



DWELL

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SHORELINE.CHURCH

WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY

DWELL

From before creation to the present and beyond, God has always been. The Spirit of God danced above the surface of the waters in the darkness of a formless Earth, and He soared before us to create an eternity of glory for Him, His Son, and the sanctified. God has had full reign of the universe before the stars shown and yet He chose His dwelling place to be among us. From the time that God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, He was among us. God walked with Adam and Eve, drifted with Noah, broke bread with Abraham, debated with Moses, spoke through Isaiah, and then came and lived as a human being through Jesus.

This month we're studying God's dwelling place – where He chooses to be and what that means for us. We'll begin with the Israelites in the wilderness after their exodus from Egypt and how they prepared a place for God. From there, we'll navigate through the prophecies of Ezekiel for a new spirit and a forever sanctuary, and then the fulfillment of Scripture through Jesus.

Before we dig in, let's get a little background for reference...

There are several significant stretches of time in the Old Testament when there was no communication between God and His people, and no evidence of His presence among them. One of those was the 400 years that the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt. Finally, God sends Moses to get His people back! After some push-back by Pharaoh, God performs ten miracles that prove Himself as the God of their ancestors to the Israelites and frightens the Egyptians. The Israelites are released to follow God out into the desert. In order to survive in this wilderness, a hostile environment, they needed a space for God to be close to them and care for them. And as they needed to be near to Him, He wanted to be among them. (Cue the tabernacle in the wilderness).

Over 800 years later the Jews once again find themselves in exile, but this time God uses prophets to speak to the Jews, one being Ezekiel. Ezekiel's prophecies contain a theme of God gathering His people together, under one king, and giving His people a new spirit within them. While Ezekiel spoke God's words he could not have fully understood the extent of what he was saying or what the prophecies were ultimately pointing to, but for us, living two thousand years after Christ, we can see that it was all pointing to Jesus.

We still live in a wilderness today. Our world is hostile, and God never meant for us to walk through it alone. God longs to dwell in us, and as our spiritual ancestors did, we need to create a space for Him. However, because of the new covenant we live in, our space is not built with poles and canvas but with faith. It is not our works but our faith that not only brings us into the presence of God, but brings His spirit in us.

We have never been worthy of God's presence but, to Him, we were worth the cost it took to be forever near to us.

Tabernacle in the Desert

"I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." **Leviticus 26:11-12**

After God had shown Himself through miracles and began giving the Israelites the law they were to follow He gave them a mighty project.

Look up **Exodus 25:8-9 (NIV)** and fill in the blanks.

"Then have them make a _____ for me, and I will _____ among them. Make this _____ and all its furnishings _____ like the pattern I will show you."

What did the Israelites have to do for God to be among them?

It took manual labor to prepare a place for God. They didn't just haphazardly build a tent, it had to be done by God's specifications, but the people were not qualified to build a place worthy for God.

Read Exodus 35:30-36:1

How did God prepare them for this monumental work?

The Israelites had survived in Egypt working as brick-makers and fieldworkers. They were not skilled craftsmen and God knew that, He knew they were not capable on their own. The greatest thing God does for His people is to give them more than they are capable of accomplishing! Without God's Spirit moving within them and around them this task would be impossible.

When was the last time you were tasked with something seemingly impossible and had to rely solely on God?

At last, all the pieces have been precisely prepared and it's time to assemble.

Read **Exodus 40:16-38**. Underline each time you read "just as the Lord had commanded."

All the work, sacrifices, and offerings had all come together for the moment that God's glory filled the tabernacle. He was among them and would lead them into their promised land!

As beautiful as it was for God to be among them, He promised that one day His Spirit would dwell in them. They would not have to travel with a sanctuary or to a temple but that they, themselves, would be a living temple that would never fade away!

The Promise... Fulfilled

The prophet Ezekiel prophesied during the time of exile in Babylon. At the end of his ministry, the messages given through him were ones of hope, for a new temple and a new spirit. And this would come through the cleansing of sin, not by the works of man but of God. Let's look at two of Ezekiel's prophecies and the Scriptures that show the fulfillment of them.

Read Ezekiel 36:24-30

In verse 25 how does God say we will be cleansed?

The sacrificial rites for the atonement of sin was a command that was solely put on the person to do, God would accept the sacrifice and the sin would be covered, but the man had to do the work. Here God says that He will do the work. The reason that this complete absolution of sin is important is that God's spirit cannot dwell in an unholy place.

Now go to Hebrews 10:11-23.

How did Jesus's sacrifice change sin offerings forever? (v. 11-14)

What has God done to our hearts to make us worthy to enter his presence? (v. 19-22)

What action is repeated from **Ezekiel 36:25**?

