

# And made his dwelling among us...

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**Readings:** Ex.25:8-9

Ex.29:42-46

Ex.40:34-38

John 15:1-10

## Recapitulation of Part 1 (28 December):

John 1:14 = **most revolutionary verse in NT**

"Word became flesh": **embraces full human reality** – "What if God was One of Us?" (Total commitment/involvement of the Incarnation)

- Knows us through and through (**he's been there...**)
- There for us **where we are...**
- Gospel is **personal** (not just **propositional**) and **incarnational**

"Bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh" = true **humanity** of the Word made flesh...

**"And Made His Dwelling Among Us..."** = true **divinity** of the Word made flesh...

"Made his dwelling..." = *skēnoō* (not the usual word for "dwell" in NT: *skēnoō/skēnē* 32x, especially in Hebrews [10x] and Revelation [7x]). Specific meaning = "**to pitch one's tent**"

International Standard Version (margin) = "**he pitched his tent** among us..."

2 **significant implications** emerge from the use of this word...

1. **Tent = "Tabernacle"** (reference to either the Tabernacle of Moses, or to the heavenly Tabernacle of which it was a shadow), e.g. Heb.8:2, 5

**What was the significance of the Tabernacle?** (Enormous detail – nearly 40 consecutive chapters in Exodus/Leviticus about building/ maintenance/functioning of the Tabernacle)

**Ex.25:8-9** “<sup>8</sup>Have them make a sanctuary [*miqdash* = holy place] for me. And I will dwell [*shakēn* = sojourn] among them. <sup>9</sup>Make this tabernacle [*'ohel* = tent] and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”

**Contrast** is with “consuming fire” of God’s [remote] presence on Sinai, which only Moses could approach (Ex.24:17-18); now God could dwell among His people...

**Ex.29:42-46** “<sup>42</sup>For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting [*'ohel mo'ed* = meeting place] before the Lord. There I will meet with you and speak to you; <sup>43</sup>there also I will meet with the Israelites and the place will be consecrated by my glory. <sup>44</sup>So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. <sup>45</sup>Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. <sup>46</sup>They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them...”

**Note** what God does at the Tent of Meeting:

- Meet with you (v.42)
- Speak to you (v.42)
- Consecrate (vv.43-44)
- Dwell among the Israelites (vv.45-46)
- Be their God (vv.45-46)

**Ex.40:34-38** “<sup>34</sup>Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup>Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. <sup>36</sup>In all the travels if the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; <sup>37</sup>but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. <sup>38</sup>So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.”

In later Jewish commentaries (the Targums) this cloud was called the *Shekinah* [from *shakēn* = dwell] to indicate the manifest presence of God (i.e. the visible representation of God's presence). More than just a “royal standard”; could see and enter God’s presence through the *Shekinah*.

Jesus “tabernacled” among us: the visible representation of God’s manifest presence (and we have seen his [*shekinah*] glory...)

### **What does this mean for us?**

- a. Jesus is one with God, just as He is also one with us (Fully God, fully man):

**John 10:30** “I and the Father are one” (also John 17:11, 22)

**John 10:38; 14:10** “The Father is in me, and I in the Father”

**John 14:9** “He who has seen me has seen the Father”

- b. God has presenced Himself with us in Jesus:

**Matt.1:23** “Immanuel” – “God with us”

**Matt.18:20** “Where two or three are come together in my name, there I am with them”

**2 Cor.5:19** “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ...”

- c. Jesus is the manifest presence (*Shekinah*) of God amongst us, which could be seen and encountered

**Heb.1:2-3** “<sup>2</sup>...in the last days he has spoken to us by his Son.... <sup>3</sup>The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being...”

**1 John 1:1-3** “<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard...”

## 2. BUT: Tent/tabernacle = temporary accommodation?

*Shakēn* [“dwell”] means “to settle temporarily”, “to sojourn”

Tabernacle eventually replaced by Solomon’s Temple

- Did this mean that God’s presence among his people was only temporary?
- Did God dwell among us only as long as Jesus was here?

Key passage: **John 15:1-10** The Vine and the Branches

One of the key words of John’s gospel = *menō* (“to continue to be present”) – 41x in John’s gospel (out of 118x in NT) – translated abide, remain, dwell, continue, etc.

<sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup>You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, as I also [remain] in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup>“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

<sup>9</sup>“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”

### What does this mean for us?

- Not just God remaining with His people; also His people remaining in me/the vine/my words/my love
- Deepest possible inter-relationship: permanent and enduring

### How does this happen? How can temporary earthly life of Jesus and abiding Presence of God among us be reconciled?

John 1:32-33 <sup>32</sup>"I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain [*meno*] on him. <sup>33</sup>...The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain [*meno*] is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit."

John 14:16-17 "<sup>16</sup>I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever—<sup>17</sup>the Spirit of Truth..."

John 16:7 "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."

God made his dwelling among us in Jesus; continues to dwell among us by His Holy Spirit...