

The Tabernacle of God is with men

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BIG SANDY, Texas—This is the time of year when many people associated with the Church of God observe some feast days in the fall. Oftentimes, believers approach these days by looking back in history and looking ahead in prophecy.

One section of Scripture that inspires many during this time of the year is Revelation 21:1-3.

In verse 1, John wrote about "a new heaven and a new earth." Continuing in verse 2, he talked about "the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven."

Then, in Revelation 21:3, John described the message of "the great voice out of heaven." The voice made the following statements.

- The tabernacle of God is with men.
- God will dwell with them.
- They shall be His people.
- God Himself shall be with them and be their God.

Many believers are looking forward to that time.

Of course, Bible students are very aware that God had previously expressed His desire to be with His people. In fact, He went to rather great lengths to establish the fact.

Time of Moses

God loves being with His children. Let's notice a few historical events and realize how much He enjoys the contact.

When God called Moses up into the mountain in the book of Exodus, He gave Moses many details about the ark of God (Exodus 25:10-22), the tabernacle (Exodus 25-27) and the priesthood (Exodus 28-30).

Notice excerpts of the following Scriptures.

- Exodus 25:8—And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.
- Exodus 25:21-22—You shall put the mercy seat above the ark and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony.
- Exodus 29:42-45—This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Eternal. And there I will meet with the children of Israel and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar. I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God.
- Leviticus 26:11-12—I will set My tabernacle among you. I will walk among you and will be your God. And you shall be My people.

Time of apostles

The book of Hebrews does a masterful job of showing how the connection between the tabernacle and the priesthood is explained after the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here are only a few statements.

- Hebrews 3:1—Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus Christ.
- Hebrews 4:14—We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.
- Hebrews 7:11—If perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, why would there be a further need for another Priest to arise after the order of Melchizedek?
- Hebrews 7:23-24—There were many priests and they all died. But this Man, who continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.
- Hebrews 8:1-2—Here is a summary of what I have been saying. We have a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. He serves in the sanctuary and the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched.
- Hebrews 8:4-5—Christ could not have been a priest under the old system, but that system was an example and shadow of heavenly things (which is why God instructed Moses on the mountain to follow the pattern).
- Hebrews 9:7, 11—The high priest went into the second veil once a year with the offering of blood for himself and for the people . . . But Christ became a High Priest of good things to come—by a greater and more perfect tabernacle (not made with hands).

■ Hebrews 9:24—Christ has not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true. But He entered into heaven itself to appear before the presence of God for us.

Reality for our time

Let's consider some of the teachings of the apostles that encourage us to see the power that God made available to us.

Here are a few statements.

- 1 Peter 2:5—You are built up as a spiritual house. You are a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 3:9—You are God's building.
- 1 Corinthians 3:11—Jesus Christ should be the foundation.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17—Don't you know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. The temple of God is holy. You are the temple.
- Ephesians 2:20-22—Jesus Christ Himself is the chief cornerstone. The building is fitly framed together, growing as a holy temple in the Lord. We are built together as a habitation for God through the Spirit.

Past, future and present

When we read in Revelation that the tabernacle of God is with men, we can remember the past and look forward to the future.

We can remember the pattern of the past described in the time of Moses.

We can remember the magnification of the past described in the time of the apostles.

We can look ahead to the time of the New Jerusalem when the angel announces his message about the tabernacle (Revelation 21:3).

But let's also remember a powerful lesson of the present. We can remember the teachings of the apostles that reveal the power of God within us today.