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# The Indwelling of God

## Isaiah 57:15

**Introduction** The high and holy God who inhabits eternity dwells in the contrite heart and meek. For the sake of our walk and worship, let us gather around the Word to think about that theme through the Bible.

### Promise: The Indwelling under the Old Covenant

The unfolding of redemptive history begins with early and simple ideas of a theme. This is no less true with the theme of the indwelling of God.

#### Individual: God with People

The early record of Genesis history only barely hints at the purpose of God to tabernacle with man. God began disclosing Himself as the Holy Creator and Sustainer of life who would engage man in a real and living relationship. This relationship is characterized all through the Bible as “walking with God”. Genesis shows how from the beginning God purposed to commune and fellowship with man.

The creation account in Genesis chapters one and two shows God creating Adam as being capable of companionship. He was made in God’s image, understood and interpreted God’s created order and was given a helping companion for life. This interaction taught Adam that God is both Sovereign King and kind benefactor. God will command, and God will provide.

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. (Genesis 2:8-10)

Eden is the place where God dwelled on earth before the flood. The Garden is in its environs. The wealth and importance of kings were often measured by the greatness and grandness of the gardens they planted near their residences. Thus, this wonderful Garden is the place where man will dwell near the dwelling of God. The Garden is watered by the river out of Eden. Out of Eden, God’s dwelling flowed a river to be the source of the Garden’s life. That river then branched off at the Garden into the four great rivers of the Fertile Crescent. Thus, the river from Eden flowing through the garden becomes the source of blessing and sustenance to the rest of the world. The point here is that God Himself in His dwelling place, pours a river into the Garden out of which comes the flow of blessing for all the earth.

Part of God's provision is the garden in the east of Eden that Adam was to till and keep. The Garden of Eden was Adam and Eve's dwelling place. It is where they live. God has given it to them, ordered their life there and given them the responsibility for its upkeep. There it is that the "Lord God [comes] walking in the cool of the day" (Genesis 3:8). Their desperate attempts to cover the fact of their sin only highlights their great loss. It is quite evident that their regular experience had been to commune with God. But their sin had broken that relationship and shattered their fellowship. Instead of gladness in God's Presence, there is guilt. Further, God's judgment causes them to be expelled from the Garden of God.

But God's mercy opens a way that Adam and Eve and their sons and daughters may come to have a relationship with God. A careful reading of Genesis 4 and the sad tale of Abel's murder by his brother shows that they were expected to come to a place with sacrifice and that communion with God happened there (v.3-7). Yet God's gracious warning to Cain is ignored and sin, crouching at the door, leaps on him, sinking its deep claws into his heart. Envy and hatred drive him to kill his brother, that one whom his mother reckoned as the fruit of God's promise (Genesis 3:15).

So from creation to the judgment of the flood, God walked with men. He walked with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Enoch walked with God and is taken into heaven. Noah walked with God as a righteous and blameless man. Therefore, we are to think of God and man in a fellowship and communion characterized as "walking with God." It is distinctly individual and personal and frankly, at least in the view of the Scriptural data, rare. What would later become God dwelling with and in man, begins as God walking with man.

### **Familial: God with the Patriarchs**

Beginning with Abraham, there is a discernable shift from God with man as individuals, to God with man as a family or a clan. The first clearly covenantal language is that of the Noahaic Covenant. It is given to an individual, Noah, on behalf of the whole human race. It is universal in scope. The Abrahamic Covenant is given to an individual, Abraham, on behalf of his descendents. God's purpose to dwell with man is moving forward through the narrowed scope of Abraham and his descendants.

There emerges from observing man's relationship with God a clear pattern of unfolding disclosure. We see it in the meta-sense of the whole of the Scripture. We also see it in the ever-increasing clarity by which God shows Himself to Abraham. In Genesis 12, Abraham is called out of his homeland to a journey whose destination is not yet shown. He is promised simply that he will be blessed in such a way that in him "all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). At this point, in redemptive history, the object to which this promise points is still dimly in view awaiting the clarity of apostolic teaching (Galatians 3:6-9).

Upon his arrival in the borders of Canaan, God appears to Abraham and says, "To your seed [descendants] I will give this land" (Genesis 12:6). Abraham builds an altar to the Lord. The Scriptures tell us that, "he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD." Bethel is an important

place in the history of Israel. The word means “the house of God.” It was recognized as a special place of God’s manifested presence. Altars were built here according to Genesis 12:6; 13:3; 35:1. The people of God came here to inquire of God (Judges 20:18) and to sacrifice in God’s presence (Judges 20:26; 21:2-4). Prophets lived there (1 Kings 13:11; 2 Kings 2:3). Jeroboam, in an attempt to discourage the people from going to Jerusalem to worship, built golden calves and developed a false priesthood, establishing them in Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:25-33). These false altars became the center of Israel’s trust and God’s condemnation through Amos (Amos 3:14; 5:5-6).

The covenants God makes with Abraham promise him a land to dwell in, descendants to dwell in that land, and a child as his first descendant. Abraham’s response to all different kinds of situations, testings and temptations shows that he has a growing understanding of who God is and what God will do. Hebrews 11:8-12 tells us that Abraham lived in tents in the land of promise “for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.” Verse 13 tells us that “all these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” Therefore, the heart of Abraham’s faith was in believing what God had promised and in seeing, in some way, the breathtaking glory of the future that awaits us in the New Jerusalem.

