

The Lord Jesus Christ: A Series of Ten Studies

Study 7: The Incarnate Word – Part 1

taken from
Bible Studies for Enquirers and New Believers
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Readings: Exodus 40:34-38; 2 Chronicles 7:1-4; John 1:1,14; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Revelation 21:1-4

Memory Verse: John 1:14

We are going to look at this key memory verse about the incarnate Word in the context of the whole Bible: God in the midst of his people seen in his supreme communication in Jesus Christ the eternal Word made flesh. The connections between the five readings listed above are:

- Glory – in relation to the dwelling place of God
- Presence – the presence of God with his people

The glorious dwelling of God with his people is seen in:

- The Tabernacle – Exodus 40:34-38
- The Temple – 2 Chronicles 7:1-4
- Jesus Christ – John 1:1,14
- Holy Spirit – 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 (God dwelling by his Holy Spirit in individual believers and in the corporate body.)
- The Heavenly Jerusalem – Revelation 21:1-4 (God in the midst of his people.)

In Genesis we read how man through disobedience broke his fellowship with God. However, God has an eternal plan through Jesus Christ to reinstate those who repented and returned to him. He would make them the glorious company of the redeemed people. The whole drama of redemption includes the intention of God to bring men back to himself through the incarnate Word who dwelt among us, died and rose again from the dead. Let us now examine in more detail the stages in which God accomplished his purposes of redemption.

The Tabernacle

God called out a people through whom he was going to work. When the tabernacle was completed the shekinah glory of God filled it. This was the glory of the presence of God in the midst of his people. It took the cooperation of all the people to build such a place. It took the gifts and treasures of the people as well as their skills. Its size, materials and every detail was commanded by God.

The main purposes of the building of the tabernacle were:

1. To provide a special place for the presence of God. God is in every place and cannot be limited to a tabernacle. However, he was especially present in the tabernacle so that the people of Israel could meet him there (Exodus 25:8,22).
2. To provide an altar for sacrifice for sins.
3. To provide a place where the representative of the people could meet with God. The representative was first Moses and then the High Priest.

In what way does each item of furniture in the tabernacle point to Jesus Christ? Give a New Testament reference for each.

- Laver – washing
- Altar of Sacrifice – sacrifice for sin
- Candlestick – Jesus as the light of the world
- Shewbread – Jesus as the bread of life
- Altar of Incense – (referred to in Revelation) an altar from where the prayers of believers ascended
- Ark of Covenant – place of special meeting with God and a symbol of the prayers and worship of God's people
- Mercy Seat

When Jesus died, at that very moment, the veil of the Temple was split in two from top to bottom. This symbolized that man could at any time come through Jesus into the holy presence of God without restriction.

The Temple

Read 2 Chronicles 5:13-14 and 2 Chronicles 6:18-21. The latter passage is a prayer that comes from King Solomon's dedication of the Temple which he built. There is a mention of the "cloud" not only in relation to the tabernacle but also in relation to the Temple. However, the most important thing was the glory of God in the tabernacle and the Temple not the cloud or pillar of fire. The cloud is mentioned first and then the glory of God. Solomon had spiritual insight to perceive that God cannot be confined to a building although God's glory was manifested there. "But will God dwell indeed with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee: how much less this house which I have built" (2 Chronicles 6:18). In the days of the prophet Jeremiah, spiritual decline had set in and the people considered themselves blessed automatically by God because his Temple was in their city (Jeremiah 7:3-4).