



# THE TABERNACLE

December 15, 2025 | *Exodus 25:1-9; John 1:1, 14*

## The Tabernacle

For the past two days, we've reviewed parts of Israel's exodus from Egypt. There are pictures of Jesus all along the way.

Perhaps the greatest picture of Christ in the exodus was the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a tent, a desert sanctuary in Israel's camp, but the symbolism is remarkable.

In *Exodus 24*, God invited Moses to meet with Him on Mt. Sinai ( v.12). There He spoke to Moses for 40 days (v.24). During that time, the Lord gave him the tablets of the Ten Commandments, as well as the plans and pattern for the tabernacle.

These were God's instructions. "Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me. From every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution... Then, let them construct a sanctuary for Me, *that I may dwell among them* . According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern for all its furniture, just so you shall construct it." *Exodus 25:2, 8-9*

Why did God want His people to build a sanctuary for Him? He wanted to dwell among them.

## A Place to Dwell

From the beginning, God has desired to dwell with His people. For example, He walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (*Gen. 3:8-9*). But, when they rebelled against Him, sin separated them (and us) from God. Consequently, God removed Adam and Eve from Eden (a picture of heaven), the place where He dwelled (v.24).

After the Fall, we see instances in the Old Testament where God met with and talked to

individuals (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), but He did not dwell with them permanently. However, after God delivered the Israelites from captivity in Egypt, He visibly dwelt with them during the exodus, in the form of a pillar of cloud during the day and a pillar of fire at night (*Ex. 13:22; 40:38*).

Then, God instructed Moses to build a tabernacle, which means “to dwell.” God desired to be with them every step of the way. The pillar of fire or cloud stood over the tabernacle, to remind His people that He was with them (*Num. 9:15*).

Notice that God gave Moses the plans to build the tabernacle. He said, “According to all that I am going to show you..., just so you shall construct it” (*Ex. 25:9*). In other words, sinful people cannot come to God any way they want. God must decide when, where, and how we come into His presence. For sinners to be reconciled with a holy God, we must come on His terms, by His plans, not ours.

Yet, even as detailed and extraordinary as the tabernacle was, it was not a permanent solution to the problem of separation from God. God only accepted animal sacrifices temporarily, for “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (*Heb. 10:4*). There had to be a better way.

## God With Us

What was the better way for God to dwell with His people? He would come to earth in the form of a man.

The prophet Isaiah foretold of this great event, “The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Emmanuel” (*Isa. 7:14*). Why Emmanuel? This Hebrew word literally means “God with us” (the Greek is Immanuel).

All of this, of course, was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, some 700 years later. When Joseph heard that Mary, his fiancée was pregnant, he contemplated sending her away secretly (getting pregnant before marriage was a disgrace).

However, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Do not be afraid, for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (*Matt. 1:19-21*).

The angel continued, “Now, all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet (Isaiah), ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel,’ which translated means, ‘God with us’” (*Matt. 1:22-23*). The Lord would dwell with His people by becoming a human being and tabernacling among them.

Remember what John said in his prologue? “In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and *dwelt among us*, and we saw His glory...” (*Jn. 1:1, 14*).

Jesus was the Godman. The infinite became finite, the invisible became visible, and the eternal

conformed to time. “In Him,” Paul said, “all the fullness of the Deity (God) dwells in bodily form” (*Col. 2:9*).

The disciples got to see a glimpse of that glory on the Mountain of Transfiguration. Jesus, the man, was transformed before them and displayed the glory of God for them to see (*Matt. 17:1-2*).

The phrase that John used — “the Word *dwelt among us*” — literally means “to pitch a tent or to tabernacle.” John was connecting Jesus to the exodus tabernacle. He walked with us and talked with us, just as He did with Adam and Eve.

But the author of *Hebrews* pointed out that Jesus was greater than the tabernacle of Moses. “He entered through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,” speaking of His body, which He sacrificed for us on the cross (*Heb. 9:11*). Since He was the better tabernacle, He secured for us right standing before God, something the first tabernacle could not do.

However, the story of God’s desire to dwell His people did not end with Jesus. Although Jesus made a way for us to dwell with Him in heaven, He sent His Spirit to indwell us on earth. “Do you not know,” Paul wrote, “that you are a temple (or tabernacle) of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (*1 Cor. 3:16*).

Through Christ and the Holy Spirit, God has made a way for us to dwell with Him now and forever.

What Child is this in the manger? The Child is Emmanuel — the tabernacle — God with us!

## Ponder and Pray

What is it that compelled God to tabernacle with us? God desires to tabernacle with you, but do you desire to tabernacle with God?

What are some practical ways that you can recognize God’s presence in your life? Pray towards that end.

**Have you missed some days?  
Click [here](#) to access previously emailed devotions.**

The reading plan and devotions were developed by Aaron Ferguson, one of our Elders and author of the *Study Guide and Daily Reflections for the One Year Chronological Reading of the Bible and the New Testament*. For more details, visit his website at [BiAY.org](http://BiAY.org).



