

HABITATIONS OF PRAISE

The Tabernacle of David and Psalmic Worship

“Introduction: What is the Tabernacle of David?”

Acts 7:44-50

- 44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.
- 45 Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David,
- 46 who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.
- 47 But it was Solomon who built the house for him.
- 48 "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:
- 49 "'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?
- 50 Has not my hand made all these things?' NIV

If you recall the setting of this narrative, Stephen has been confronted by false accusers who testified that, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us." (Acts 6:13-14) Stephen, who was a man full of the Spirit of God and wisdom, gave a tremendous testimony of the progressive revelation of God in His dealings with man. The specific charge laid against him was that he had spoken against the law and the Temple. In reply, he refers King Solomon himself, the man who had the temple built.

1 Kings 8:22-27

- 22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven
- 23 and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below-you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way.
- 24 You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it-as it is today.
- 25 "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.'
- 26 And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.
- 27 "But will God really **dwel**¹ on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! NIV

Strong's definition-

OT:3427 **yashab**¹ (yaw-shab'); a primitive root; properly, to sit down (specifically as judge. in ambush, in quiet); by implication, to dwell, to remain; causatively, to settle, to marry:

KJV - (make to) abide (-ing), continue, (cause to, make to) dwell (-ing), ease self, endure, establish, X fail, habitation, haunt, (make to) inhabit (-ant), make to keep [house], lurking, X marry (-ing), (bring again to) place, remain, return, seat, set (-tle), (down-) sit (-down, still, -ting down, -ting [place] -uate), take, tarry. (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

Vine's definition-

Yashab¹ OT:3427, "to dwell, sit, abide, inhabit, remain." The word occurs over 1,100 times throughout the Old Testament, and this root is widespread in other ancient Semitic languages. (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (c)1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Where indeed does God dwell? This was the central issue under discussion. In his defense, Stephen mentioned three Old Testament structures that had been the habitation of God because the ark of the covenant had been in them. The first was the Tabernacle of Moses. We have spent nearly five months examining the significance of this structure in Scripture here in Maranatha Church. If you have not heard these teachings, we have the series on tape: The Tabernacle of Moses: The Messiah and His Church Proclaimed in Prophetic Structure. Understanding this structure is foundational to much of what we will be examining in the coming weeks.

Another structure that Stephen mentions is the Temple of Solomon, of course. But there is an intermediate place of worship that he alludes to in verses 45 and 46.

Acts 7:45-46

45 Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David,

46 who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. NIV

David desired to provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. Now, if you know your Bible stories you are probably telling yourself right now, "But God wouldn't let him build a temple because he was a man of war." That is true. David was not allowed to build a temple, but he did pitch a tabernacle.

2 Sam 6:17

17 So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. NKJV

Later in this series we will take a more in depth look at this section of Scripture. For now, suffice it to say that David pitched a tent for the ark in Jerusalem and then moved the ark there. What does that have to do with us? What does it have to do with the church of the body? What does it teach us about Jesus? These are some of the things we are going to be looking at.

Acts 14:26-28

26 From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

27 On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

28 And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. NIV

Barnabas and Paul return to Antioch after a very successful missions trip. Their ministry centered on taking the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles. As a matter of fact, every time they went to the Jews, major trouble ensued.

Acts 15:1-2

1 Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."

2 This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. NIV

Things in Antioch are going swell, and then these guys show up. They tell the believers, "Yeah, it's great that you have the Holy Spirit and all, but unless you are the right cut, you're not getting in." This, of course, was very upsetting to the Gentiles as well as to Paul and Barnabas.

Gal 2:1-5

1 Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also.

2 I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.

3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.

4[This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

This event was no small thing. On it hinged the conditions by which Gentiles would be deemed to be part of the Church. But these saints, the circumcisers and the Antioch church, didn't just duke it out in Antioch and decide to do a church split. No, they sent a delegation to the leadership in Jerusalem to decide the issue.

Acts 15:3-12

3 The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad.

4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

5 Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."