Fill in the the blanks from verse **26-27**

" I will give you a new _____ and put a new _____ in you; I will _____ from you your heart of _____ and give you a heart of _____. And I will put my _____ in you and move you to _____ my decrees and be careful to _____ my _____ .

The book of Ezekiel uses the phrase "new spirit" two other times and each time is preceded by the cleansing of sin (**11:18-20, 18:31-32**). Only after we are cleansed by God, and we are made holy, can we receive the Spirit that will soften our heart towards His word and help us to follow His will, and that could only happen after the purest of sacrifices, Jesus.

Read Ezekiel 37:22-28

At this time Israel was divided into two kingdoms and also scattered because of war. In these verses, God promises one king for all His nation, one shepherd.

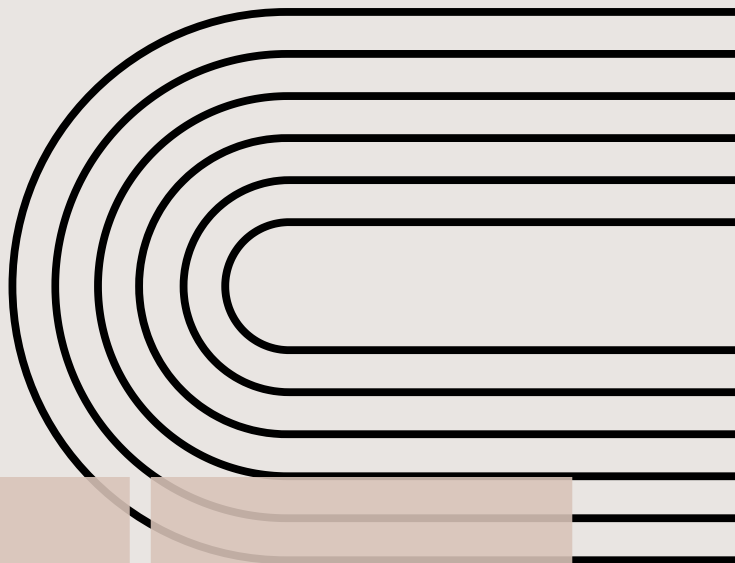
Go to **John 10:11-18**. As Jesus is speaking, who does He say He is?

Let's look forward and read **Revelation 21:1-7**. This picture of our eternity is the fulfillment of the covenant of peace, living in our inheritance, in the dwelling place of our God that will never fade! Focus on verse three and write out the quote of the loud voice.

This is a picture of our forever sanctuary. The promise given to Ezekiel was not just a promise for Israel but for all those who would believe.

REFLECT IN PRAYER

Journal or speak a prayer of thanksgiving to God that His promises never fail! Express your gratitude that we can be seen as holy, not by our works, but by the sacrificial blood of Jesus, and because of that, we have a new spirit that dwells in us!



Ezekiel 36:25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

Hebrews 10:22

Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

John 16:13

Ezekiel 36: 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.

1 John 1:7-9

Ezekiel 37:24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees.

John 10:11-18

Ezekiel 37:26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.

Hebrews 9:15

Ezekiel 37:27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Revelation 21:3

Tearing of the Veil

Read Hebrews 9:1-8

How many rooms were inside the tabernacle?

What were the articles in the Most Holy Place? (v. 3)

Who was allowed in each room and when? (vv. 6-7)

Each section of the tabernacle was separated by a veil, or curtain and God instated a strict protocol for the high priest that would enter the Most Holy Place. **Read Leviticus 16:1-2**. What happened to those that approached the Most Holy Place without the proper regard?

Jesus is the only way that we are allowed to enter boldly into God's presence. Before Jesus, there was a great divide between God and man, made by man through sin. God wanted to be among His people but His holiness was too much for sinful men, so the veil made His presence possible.

Look up Hebrews 9:11-14.

The high priests of the tabernacle would have to enter once a year with the blood of animals. How many times did Jesus enter the most holy place?

Scripture says the wages of our sin is death. Our death, not the death of an animal. The sacrifices of ancient days were a covering but they did not remove sin (**Hebrews 10:4**). In order for us to be glorified, we needed a perfect sacrifice to stand in our place and take on our sin. That person was Jesus. His sacrifice was **so great**, had **so much power**, it only had to be done **once** for the whole of humanity **forever**.

Read Matthew 27:50-51.

In which direction was the veil torn?

