

Who Dwells in the Most Holy Place? – Part 2

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Recorded on July 21, 2018

This is a second part of the sermon that we gave last week, and last time we started off by asking the question: When you think of the throne in heaven, who sits on it in your mind—in your vision? When you think of the Old Testament tabernacle and the Old Testament temple, who resides in the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place?

So by way of introduction and for those who might have missed last week's message we're just going to give a brief review. The first point we made last week, we looked at scriptures describing God coming into the tabernacle—the Old Testament tabernacle. We found that scripture revealed an amazing truth that I didn't think of years ago, but the fact is that God wanted to build a sanctuary to dwell among His people. What a concept! God told Moses, I want you to build this thing and I'm going to come down and dwell in it. Let's go to Exodus 25:1, just as a review. God is a loving God and He's calling children over time down through the millennia to ultimately build a family.

Exodus 25:1 *And the LORD [all caps, the Hebrew is YHVH or Jehovah] spake unto Moses, saying ... (KJV)*

And then jumping to verse 8:

8) *And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for “dwell” means to *reside* or *permanently stay*. God says I want to stay with My people, I want to dwell amongst them.

22) *And there [in this tabernacle] I will meet with thee [Moses], and I will commune [the Hebrew means to speak or talk or teach] with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, [I'm going to commune with you] of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. (KJV)*

God had Moses build Him a dwelling place that included a Most Holy Place with cherubims inside on either side of the Ark. We have to ask the question, who dwells between the cherubim? What does the Bible say?—letting the Bible define the Bible. Let's go to Isaiah 37:16. Mr. Armstrong taught us decades and decades ago that you have to let the Bible define the Bible; not outside sources but God's word defines God's word. We hear this same word again:

Isaiah 37:16 O LORD of hosts, [all caps, but this time, LORD of hosts] God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. (KJV)

We know God created all things through Jesus Christ. So we asked the question last time, who was this LORD, Jehovah, and again the Bible gives us an answer in Psalm 83:18. Isaiah says, here a little, there a little, precept upon precept, line upon line.

Psalms 83:18 [David says] *That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah [or translated in other verses, LORD, all caps], art the most high over all the earth. (KJV)*

This defines Jehovah. There is only one named Jehovah and He, we are told, is the Most High. He is the one who spoke to Moses, He is the one who dwells between the cherubim.

Let's notice what happened to the tabernacle after it was completed. Let's go to Exodus 40:34. Moses faithfully followed God's instruction, the tabernacle was built and notice what happened when it was completed—a miracle occurred. I imagine Israel, all the people standing around—millions of people standing around—had no clue what was about to happen.

Exodus 40:34 *Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

35) And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36) And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

37) But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

38) For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (KJV)

God personally came into the tabernacle, He was personally in that cloud and the fact that the cloud was there by day and the fire was there by night showed Israel that God was there—He was present among them. That had to be encouraging to them. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could see that now and know that God was right there? The tabernacle also is referred to as belonging to God—belonging to Him. It's referred to as His dwelling place, His tabernacle, His house. Why? Because He built it and because He was present in it. Why would it be any other way? There are many scriptures that point that out. So in every case we read last week (and we just hit the high points) it was the LORD, YHVH, who resided in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle, and the one who Israel sacrificed to and who they worshipped was this same LORD—God Almighty. He is God, He is the Living God, He is the LORD of Hosts and He is the Most High God. So that's the first thing we did last time.

The second is, we looked at scriptures describing God coming into the temple. As a reminder let's go to 2 Chronicles 7:1, and we pick up the account of the dedication of the temple that Solomon had built under God's instruction. This is the dedication—it was now completed and it was being dedicated. Solomon gave a dedicatory prayer and the prayer has just ended, and notice what happened.

2 Chronicles 7:1 *Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven [that's a miracle], and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; [now notice this miracle] and the glory of the LORD filled the house.*

2) *And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.*

3) *And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. (KJV)*

What happened here makes absolutely perfect sense because the Glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. Think about that, God's Glory filled His own house—perfect sense. He was inside the temple in the Holy of Holies. Christ acknowledged that the temple was His Father's house—let's go to John 2:16. The Jews of the day were polluting and perverting God's house and Christ was not happy about it. In John 2:16, Christ had some words to say about that but notice how He refers to the house.