The clearest revelation by God of His dwelling with the patriarchs is given to Jacob in Genesis 28:10-22. We find Jacob on the run after deceiving his father and stealing his brother’s birthright and blessing. His mother in shielding him from Esau’s anger (Genesis 27:41-45), convinces Isaac to send him away to find a wife (v.46). So he is traveling from Beer-Sheba towards Haran when nightfall overtakes him. He piles up stones as a pillow and in his sleep, dreams of a ladder reaching to heaven with angels going up and down on it (Genesis 28:10-12). Further,

And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. 14 Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” (Genesis 28:13-15).

Jacob’s awed reaction is, “‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it.’ He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven’” (Genesis 28:16-17). Marcus Dods notes, “The world that had been so bleak and empty to him, is filled with a majestic vital presence.”<sup>1</sup> He has seen the awe-inspiring presence of God and heard the affirming promises of God. God will be with Him. God will bring him into the land of his inheritance. The presence of God and the promises of God come to him in the place where God dwells. This is “the house of God and the gate of heaven.” This is Bethel. This is a place where God particularly manifests Himself. To the patriarchs God was with them in His promises. His

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus Dods, *The Expositor’s Bible: Genesis*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton), p. 286.

covenants demonstrated God's future purpose to provide a land in which they and their descendants would dwell. To Jacob in particular, God gave insight that the Lord would manifest His special presence and power *in places*. This begins to set in motion the unfolding drama that would be the nation of Israel's experience of tenting with God.

## National: God among Israel

The next stage in the indwelling of God moves from God with men to God among men. The constant language of God's dwelling with Israel is that of being among His people.

### The Tabernacle

The pursuit of our theme brings us to Israel as nation, on her exodus from 400 years of slavery. God is now concerned to show Himself by dwelling with Israel in her very midst. As Israel left Egypt and began the long trek to the Promised Land, God's shining Presence, His Shekinah Glory went before them to lead them as to where they should go and to show them where they were to stop and rest. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup>He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (Genesis 13:21-22). That pillar of cloud by day and fire by night was a way of God's manifesting His Presence to His people. Israel therefore had before them visible evidence that God was with them. But that pillar of cloud and fire could only be seen from a distance.

As soon as Israel came to Mount Sinai, God gave them His Covenant of Law (Exodus 19-24). After the people had heard the book of the covenant and agreed to it (Exodus 24:7), God gave them through Moses, a wonderful new idea. God would give them instructions on bringing their contributions for the construction of a *place where He would come and dwell among them*. God was clear all through the Scriptural accounts of His intent to dwell in the Tabernacle in order to be with or among His people. God's word to Moses was, "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8).

What was to be constructed was built exactly according to Divine specifications. There could be no deviation. The place where God was to dwell was not to be a place of man's design. It was to be neither a monument to design nor merely functional. Its orderly arrangement, portability, materials, all that went into its construction was to be "according to all that I [God] am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it" (Genesis 25:9).

In Hebrews 8:5, we are told that the Tabernacle was "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the Tabernacle; for, 'See', He says, 'that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.'" From this it is clear that the pattern was "an exact replica of something which already existed in Heaven. It is certainly

plainly stated that Moses saw it.”<sup>2</sup> This tent was to be an earthly facsimile of the grand spiritual reality.

It is significant that, after giving the details of the construction of the Tabernacle and all the sacrifices that are to be a part of its service, God declared His purpose once again in Exodus 29:42-46.

It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. 43 There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord their God. (Exodus 29:42-46)

This text establishes powerful principles for the indwelling presence of God.

**THE INDWELLING OF GOD IS AN ACT OF MERCY ON GOD’S PART.** God initiates the indwelling. Man has no right or claim on God. God initiates in all respects His interaction with man. It is entirely of His mercy. There is no need or compulsion or inward bent in God that makes a relationship with man necessary. Yet, the Scriptures declare that God chooses and desires this relationship.

**THERE IS NO MEETING WITH GOD WITHOUT SACRIFICE.** We are reminded here of the devastating consequences of sin. God is dwelling in and meeting with sinners. It was and continues to be sin that separates man from God. So if there is to be union and communion, it can only come on the basis of sacrifice. God has clearly revealed from the first heartbeats after the fall that sin is dealt with by blood sacrifice.

**THE INDWELLING OF GOD BRINGS A CONSECRATING GLORY.** The very presence of God in the tabernacle and upon the altar makes it holy. It is a purifying and transforming glory. It turns wood and gold and silver and cloth garments into material vessels upon which the glory of God leaves its bright stamp. Even the priests will be set apart. This setting apart effect is evident all through the growing understanding Israel had of the significance of God’s dwelling with them. This consecrating effect made the casual and indifferent approach of later generations a rotting stench to God.

**THE INDWELLING OF GOD AFFIRMED GOD’S ETERNAL COMMITMENT TO BE THEIR GOD.** When Israel recognized that God dwelled in the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, there was a sense of inner conviction and strong affirmation that God was their God. He, in a sense, had made a commitment to them and was for them. This should have promoted among them a deep sense of reliance in the prevailing power of God to bring about all of His promises in time and eternity.

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<sup>2</sup> Olford, p.43.

Exodus chapters 34-40 detail the fabricating and construction of the Tabernacle itself. The craftsmanship employed and the skill required in following the precise instructions from God, along with the costliness of the materials emphasize the quality of work that pleases God. Then we come to those wonderful verses that consummate the first erection of the Tabernacle.