- 6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question.
- 7 After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.
- 8 God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.
- 9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.
- 10 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?
- 11 No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."
- 12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. NIV

Peter, if you recall, was the one who was given the vision of the animals in the sheet that taught him that God was no respecter of persons. He gave his testimony of what God had done in bringing in the house of Cornelious to the faith. Paul and Barnabas gave testimony of all that God had done among the Gentiles. But the Church still needed a decisive word, a rhema that would speak to their present situation, a revelation of what God was doing in their midst.

Acts 15:13-18

- 13 And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me:
- 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.
- 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:
- 16'After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;
- 17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.'
- 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works. NKJV

James, the Lord's brother, quotes one of the prophets and cites the Scripture as proof that God intended to bring the Gentiles into the commonwealth of Israel. In a strict dispensational view, this is not possible. After all, Jew and Gentile being one in Christ is the mystery and how could it have ever been written in the Old Testament?

Amos 9:11-13

- 11 "On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old;
- 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the LORD who does this thing.
- 13 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it. NKJV

Amos 9:11-15

These had been long confined to the vineyard of the Jewish church; divine revelation, and the power that attended it, were to be found only within that enclosure; but in gospel-times the

mountains and hills of the Gentile world shall be enriched with these privileges by the gospel of Christ preached, and professed, and received in the power of it. When great multitudes were converted to the faith of Christ, and nations were born at once, when the preachers of the gospel were always caused to triumph in the success of their preaching, then the ploughman overtook the reaper; and when, the Gentile churches were enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge, and all manner of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 1:5), then the mountains dropped sweet wine.
(from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

Christian theology gives us numerous windows through which to view the information in Scripture. Ideally, Scripture should educate our theology. In practice, theology often colors the deductions we get from Scripture. Two widely accepted (and I believe accurate) theologies are dispensational theology and covenantal theology. Often, expositors and teachers of the Word of God argue with each other based on the different conclusions they arrive to using one or the other viewpoint. This is the trap of classical Greek thought (which educates our Western minds): either/or didactics. The truth is that the different covenants instituted by God gave rise to the various dispensations (or administrations if you will) that we see in Scripture. Because it is the covenant which undergirds the dispensation, covenant theology has the greater weight of consideration when interpreting Scripture. This is important to understand because covenants overlap much more than ages or dispensations do. This is the case with the Tabernacle of David.

Lev 16:1-3

1 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD.

2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.

3 "This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: NIV

Ps 63:2, 7

2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. NIV

Certainly David lived under the law, squarely within the dispensation of the law. By that law, he should have been a dead man for having seen the ark in the sanctuary and actually sung in the shadow of the wings of the cherubim on the mercy seat. But he didn't. He had free access to the ark of the covenant and worshipped freely before it. And he didn't die or get leprosy like King Uzziah because he entered in under covenant.

In the context of Acts 15, covenants feature large. Circumcision was the central issue and circumcision was the sign of this covenant. Moses is mentioned by name, drawing our attention to the Mosaic covenant (the base of which is the Ten Commandments). The Sabbath day was the sign of that covenant. The new covenant is shown in Peter's testimony in verses 7-11 where he talks about salvation by grace. The sign of this covenant is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. What we need to understand is that the new covenant incorporates the truth of all the others,

completing some and amplifying the last one, the Davidic covenant. God used the Sun and the Moon as the signs of this covenant (Ps. 89:27-37) and proclaimed to be an everlasting covenant.

Why David? Because he was a man after God's own heart.

Acts 13:22

22 After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' NIV

How central to the gospel of Christ is David? How important is it for us to understand about David for us to understand about our faith? Our Savior? Two verses I believe will give us a glimpse of how important it is to the Lord.

Matt 1:1

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: NIV

Rev 22:16

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." NIV

The first verse of the New Testament and the next to the last words of Jesus Christ recorded in Scripture tie Him to David. David is more closely associated with the gospel of Christ than any other patriarch. In 2 Samuel 23:1 he is called the "sweet psalmist of Israel." Let us look at a verse in one of his psalms.

Ps 22:3

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. KJV

To answer the question of habitation raised by Solomon, Isaiah, and Stephen, David has an answer. Yes, God dwells in our hearts. But His manifest presence inhabits the praises of His people. It is to the end of understanding this habitation of the Lord that we shall be looking at the Tabernacle of David and Psalmic worship in the coming weeks.