John 2:16 *And [Christ] said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence [He says]; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. (KJV)*

He called the temple that was extant there, He called that temple, His *Father's* house—very clear. So last time—I'm just wrapping up now our summary of last time—we saw that it was God who came and dwelled in the tabernacle, then later in the temple and He dwelt there because of His love for His people that He called, and He wanted to show Israel that He was near. What does that say about the character of God—that God would come down and do such a thing? So He would have a physical home to dwell in and be among the people that He was dealing with. What does that say about the nature and character of God? That is what we covered last time, so now we're going to finish this up today—part 2, about He who resides in the Most Holy Place.

The third point we want to mention—this is something we need to consider:

3. God left the Most Holy Place.

This isn't covered very much and I've never heard a sermon on it in the fifty-plus years I've been in God's Church, but when you look at scripture it's very clear. God at a point in time left the Most Holy Place. Let's go to Deuteronomy 31:16—you'll want to place a

marker here. Moses as we know wasn't allowed to go into the Promised Land and he was looking across into the Promised Land, and he wrote Deuteronomy reminding Israel of everything that had happened to them. Now we're getting to the end of Deuteronomy and notice what he has to say, looking forward to what would happen after Israel went into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy 31:16 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; [and, He says, notice what's going to happen] and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them. (KJV)*

God says, this is going to happen and He knew it. He said, they're going to break this covenant I made with them. To further identify who is speaking here, keep your marker here and go to Acts 3:25—letting the Bible define the Bible. Who made the covenant with Ancient Israel? Who made the covenant starting with Abraham? Notice what is being said here.

Acts 3:25 *Ye are the children of the prophets, and [you're the children] of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
26) Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus [Christ], sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*

It's very clear here in these two verses, God and Christ are mentioned, and it's very clear that God the Father made the covenant with Abraham. Let's go back to Deuteronomy 31. God said to Moses, these stiff-necked people are going to break this covenant—it's going to happen. That was probably not a surprise to Moses given everything he had been through in the forty years in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 31:17 *Then my anger [God is speaking, God's anger] shall be kindled against them in that day [when they break His covenant], and I will forsake them. (KJV)*

If you look up the Hebrew meaning for the word "forsake", it can mean *leave*, and I think that would be the correct word in this context.

17 continued) ... and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day [when they're filled with troubles and trials], Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? (KJV)

God is no longer there.

18) And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods. (KJV)

It's sad to say this was Israel's constant problem. They turned to other gods, they refused to worship the true God, they rejected the true God as we're going to see. This is a theme throughout the existence of Israel. Hosea prophesied that God would ultimately depart the Most Holy Place. You can be turning to Hosea 5 and let me give you a little bit of background on Hosea. He prophesied—his ministry lasted roughly 770 BC to 725 BC—and Hosea was written sometime during that time. It was written before Israel and Judah were taken captive. Israel in 721 BC or so, 718-721, and Judah in the late 500's BC—this was written before they were taken captive.

Hosea 5:3 [Hosea is quoting God] *I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: [God sees everything] for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.*

4) They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: [they just won't turn unto Me, He says] for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD [Jehovah]. (KJV)

That is true today—many people do not know God.

5) And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

6) They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them. (KJV)

Meaning literally, He will withdraw from the Holy of Holies—He will not be there. Now let's go to Hosea 9:12, just one verse. Here it says it directly.

Hosea 9:12 *Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!*

What God is saying and Hosea is prophesying that there's going to come a time when God will leave Israel. He will remove Himself from the Holy of Holies and He will be gone. Let's turn to Ezekiel 4 and let me give you some background here. Ezekiel prophesied the destruction of Israel in chapters 4-8. Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon in 597 BC. This was before the temple was ultimately destroyed but a group of Jews was taken captive in 597 and Ezekiel was among that group and he is writing now ten years before Jerusalem was destroyed, so this is a prophesy. Now let's begin in Ezekiel 4:1, God is speaking to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 4:1 *Thou also, son of man, take thee a tile ... (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for "tile" could mean a *brick*—it could be a floor tile or it could be a large brick.