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:34-35)

The glorious presence of God descended on the Tabernacle because Moses had finished the work (Exodus 40:33). In language pregnant with import, we have a completed work and a glorious indwelling. No one could miss the significance. When all the work on the Tabernacle was done, every piece finished and in its place; when all was readied — then God came down in incomprehensible and visible glory to “fill the Tabernacle.” This glorious in-filling was of such a magnitude that *not even* Moses could enter the tent of meeting.

## The Temple

God had manifested His presence by dwelling in a tent. David, the great king of Israel, hungered for a place more worthy of the glory of God. Israel was settled into the land. God had secured the borders of the Kingdom. David’s house was even more majestic than the tent of meeting. But God would not allow him to build it. God promised David that his son would build it. David had a purpose for which he served his people. His son, Solomon, would be raised up to build this Temple.

David understood something key to the Temple being God’s dwelling. He articulated it in this way, “My son Solomon, whom God alone has chosen, is still young and inexperienced and the work is great; for the temple is not for man, but for the Lord God” (1 Chronicles 29:1). O that Israel had been gripped by this same understanding down through the years: *the temple is not for man, but for the Lord God*. O that our hearts would be gripped by this astonishing and life transforming truth – the present dwelling place of God, we His temple, we are not for ourselves, but for the Lord our God.

In the building of Solomon’s Temple, a tension begins to be explored. We find it first in Solomon’s letter to Hiram, King of Tyre.

<sup>4</sup> “Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him, and *to set out* the showbread continually, and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on sabbaths and on new moons and on the appointed feasts of the LORD our God, this *being required* forever in Israel. <sup>5</sup> “And the house which I am about to build *will be* great; for greater is our God than all the gods. <sup>6</sup> “But who is able to build a house for Him, for the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain Him? So who am I, that I should build a house for Him, except to burn *incense* before Him? (2 Chronicles 2:4-6)

Here is the question that now begins to be considered. How can a physical temple house the God who is greater and vaster than all the oceans of space? In fact, how

can the Temple contain the God in whom we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28)? How can we as frail vessels filled with sin be capable of building a house for God?

The depths of Solomon's wisdom can be seen in his simple humility before God. He understands that what he is about to undertake cannot be like anything else. Its grandeur must be a fitting reflection of the glory and greatness of God (2 Chronicles 2:5). In this spirit and with this aim, he sets out to build a magnificent Temple.

The dedication of Solomon's Temple is one of the high places in Israel's history. The scene is described in 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chronicles 5. The people have turned in mass—thousands jammed into the city and the Temple precincts. Solomon has built a bronze platform on which to stand and later pray the dedicatory prayer. Out of the Tabernacle come the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant on their shoulders. In a train behind are priests carrying all the sacred utensils and the treasures of David for use in the Temple service. The Ark is brought into the Holy of Holies in the Temple. There it is placed in the center of the room with the mighty statues standing in each corner spreading their wings over it. The curtain is closed as the mighty chorus of voices and trumpets and cymbals and harps and lyres ring out, reverberating from the stone walls, porches and courtyards. The powerful praise of joyful hearts rises up to God on the ascending incense and smoke of hundreds of sacrifices.

Note what the text says.

And when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD *saying*, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, <sup>14</sup> so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God. (2 Chronicles 5:13b-14)

*When* they praised the Lord, affirming His goodness and His faithfulness in covenant keeping love, *then* the glory of God filled the house like a cloud. God was certainly coming to dwell in this house made by hands. His glorious presence was so powerful and compelling that the priests could not even stand to minister.

God has fulfilled what He promised to Israel and to David. He has placed His Name among them by dwelling in this house that David desired to build, but God left for Solomon to do. Now, the Ark of the Covenant is at home in the Temple. In his prayer, Solomon again acknowledges that it is not possible for a house, even such as this one, to contain the greatness and vastness of God. Yet, God was there in a very real way. He manifested Himself in a cloud that permeated the Temple with His glory just as it had the Tabernacle. The Psalmist responds to this glorious residence of God in Psalm 26:8, "O LORD, I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwells."

## The Glory Departs

This sets the stage for the majestic and tragic departure of the glory of God from the Temple during Israel's captivity. This unfolds in the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel opens with the awesome vision of the portable throne of God. Ezekiel makes a point that He is in the land of Babylon. It is there that God appeared to him coming out of the north (Ezekiel 1:1-4). To the Israelite, the throne of God was fixed and firm. It was settled on Mt. Zion in the God's holy dwelling place with all that those words implied.

Now, they are in captivity and the city and Temple are about to be utterly destroyed. They are bereft of all that comforts them by God's presence with them. The language describing the awe-inspiring resting-place of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies pales in contrast to the magnificently splendid and astonishingly wondrous vision of this portable throne. Here is a massive throne carved from a single glowing jewel resting on four wheeled creatures whose 4 faceted faces allow the throne to glide in any direction. Over the throne are four cherubim whose wings create a massive awning under the brilliantly flashing dome of crystal. All of this amazing structure moves with glorious dread and great power illuminated from within by the blinding glory of God's holy presence and accompanied by the ocean roar of heavenly voices thundering the praise of Him who sits on the throne (Ezekiel 1:4-25).

