

## "The Dwelling of God"

The Ministry of the Word – Exodus

June 8, 2025

*...If I say Mt. Sinai ..... You Say \_\_\_\_\_?*

**INTRO** ...The "Size & Weight" of Biblical Subjects

... Not All Themes, Doctrines, or Topics are the Same Size or Given the Same Weight in Scripture

*When one stares at the "Tapestry" of Theology that runs through this "Storyline Quilt" of God—we're simply going to see certain "colors/threads" as More Predominant than Others. ...and to Read the Bible Well, we need to Let Those "Major Themes" DOMINATE the Landscape of Our Personal Bible Reading Grid.*

### **Ex 19:3-6**

...Ex 20 - The 10 Commandments ...Ex 20-23 - Civil Laws ...Ex 24 - Covenant Confirmed

### **Ex 25:1-9**

...We arrive at a moment that features "The TABERNACLE"

...Ex 25-31 - The Tabernacle ...Ex 32-34 - The Golden Calf Episode ...Ex 35-40 - Constructing the Tabernacle

### **Ex 40:34-38**

...What's All This "Mt. Sinai Stuff" About??

Ex 25:8 "...that I may DWELL in their midst"

"...when God reveals at Mount Sinai the promise of his presence as the central aspect of the covenant relationship between him and the people of Israel, he is speaking not about some vague concept of omnipresence but of a very real and terrifying holy presence as he comes to actually dwell among them. He instructs Moses, "Have them make me a sanctuary [a holy place], so that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 25:8). This indwelling of God's presence lies at the center of his relationship with his people. He states, "I will dwell among the Israelites, and I will be their God. 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" (Exod. 29:45–46)." **Daniel Hays & Scott Duvall**, "God's Relational Presence - The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology", p. 6

Our basic thesis is that the Triune God desires to have a personal, encountering relationship with his people and enters into his creation in order to facilitate that relationship. Thus the Bible begins with God's presence relating to his people in the garden (Genesis) and ends with God's presence relating to his people in the garden (Revelation). ...The entire story culminates at the end of Revelation, where the presence of God is once again in Jerusalem (the new Jerusalem) and in the garden, relating to his people. This "megatheme" drives the biblical story, uniting and providing interconnecting cohesion across the canon for all of the other major themes, such as covenant, kingdom, creation, holiness, redemption, law and grace, sin and forgiveness, life and death, worship, and obedient living. It is indeed the cohesive center of biblical theology." **Daniel Hays & Scott Duvall**, "God's Relational Presence - The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology", p. 1

...Remember ...***We Cannot Get Our Little Story without Getting God's Big Story!***

-- When I go to do my life ...***How Central and Informed and Tethered is my life approach to THIS THEME in Scripture—This DOMINANT THREAD COLOR in the Tapestry of Creation?***

...The "FEATURE" Word in this Topic of Tabernacle ...is the word—"DWELLING"

"...in Exodus God reveals himself to Moses and then demonstrates his saving and judging power by delivering Israel from Egypt (Exod. 1–18). From Exodus 19 to Exodus 40, however, the central focus of the story zeroes in on the presence of God as he establishes his covenant with Israel and then actually comes to dwell among his people.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the climax or high point of the entire book of Exodus is God's taking up residence in the tabernacle to dwell among his people.<sup>52</sup> Commenting on Exodus 29:45, Rolf Rendtorff exclaims, "According to this it is practically the goal of Israel's being led out of Egypt that God should dwell in the midst of them." **Daniel Hays & Scott Duvall**, "God's Relational Presence - The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology", p. 23

...Do most Bible Readers Catch THIS EMPHASIS at Mt. Sinai?

**[Google Ai]** - Most people associate Mount Sinai with the biblical account of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments from God. Here's a breakdown of the key associations: 1. The Ten Commandments: 2. Moses: 3. Divine Revelation: 4. The Exodus: 5. Covenant: 6. St. Catherine's Monastery: 7. Spiritual and Historical Significance:"

...What if all this "Morality" and "Ceremony" and "Rituals" ...is Not First/Foremost about Human Society (Mutual respect, Do Unto Others, Laws of the land, Relational Definitions & Boundaries, etc.) but about the "Setting Required by God for His Dwelling Presence"??

??— *What if the "Christian Community" could shake-off the misplaced priority of "Human Behavior answering to Some Human Holiness Club" ) ...and Instead it was connected to "God's Dwelling Presence Among Us"!!??*

...Sin goes on record in Scripture—as being a "DISTANCE CREATOR" between Man & the Presence of God!

