomy 10:2-5). It was there, only there, within the holy of holies, that the law was preserved unbroken, magnified and made honorable. — Again, how clearly and beautifully this speaks of Christ, who magnified the law and made it honorable as our Substitute.

6. The tabernacle was **the place where sacrifice was made**. In its outer court stood the brazen altar, to which the animals were brought, and on which they were slain. There it was the blood was shed and atonement was made for sin. — So it was with the Lord Jesus. He fulfilled in his own person the typical significance of the brazen altar, and of everything else in the tabernacle. The body in which he tabernacled on earth was nailed to the cruel tree. 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 sin.

7. The tabernacle was **the place where the priestly family was fed**. In Leviticus 6 (16-26) the Lord instructed the priests to eat of the sacrifices “*in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.*” — Christ as the Food of God’s priestly family, that royal priesthood of believers to whom Christ is precious (1 Peter 2:5-9).

8. The tabernacle was **the place of worship**. Believing Israelites brought his offerings to the tabernacle. They turned to the tabernacle when they desired to worship the Lord. At its door they heard his the voice. Within its courts the priests performed their sacred service. — And so it is today. It is by Christ that we are to offer our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God (Hebrews 13:15). It is in him alone, and by him, alone, that we worship the Father. It is through him alone that we have access to the throne of grace.

9. The tabernacle had just **one door**. The outer court, with its solid walls of white curtains, was broken open by one gate only; telling us there is, but

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one way into the presence of the holy God. Christ is the Door, the only door by which sinners have access to God (John 10:9).

10. **The materials used in the tabernacle tell us that Christ is Lord over all the earth and that all creation shall be made to honor him.** The Lord God arranged for materials from every part of creation to be used in the construction and service of the tabernacle. The mineral kingdom supplied the metals and the precious stones. The vegetation of the earth gave the wood, linen, oil, and spices. Animals furnished the skins and goats hair for curtains, and the sacrifices upon the altar. — In Christ and by Christ, there is a day appointed when all creation shall be made to show forth the praises of our God (Acts 3:21; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 1:19-20).

(Acts 3:21) “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

(Ephesians 1:11) “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

(Colossians 1:19-20) “For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell; (20) And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven.”

PURPOSED AND PERFORMED

If you will read Exodus 25 through 40 at one sitting, you will see clearly that the Holy Spirit has given us two full accounts of the construction of the tabernacle.

- First, we have the blueprints for the tabernacle given to Moses in the mount (Exodus 25-31). God showed Moses the pattern and said, “Make the tabernacle exactly according to this pattern.”
- Then, in Exodus 32-34, there is an interruption, a parenthesis, in which we see a terrible fall involving great corruption and judgment.
- After the fall the tabernacle is constructed exactly according to the plan revealed in the mount.

Surely, none can fail to see the beauty and clarity of the parallel.

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- God purposed the salvation of his elect in and by Christ before the world was made. Indeed, our salvation was accomplished in eternity (Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-6).
- Then came the sin and fall of our father Adam.
- Then the Lord God began to perform in the earth his great purpose of grace.

(Romans 8:28-30) “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”

(Ephesians 1:3-14) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: (4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (6) To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (7) In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; (8) Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; (9) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: (10) That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him: (11) In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: (12) That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. (13) In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, (14) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”

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“Christ had been already provided, but man must feel the need of the Divine salvation by the actual experience of sin. It is touching beyond degree to know that all the time that man was rebelling against God, God’s remedy was waiting in that mount of grace” (Christ in the Tabernacle, by A. B. Simpson). — When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son. Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

THE SPIRIT’S WORK

Turn with me to Exodus 35:30-31, and I will wrap my message up by showing you one more thing that I must not omit. The tabernacle was, at last constructed by the agency of God the Holy Spirit.

(Exodus 35:30-31) “And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; (31) And he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.”

- Christ came to tabernacle among us by the power and agency of God the Holy Spirit in the incarnation (Luke 1:34-35).
- Christ comes to dwell in chosen, redeemed sinners by tat same divine agency, by the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit.

This is the message of the tabernacle: — “*Salvation is of the LORD!*”

- In its planning.
- In its purchase.
- In its performance.
- In its preservation.
- In its presentation.
- In its praise.

Amen.