High up, on the throne, sat one whose appearance was like that of the glory of the Lord. Ezekiel saw it and fell on his face to hear God's voice speaking (Ezekiel 1:16-28). The next chapters relate the calling (chapter 2) and the commissioning (chapter 3) of Ezekiel. Then we have the message of doom and destruction that awaits the city and the Temple (chapters 4-5). The abominable wickedness that profaned the Temple and provoked the Lord is catalogued (chapters 6-8). Then the glory of God is seen departing from the Temple (Ezekiel 10). God's glory does not just rise up from the Ark of the Covenant and go out. That would have implied that God was rising up in the cloud of glory to lead Israel out and forward. But, except for a small remnant, Israel was exiled out of the land. There is no leading them out or moving forward. This is not the directing hand, but the departing glory.

So the glory of God is seen moving out in the massive structure of the portable throne described in chapter 1. The text is both majestic and tragic as it relates the removal of the glory of God from the Temple to its courts out into the city and finally over the gates to hover over the mountains outside the city. Then the light of the vision blinks out and Ezekiel is back with the exiles. The glory of God has departed. Though the Temple was rebuilt under Ezra and Nehemiah, we do not find a return of the glorious presence of God to the post-exilic Temple. Until the glory of God walked through the gates of the Temple in His incarnate Son, there was no longer the Shekinah Presence dwelling behind the veil.

### **Categorical: God within Personally**

But all is not ended. This removal of the presence and indwelling of God from the Temple was not to produce despair that God's purpose has failed. Before and after God's punishing procession from the Temple, God promised and prophesied of an even greater indwelling yet to come.



## The Prophetical Promises

The prophets often had a clear vision of a coming glory that was so much greater than had been experienced in the past. Through the telescope of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, they saw far off into the distant future when God would dwell with and in His people forever. Yet, there seems to be contours and edges that are not yet clear and may be something else than what they describe. What they see they must communicate in language, categories and imagery that were familiar to their hearers and readers.

The prophet, Ezekiel, speaks of the future grace and glory that Israel will experience. Prophesying to a people whose national and religious dreams were in shambles under the punishing hand of God, his hope inspiring words point to what God will do. In the time when Israel is being resurrected, unified and living in the land under David the King (Ezekiel 37:1-25), God declares what He will do in these words:

<sup>26</sup> "And I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. <sup>27</sup> My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. <sup>28</sup> And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever." (Ezekiel 37:26-28)

In the context of a new covenant of peace, God promised that He will establish His sanctuary and His dwelling with them forever. This affirmed His relationship with them as their God and they as His people. The consequence of this is that all the people groups will know that God is the One who has set His people apart as special and unique.

So there is yet to come a day when God will once again dwell among His people within Zion in His house. It will be a day of immense and incomparable glory. In that day, Israel will be seen as special in the Lord's eyes while from all mankind, people will come to worship and be joined to the Lord God. He will be exalted and rule and reign. And He will be honored among all people with the honor that has been His due all along. In that day, His people will see and experience the exuberant joy of God and His delight in those whom He has saved.

## The Personal Intimations

Finally, a gleaning through the Old Testament harvests a cluster of texts that point to the possibility of God's indwelling in people personally and individually. Interestingly, these are given to the Old Testament saint as both a present possibility and a future certainty.

### Present Possibility

Though we tend to associate the indwelling of God by His Spirit with the New Testament as a privilege of the believer, it is inclusive of the Old Testament saint. Isaiah 57:15 makes this clear.

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell *on* a high and holy place, And *also* with the contrite and lowly of spirit In order to revive the spirit of the lowly And to revive the heart of the contrite. (Isaiah 57:15)

What a glorious tension is created in this text. The God who is exalted and eternal, dwelling in a high and holy place also dwells in the contrite and lowly in order to bring them life. Thus, repentance from sin and a self-abasing humility is called for on the people's part. God would come into this kind of humbled heart with all His greatness and glory.

This has been unfolding through the Old Testament. The Spirit in Elihi, Job's counselor gives Him understanding, makes him full of words and constrains him. (Job 32:8, 18). God had done this with Bezalel, the craftsman leading the building of the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:3). Further, we find that Moses is to "take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him" (Numbers 27:18). So God dwelled within believers. He put His Spirit in them, particularly in those who were humble and contrite.

### Future Certainty

There is a cluster of texts that point to the future certainty that God will indwell His people at the personal level. That certainty emerges from the New Covenant that God makes with His people. Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the foundational text for this New Covenant. God will put His Word into their hearts in such a way that they will obey it and not need to instruct one another in it. Their sins and iniquities will be forgiven. God will be their God and they will be His people.

Later, Ezekiel expands on the implications of this New Covenant as God promises to bring life into the midst of death by His Word and Spirit.

<sup>24</sup> "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. <sup>26</sup> "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> "And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. <sup>28</sup> "And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

This promise is repeated in Ezekiel 37:14 where he writes, "'And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,' declares the LORD." This great promise is enlarged even further in Joel 2:28-29. There the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all mankind. Peter identifies this prophecy as being fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-21).

### Summation: The Promise of the Indwelling

The Old Testament establishes several principles and categories that inform us as we approach the New Testament.

God desires to dwell with people in shared communion and fellowship.

God discloses Himself by His personal presence in places of worship. The Tabernacle and Temple were designed to show us the pattern of the heavenly and to teach us what is required for God to dwell among His people.

The indwelling of God demands sacrifice. There can be no presence of God where the punishment for sin has not taken place.

The indwelling presence of God consecrates and makes holy what is indwelt.