"After Adam and Eve listen to the serpent, disobey God, and eat of the forbidden fruit, they are banished from the garden of Eden. This event, often referred to theologically as the "fall," plays an important role in Christian theology. Yet the critical consequence of the eviction from the garden is that Adam and Eve lose the great privilege and blessing of direct access to the presence of God.<sup>31</sup> God had told Adam that on the day he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he certainly would die (Gen. 2:17). Yet what God actually does to Adam and Eve is banish them and separate them from his presence.<sup>32</sup> Thus the banishment from the garden likewise suggests connections to death. Loss of direct access to the tree of life and loss of direct access to the presence of God seem to be inseparable. Routledge writes, "In the OT, physical death also has a spiritual dimension: it brings relationship with God to an end. Similarly life is more than mere existence: it is also about continuing to enjoy the blessings of God's presence." ... "Thus the basic theological problem ("the inciting incident") that gives rise to the unfolding biblical story is now set.<sup>37</sup> Through disobedience and sin people have lost access to and relationship with God, resulting in the loss of eternal life as well. Yet God in his grace will continue to work outside of the garden to restore humankind to relationship with him. This is the story of the rest of the Bible. At the center of this story about restoring the relationship between God and humanity is God's relational presence." **Daniel Hays & Scott Duvall**, "God's Relational Presence - The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology", p. 19

...The Presence of God as a "Life-Definer and a Deal-Killer"

Ex 33:1-5 <sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your offspring I will give it.' <sup>2</sup> I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>3</sup> Go up to a

land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.”

<sup>4</sup> When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. <sup>5</sup> For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’”

...v. 5 ...You get a sense that these "Tabernacle/Ceremonial Details" are NOT about "Human Societal Arrangements" ...but make us aware that for God to Relate to Sinful-Fallen-Man is NOT a Casual Endeavor!

"The presence of God with his people is one of the most prominent themes in the entire Bible, running from the very first chapter of Genesis to the very last chapters of Revelation, and even arguably giving shape to the central riddle of the entire storyline: How can a perfectly righteous and holy God ever have rebellious, sinful human beings in his presence without destroying them in his righteous wrath?" **Greg Gilbert**, "The Epic Story of the Bible", p. 66-68

"In the book of Exodus, as people encounter the very presence of God here on earth, the tension between God's transcendence (God's otherness) and his immanence (God's relatedness) becomes stark.<sup>99</sup> God in his glory does indeed come down to earth, but that glory brings with it danger. God comes to dwell among his people so that they can approach him and fellowship with him, but that holy presence normally is accompanied by terrifying and awe-inspiring smoke, fire, clouds, or earthquakes. Wherever God's presence arrives, that space becomes holy<sup>100</sup> and the demands on people for holiness and cleanness become important (and thus the need for Leviticus). ...As God becomes immanent (here in this world), he remains totally holy. Indeed, his glory and his holiness constitute a danger and hindrance to people who desire to approach him. ...Yet God goes to great lengths to provide his people with the means to approach and worship him. Indeed, many of the details regarding the construction of the tabernacle and the rules regarding Israel's manner of worship seem to be given by God to allow people to approach and fellowship with him—indeed, even to allow him to live in their midst—despite his great glory and holiness." **Daniel Hays & Scott Duvall**, "God's Relational Presence - The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology", p. 35

**Ex 33:12-16** Moses said to the LORD, “See, you say to me, ‘Bring up this people,’ but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.’” <sup>13</sup> Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.” <sup>14</sup> And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” <sup>15</sup> And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup> For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?

#### **(1) God's Presence is More Valuable Than God's Promises**

...v. 1-3 ...The "Good-Life" is Still Available to Them!!!

...v. 15 ...Better to live in the Wilderness of Mt. Sinai than to have the Pleasures of This World w/o God's Presence!

#### **(2) Whatever Impact Our Lives are Supposed to Have in This World—It Takes God's Presence & Power!**

...v. 16 ...*it is God's Presence & Power manifest in us and among us, that makes us who we are!! ...Our Identity and Our Success is attached to the Impact of God's Power & Presence FUNCTIONING in Our Lives!!*

? - How's This for a "Life-Priority"?! ...an insight and a benefit that is SO VITAL (vitality = life giving) that I don't want to create or pursue a life where God is "DISTANT Not DWELLING"!!!!

## The Storyline of God's Dwelling Presence

- Eden
- Tabernacle, Temple in Jerusalem (Solomon, then returned Exiles, then Herod's)
- Immanuel (The Incarnation - God with us)
- PENTECOST!!!!

**Acts 2:1-4** <sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- Where Have We Seen This IMAGERY & MANIFESTATION?
- BUT!!! ...Now the "Presence" is in INDIVIDUAL Lives!!

**1 Cor 3:16** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1Cor 4 ...There's division and criticism of leaders in the church

1Cor 5 ...There's sexual immorality in the church

1Cor 6 ...There's conflicts, disputes, and law suits in the church

**1 Cor 6:15-20** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup> Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh." <sup>17</sup> But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. <sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

... "Flee sexual immorality" ... because you are a temple of the Holy Spirit—Not merely because "good Christian People don't do such dirty things"

- New Jerusalem

**Rev 21:1-4** <sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

**...Can't You Hear & Feel the LONG AWAITED—"FINALLY"!!! ... "the dwelling place of God is with man"!!!**

...I know it's human nature to run to v. 4

**—BUT, Don't Rush Past the Deep Longing of God in This Story from Genesis to Revelation ...Finally,  
the long awaited full reunion of God Fully Among Us!!**

Moses (Ex 33:15): *"And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here."*

Jesus (Lk 24:48-49): *"You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And behold. I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."*

LCC: *"Lord, if your presence is not in us and among us ...fix that first! ...How can we be your people unless your presence and power go with us?"*