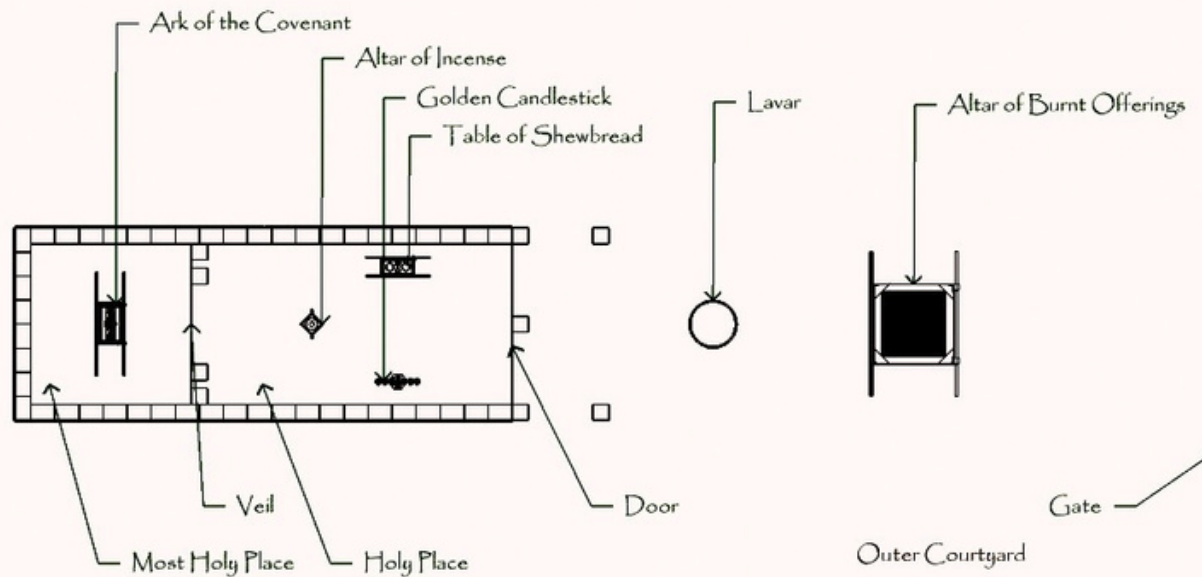
The veil in the temple was at least 30 feet high and ancient Jewish text says it was the thickness of a man's hand! God destroyed the barrier between Himself and humanity, He sacrificed His only Son and ripped the upholstery of His own design to make a way for us!

Read John 16:7-8.

When would the Spirit come?

Jesus's death did not only give us the gift of eternal life, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us. The Israelites of the Old Testament were able to feel God's presence among them, and now we stand as recipients of the promise of God dwelling in us. Never having to traipse through the terrestrial thorns without the protection of our Father.

INSIDE THE TABERNACLE



Tabernacle of the Heart

When we accept Jesus as our Savior our hearts become the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit since access to God only comes through belief. Scripture is clear that God does not hear the prayers of an unbeliever, for their heart is still behind the veil, unable to approach (**John 9:31**). Only when we declare with our mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, can we be saved and redeem our inheritance of the Spirit (**Romans 10:9**). There is no longer a barrier between God and us!

Read Hebrews 10:19-22.

How are we as believers to enter the most holy place?

Look at the first part of **verse 22**, what's our role in this relationship?

Read Exodus 20:18-19.

What's the difference between the way the Israelites approached God and the way believers are able to today?

God never changes (His mind or His position), so He was always available to us but because of our sin, we made that impossible. He made the sacrifice through Jesus so that we can be near to Him. We don't have to go through what the Israelites did to have God's presence, all we have to do is believe and draw near.

Read Ephesians 3:16-19 and match the key phrase with the verse in which they are found:

May have power, together with all the Lord's holy people

Verse 16

Strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being

Verse 17

Filled to the measure of all the fullness of God

Verse 18

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith

Verse 19

What does it mean to you in this moment that you have full access to the same God the Israelites trembled in front of? That you can walk up to Him in boldness because of His Spirit dwelling inside of you? That we may be filled with the full measure of God?

Each day we need to purposely make room for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, we need to lean into the direction He's leading, and trust His calling. Also, we need to be careful not to take His presence for granted. Even after two thousand years of His presence being available to all who call on Him, it's a remarkable thing that we are able to daily approach the throne of the King of eternity.

RESOURCES

Interested in going deeper? Check out the resources below.

Books & Videos

The Tabernacle by M.R. DeHaan, Zondervan Publishing

Temple by Bible Project
<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/temple/>

Old Testament Overview: Part 1 - The Pentateuch: Tabernacle (Exodus 24-40) by Preston Sprinkle, Right Now Media
<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/player/video/371665?session=371686>

Bible Studies

With God in Wild Places by George DeJong, Right Now Media
<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/content/details/347932>

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