The indwelling of God is an all-consuming and all-encompassing glory. Whenever God indwelt, He did so as a glorious presence. When He removed Himself, it was the sad departure of His glory.

God departs from Tabernacles and Temples. In Israel's case, He does so with a real finality.

God indwells in human hearts. This was a present possibility and a future certainty.

The Old Testament closes and leaves 400 years of silence—the end of one age while the new age will begin with the birth, life, death and resurrection of Emmanuel.

## Person: The Indwelling in Jesus Christ

The next phase of God's purpose to tabernacle with man is as incomprehensible as it is glorious. It is both simple and elegant in its form while complex with esoteric principles of theology in its details. It is not God living in a tent. Nor is it God living in a Temple. It is the great mystery of the incarnation.

### Reality: God Dwelling in Christ

Though our understanding of the details of the incarnation may vary and differ, no true Christian can deny that the Bible clearly teaches that the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, became flesh, the man, Christ Jesus. This is related to us in the story of Jesus' birth, life and passion by the authors of the Gospels. It is argued for us by the apostles who interpreted Old Testament texts in the light of this mystery, giving us glimpses of past and future glories.

### Emmanuel: God with us

In simplicity of language, Matthew begins to unfold the unfathomable mystery. Matthew 1:18-25 tells of the announcement and birth of Jesus, the Christ. The virgin Mary, while engaged but not yet married, "was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:18). The Divine initiative moves by the Holy Spirit to conceive within the womb of Mary, a child.

Now this did not come unannounced. Luke 1:26-38 records that an angel had come to Mary and prepared her for what was about to happen. He tells her:

<sup>31</sup> "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the

Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; <sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.” (Luke 1:31-33)

These words declare the both the Deity and humanity of Christ. He was conceived in a womb and carried for nine months. Upon His human birth, He received a common name filled with history and meaning. Jesus in our Bibles is also the name, Joshua. It means, “God our salvation.” Yet, He will also ascended to transcendent greatness. He will be rightly recognized as the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, Deity. He will stand as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets that a descendent of David will sit on David’s throne, not just for the passing of one lifetime, but for eternity. This baby born of her who was to be both human and divine would rule and reign over a never-ending kingdom.

The most powerful statement about the amazing truth we are considering though is in Matthew 1:23 where angel says quoting Isaiah 7:14, “‘And they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which translated means, ‘God with us’”. That baby that was to be conceived by God’s Spirit and carried until born would be one whose name would point to the reality of who He was; that is, God with us.

So the purpose of God to dwell with man now moves forward with the incarnation. God Himself, the second person of the Godhead, would take upon Himself a human body and would tabernacle among us, neither in tents nor in temples, but in holy, human flesh. Being conceived of the Spirit, He is God. Being conceived in a woman, He is human. Being conceived by the Spirit in a woman who is a virgin means that He has the divine nature and the human nature. Not having a human father means that He has received a human nature and body without the transmission of the sinful nature and depravity. Since the transmission of the sinful nature and the imputed guilt of Adam is transmitted from the father to his children (Genesis 5:3; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-2), Jesus was “that holy thing.” Therefore, the author of Hebrews could say that He “has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). That is, Jesus was tempted in all points yet had within Him no sin nature.

### **The Word: Full of Grace and Truth**

“The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The Shekinah presence of God indwelling the tabernacle and the temple under the Old Covenant brought the glory of God right into the midst of the lives of men and women so that the glory and awesome majesty and terrible holiness of God might be seen. Now, God the Son, the Word (John 1:1-5) tabernacled in a human body, not for any lesser, but for a greater reason—that we might see the glory of God as being full of grace and truth. The Old Covenant was full of types and analogies and hidden mysteries. The New Covenant unfolds the truth that the glory of God will be magnified when the grace of God and the truth of God are clearly seen in the Son of God. This glory was the glory that was unique to the Son. It was the glory that God had given to His Son. And there are glories in this yet to be seen.

That God indwelled in Christ was not only the self-assertion of Jesus, but also the clear interpretation of His life by the Apostles after the resurrection. Paul understood the indwelling of God in the Lord Jesus Christ and its significance.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. 9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, 10 and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority. (Colossians 2:8-9).

False understandings of the nature of life and their empty deceptions are enemies whose objectives are to take us captive and rob us of the riches that are to be mined from Biblical truth. Understanding the indwelling of God in Jesus Christ is fundamental in discerning false philosophies. The pseudo answers proposed by false systems of belief to the great questions of life are substitutes for the true answers given in a Biblical Christology. It is imperative that we understand and agree that clearly articulating what it means for the fullness of Deity to dwell in bodily form in Jesus Christ is the foundation for thinking God's thoughts after Him.

It is clear that Paul meant for us to think of God indwelling Christ in a way similar to that of God dwelling in the tabernacle and the Temple. These were categories of thought that help us to understand the immense mystery of God in a man. Yet, it is also clear that the Old Testament analogies involved inanimate things. Jesus Christ was fully man, with all the faculties of man, yet without sin. So the indwelling of God in Jesus involves the true union of God and man without confusing the essences and without dividing the person. The mystery of the incarnation is so great and yet so wonderful a truth that in it is hidden all the depths of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:2-3). It seems that Paul is arguing for a deep and reflective understanding of the incarnation that yields the key to unlock truth about all that is.

### Revelation: Christ Showing us God

The incarnation, the indwelling of God in Christ, then has a revelatory purpose. First, because of the indwelling, Jesus is revealing to us what God is like. We see God living among us. The incarnation is also revealing the interpretative key to the universe. The doctrines of the incarnation and the trinity hold the keys to all knowledge and understanding. The dwelling of God in Christ also reveals that this is possible. It is easier, if you will, to grasp that God can dwell in a tent or a Temple. But it is much more difficult to accept that the God of the universe could indwell a human being in such a way as to preserve the unity of the soul and spirit and not to intermingle the deity with humanity. Thus, the stage is set for the possibility of a further indwelling of God in human beings. Finally, the indwelling of God in Christ is revealed as being unique and non-repeatable. This incarnational indwelling is unique. No one before or since could rightly claim to be deity. In all other indwelling, the soul of the human exists prior to God's taking up of residence in that soul.

The fullness of this revelatory result in the incarnation can be seen in Jesus' dialog with Thomas and Philip in John 14:5-11. Knowing Jesus means that we know the Father (v.7) and have seen the Father (v.9). Jesus is the full and sufficient revelation of all that God is

and does. To deny this in any form is to deny that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus (v.10-11). May this be so of us that having seen Jesus in the Word of God, we will be satisfied that we have seen the Father (v.8-9).

## Redemptive: God Dealing with Sin

The incarnation not only had a revelatory effect, but it had a redemptive purpose.

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Here once again is the *reality* (v.4) and the *redemptive* purpose (v.5) of the incarnation. This text establishes that God's primary purpose in the incarnation is redemptive. At the right time, the second person of the Godhead was sent to earth to be born as a human having a virgin mother and subject to the Law. God did this in order that He might accomplish the full redemption of those who were condemned by the Law so that those redeemed ones might fully enjoy the position and privileges of sonship.

This corresponds to the essentially redemptive purpose of God's indwelling in the tabernacle and Temple. Sacrifice for sin and atoning death was always associated with worship and acceptance with God. The tabernacle and Temple were built as places where atoning deaths might take place so that the people of God might enjoy and glorify the God who indwelt there. Though the incarnation as an event is important, it is a means to a greater end, not the end itself. Thus, Dr. James Boice notes, "Any gospel that talks merely of the Christ-event, meaning the Incarnation without the atonement, is a false gospel."<sup>3</sup>

We find also here that the indwelling of God in its redemptive purpose is rooted in the initiating pleasure and determining will of God. There is no underlying necessity of things that makes the incarnation necessary. God chose to do so in order to accomplish redemption. Whatever "must" is associated with the incarnation and the cross arises not from something or somewhere apart from God, but from His choice, not only to redeem, but to redeem the way He did.

In his second letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul weaves the incarnation and the redemptive work into a massive fabric that is the gospel.

<sup>18</sup> Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)

At the heart of the gospel message committed to the Ambassadors of the Kingdom of God is that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." This reconciliation

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<sup>3</sup> James Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. 1986), p.292.

was effected by His taking our sins on Himself (1 Peter 2:24) in order that we might have His righteousness and not have these sins counted against us any longer. Now that we are reconciled with God through the incarnation's redemptive purpose and substitutionary sacrifice, we can enter into a relationship with God.

### Relational: God Empathizing with Man

This redemptive purpose also has suited Christ to fully serve as a compassionate and understanding High Priest. Boston rightly observes, "Wherefore, the Son of God, that he might be fit to mediate, as he, being God equal with the Father, was high enough, in respect to the party offended, so he consented to become low enough, in respect of the party offending, by his becoming man."<sup>4</sup>

The author of Hebrews observes that since Jesus has come to give help, not to angels, but to man,

<sup>17</sup> Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. (Hebrews 2:17-18)

Consequently, we have a High Priest who has been tempted in every way we have, except without the sin nature, who can sympathize with our weaknesses. So we can come to God with confidence, knowing that we will not be disdained in that we are flesh, but received and answered because He understands and extends His grace (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The indwelling of God in Jesus Christ gives us the confidence in our relationship with God. Though He is great and glorious and utterly without need, He has chosen to live in a human body and face all the frailty and folly and temptation of living in a fallen world so that His experience will be like ours. This encourages us to come and expect His mercy and enabling grace because He really does know, not from abstract theory, but from remembered personal experience, what it is like to suffer and to suffer without sin. In a way, His very sinlessness itself make His experiences more acute and sharp because His senses were not dulled nor callused by the constant exposure to and experience of sin.

All of the evidence of the Scripture points to the fact that Jesus has taken upon Himself a human body, forever. After His resurrection, He appears often in His glorified body. He promises to return much as He went away (Acts 1:9-11). When He is seen after His ascension, He is in a recognizably human body (Acts 7:55-56; Revelation 1) albeit glorified and marvelous beyond anything we can imagine. The present encouragements to confident prayer are rooted in the fact that Jesus mediates in heaven in a glorified human body. And when He returns, He will be seen by those who pierced Him (Revelation 1:7).

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<sup>4</sup> Boston, p. 491.

## Summation: The Person of the Indwelling

The indwelling of God in Jesus Christ, the incarnation, is the centerpiece of the indwelling of God.

The incarnation is the reality of God taking on human flesh and dwelling, not just in tents and Temples, but in living human beings.

The incarnation is a full disclosure of the character and conduct of God, fully and sufficiently satisfying all that we need to know of the Father.

The incarnation was purposed to accomplish a full and final redemption of a people who would be reconciled, redeemed and brought to experience the position and privilege of sonship.

The incarnation encourages us to reverent intimacy with the God who has experienced the frailty of the human condition and whose compassion and mercy hurries Him to extend the help of His grace to us.

## Present: The Indwelling Under the New Covenant

The Old Testament declared that God, the high and holy one who inhabits eternity, dwells in contrite hearts and humble men (Isaiah 57:15). We noted that the dwelling of God in Jesus Christ points to the potential for God to indwell man. As we come to the pages of the New Testament, we come to the most amazing aspects of the indwelling of God. God dwells in individual believers and in the believers corporately.

### Individual: God in the Believer

Peter tells us that the Old Testament prophets "...who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful search and inquiry, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11). Even in the Old Testament, there was an indwelling of the Spirit that was related to Jesus but was mysterious and unknown to them because the cross was not clear to them. But this is not so of us today. The New Testament unfolds for us these intertwined truths to establish our faith, encourage our hope and motivate our holiness.

### The Lord Jesus' Indwelling

The Apostle Paul writes in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me." Paul here asserts that by virtue of his union with Christ, Christ lives in him. The Lord Jesus, in some way, indwells believers.

Paul reflects on this further in when he writes:

<sup>14</sup> For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, <sup>16</sup> that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man;

<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; *and* that you, being rooted



and grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

Paul prays that believers would be strengthened by the power of the Spirit to the end that there would be a settled residence of Christ in their hearts through the operation of faith. Paul is not speaking here of the initial indwelling at salvation, but of the on-going sense “to live or dwell in a place in an established or settled manner,”<sup>5</sup> to *be at home in*. This prayer goes further to connect the maturing effect of knowing the vastness of God’s love with the goal of being filled up inwardly with all the fullness of God.

So the indwelling of Christ in believers is not so much esoteric doctrine lost in the mists of theological speculative formulations, but is a solid and clear truth with practical implications for the professing believer and the maturing saint.

This raises a fundamental question: how can Jesus Christ both be in heaven in a glorified body and also indwell individual believers? Though Jesus is not limited in His on-going mediatorial work, this is still a valid and disturbing question. The answer rests on the way the Bible connects the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus speaks of this Himself in John 14:16-21. In this text, by way of promise, Jesus associates the indwelling of the Spirit with His own indwelling in believers. He is going to send the Spirit to abide with them and to be in them (v.17). When He is gone and the Spirit comes, on that day they would understand that “I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you” (v.20). The Holy Spirit is sent to indwell believers. However, the Spirit identifies Himself in them as Christ.

Paul unpacks this same category of thought in several texts. The most important of them is in Romans 8:9-11.

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.<sup>10</sup> And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.<sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you. (Romans 8:9-11)

Look carefully at Paul’s logic. We are in the Spirit if the **Spirit is in us**. If we do not have the **Spirit of Christ** then we do not belong to Christ (v.9). We have spiritual life in spite of depravity and spiritual death if **Christ is in us** (v.10). This resurrection kind of life comes through the **Spirit of God indwelling us**. In Philippians 1:19, Paul again calls the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of Christ”. Writing to the Galatian church, Paul asserts that “God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts”

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<sup>5</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

(Galatians 4:6). John confirms this when he writes, “We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us” (1 John 3:24b).

The foregoing pivotal texts make the claim that God indwells in us through the Holy Spirit in such a way that we can truly say that Christ indwells us. The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead who is indwelling believers, imparting to them life, uniting them with Christ and indwelling in their inner man so as to mediate Christ in us.

### The Holy Spirit's Indwelling

From the above, it is clear that the indwelling of God is now mediated in human hearts by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's coming into the soul is the new birth (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5-7), the imparting of resurrection life into the spiritually dead soul. The Holy Spirit takes up a permanent residence in the soul guaranteeing that God will redemptively complete in reality what is yet in prospect (2 Corinthians 5:4-5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:21).

This indwelling of the Spirit emerges also in a cluster of texts that speak of the believer as a Temple. What is striking is that both of these are given to a church who had an over-realized eschatology and doctrine of the Spirit, yet who had seemingly little awareness of the Spirit as Holy. Therefore, Paul's outrage is expressed when he writes, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Paul continues this line of thought in 1 Corinthians 6:19, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? <sup>20</sup> For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer is to be thought of in the categories of God's indwelling of the Old Testament Temple. The language is picked up and used in way that is clear and recognizable. God dwelled in the Temple in the Old Testament. Indeed, Paul makes the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer a fulfillment of an Old Testament promise. Consider 2 Corinthians 6:16 where the thread of Exodus 29:45, Leviticus 26:12, Jeremiah 31:1 and Ezekiel 37:27 are all brought together.

For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,  
“I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be  
My people. (2 Corinthians 6:16)

We have observed the progression of the dwelling of God in the shifting of the prepositions. God was with the patriarchs. God dwelt among Israel. God was in Christ. And God indwells believers. It is curious to note that Paul sifts the quote from its Old Testament use of *among* and sees the fulfillment as *in*. This is not a trivial point. It means that connecting the dwelling of God in believers and the dwelling of God among Israel in their tabernacle and Temple *are Biblically valid connections*. They are not merely the appearance of a connection, but the actual assertion of New Testament writers. It is the fulfillment of the promise in the New Covenant that “I will put My Spirit within you” (Ezekiel 36:27).

The indwelling of God in His people through the Holy Spirit is the emphasis of the New Testament. Jesus has come and redeemed. Now the Spirit has come and indwelled. Therefore, we are to be a people holy to the Lord as the living temples and tabernacles of God's abiding residence.

### **Corporate: God in the Church**

The New Testament speaks of a second aspect of the indwelling of God. Since God indwells His people individually, together there is a corporate indwelling of them as the church. Though not spoken of as much, it is a glorious truth.

Ephesians 2:19-22 is the primary text teaching this.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

This text occurs at the end of Paul's long argument for the full and final unity of the people of God from out of Israel and the Gentiles. God's purpose in Christ was to bring together all His people into one new man by breaking down the dividing walls through the redemptive work of Christ. In this one new man, God reconciled both Jew and Gentile to Himself with the consequence that we share our access to God by the Spirit (v.11-18).

Thus, the church is built on the foundation of the authoritative teaching of the apostles and the prophets. This building is being fitted together by God on the foundation of Jesus Christ and is, over time, growing into a holy temple in the Lord. So as to secure the personal involvement of his readers, Paul includes them with the words, "in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (v.22). The analogy here again draws on the category of *temple* and sees the people of God *together* as a dwelling of God corporately.

The church is portrayed as the Temple of God being built of living stones into a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5) as a dwelling place for God. There in each stone and among the living stones together, God's Holy Spirit dwells. The phrase "is growing into a holy temple" points to the age long process which will be finished at the appearing the Lord Jesus in His glory.

### **Summation: The Present of the Indwelling**

Amazing grace this mystery once hidden now disclosed to us. God indwells believers by the Spirit and dwells in the church corporately so as to manifest His glory.

The personal indwelling of God in individuals is through the Spirit in such a way that it can be truly said that Christ is in them.

The indwelling of God in individuals is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and promises.

The indwelling of God in believers individually and corporately is to be thought of in the categories of tabernacle and Temple from the Old Testament.

The indwelling of God in believers is a supreme motivation for holiness.

## Perfection: The Indwelling at the Consummation

The future prospect of the consummation of God's indwelling fills genuine believers with awe and hope. Though tarnished down through the history of the church by speculation and irresponsible mishandling, the text that gives us glimpses into the future can be powerful lenses for the eyes of faith.

The finality of the indwelling of God is a great eschatological truth. That is to say, what God is doing now in this present age, is the beginning of what He will complete at the consummation. Just as there were continuities down through redemptive history, the consummation is the glorious end toward which this great theme has been working.

This is most clearly revealed in the last book of the Bible, in Revelation 21.

### Creation: The Restoration at God's Indwelling

This text begins after the ending of the wrath of God. God has judged the wicked that are alive at His return and has caught out His people to their reward. The terrible judgments of the day of the Lord have cut the curse out of the natural order, destroying it by fire (2 Peter 3:1-13).

The first thing John the revelator sees at the consummation of God's indwelling is "a new heaven and a new earth." (Revelation 21:1) There is now a new order of things because the old order has passed away. The new creation experience for believers individually (2 Corinthians 5:17) is now the new creation in all the cosmos. What all creation was waiting on with groanings and deep convulsions (Romans 8:18-22) has finally transpired. God is here in a way that as His feet touch the earth renovating renewal runs forth from Him like life giving water.

Therefore, the consummating indwelling of God will bring about the final renovation and restoration of all creation to that perfect state. If the beauty and majesty of the fallen world we live in now stirs us, what will be the breath taking splendor of all things made new and perfect?

### Bride: The Reality of God's Indwelling

In apocalyptic and visionary language, the consummation is seen as a city coming down like a bride adorned for her husband (v.2). What was begun in the age of the betrothal (2 Corinthians 11:2) is now ready for the wedding feast (Matthew 25:1-13). The marriage of Lamb has taken place (Revelation 19:7-10) so that now the church is not only the bride, but also the wife.

What Christian marriages have portrayed throughout the ages (Ephesians 5:32) is now the consummating reality. Jesus and His bride are in true and glorious union. Though a reality shrouded presently in mystery, there will come a day when the bride will gaze

with transforming wonder on the face of Her heavenly lover and will reflect back to Him His own glory like a mirror. The anticipating hope of that day has present power to purify (1 John 3:2).

### City: The Representation of God's indwelling

John is taken away to a great and high mountain is shown the holy city, Jerusalem. "Look, John a Lion. And I looked and saw a Lamb" (Revelation 5:5-6). "Look John, see the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And I was shown the holy city" (Revelation 21:9-10).

God's dwelling in the consummation will be in a city, the New Jerusalem (v.2, 10). This is a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10, 16) that was prepared for those who love Him and forsook all passing pleasure in anticipation of a heavenly reward. Living in the shadow lands of time, it is difficult to comprehend the dazzling glory bending around the contours of that eternal and heavenly city. It will be full of wonders incomprehensible to fallen minds, unseeable by sin dimmed eyes and unapproachable by flesh encrusted souls. There will be joy and gladness and glory because Jesus will be there. God will dwell there in the full finality of His abiding residence with, among and in man.

**Conclusion** The bride has become the wife of the Lamb and the city has come down out of heaven from God. The final announcement is made.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." <sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He \*said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." <sup>6</sup> And He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. (Revelation 21:3-6)

In these words is blended the present and the future, the longing and the fulfilling. Now there are tears and death and mourning and pain and things to be made new. Then, the dwelling of God with man reaches its glorious end and we will hunger and thirst no more, but be filled with all the delights of heaven and God.