1 continued) ... and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem: (KJV)

What he was told to do was take this tile or brick and draw an outline of the city on it. Notice what God says to further do. He's playing a game of models here.

2) And lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it; set the camp also against it, and set battering rams against it round about.

3) Moreover take thou unto thee an iron pan, and set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city [this model of the city]: and set thy face against it, and it shall be besieged, and thou shalt lay siege against it. This shall be a sign to the house of Israel [this model]. (KJV)

Then God proceeds to reveal to Ezekiel why He will ultimately depart. What would make God leave His dwelling place in the temple? What actions could possibly make God leave—leave the Most Holy Place—of this gorgeous temple that He had built. As we read these next words from Ezekiel, as we go through, compare what we're going to read with the joy that Israel had when the temple was dedicated. People were singing and sacrifices were being made and people were rejoicing, and there was great joy in the land. Compare that to what we're going to read now. Let's go to chapter 8 and we'll begin in verse 5—notice how far down Israel has come. In this case, Judah, of course.

Ezekiel 8:5 *Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. (KJV)*

What is this image of jealousy? When you check all the historical resources and the commentaries and all of that, scholars and historians generally agree it was one of two things. It was an image of Tammuz in the shape of a cross or it was a carved image of a male body part—either one of them really bad. This was right in front of the temple. Going on in verse 6.

6) He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, seest thou what they do? [God is saying, look Ezekiel, look at what Israel is doing—look at what My people are doing] even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? (KJV)

God is saying here, look at what they're doing and I'm going to go far off—I'm not going to be there anymore. This indicates that at some point God would have to leave the Most Holy Place at some time in the future because of what Israel was doing—what Judah was doing.

6 continued) ... but turn thee yet again [if this wasn't enough], and thou shalt see greater abominations.

7) *And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. (KJV)*

Meaning of the temple itself—this is in a vision, of course, but there was a hole in the wall of the temple.

8) *Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall [he came through the wall], behold a door.*

9) *And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. (KJV)*

This is in the temple.

10) *So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts [my guess is all of these were unclean; animals, insects, who knows—snakes, bats, whatever], and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about. (KJV)*

Here was a room that had pictures of all the idols of Israel.

11) *And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients ... (KJV)*

I'm reading out of the King James, the New King James says "elders"—seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel—

11 continued) *... of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. (KJV)*

—in this room with pictures of idols—so guess what's going on here. Who are these seventy men? The seventy men are only mentioned twice in the Bible—once here, and we won't turn there, but the other time in Numbers 11. We're told that Moses picked seventy men to help him, so the only logical conclusion you can draw is at this late date these were seventy men that were helping in the temple. They must have been helpers, but guess what—they're offering incense to idols, if you can imagine that, in the temple of God. Let's go on to verse 12.

12) *Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients [the elders] of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? (KJV)*

The margin in the King James says *in the rooms of his idols*. So in the temple of God, the helpers, the priests, the Levites, had chambers where they had portrayed on the walls, idols. This is going on in God's house.

12 continued) ... for they say, the LORD seeth us not; (KJV)

I have run into people many times over the years who think somehow the LORD doesn't see what they do and what they think and what they say. These people here at this time—the seventy—they say God doesn't see us. The truth is God sees everything; He knows everything. But they say, God doesn't see us ...

12 continued) ... the LORD hath forsaken the earth.

13) He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. (KJV)

There's even greater ones than this.

14) Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. (KJV)

Why would they do that? Tammuz was the goddess of love, also known as Ishtar or Semiramis, and worshipping Tammuz was part of a fertility cult. This is going on on the temple grounds—this is how far things had progressed.

15) Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

16) And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house [now think about that], and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. (KJV)

We see here Easter sunrise services are not new, they started a long, long time ago. This must have been the Levites because this area was forbidden to non-Levites—now think of what's going on here.

17) Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned [notice this] to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose. (KJV)

We would say today, they thumb their nose at God—that's how little they regarded God. They were just blowing off God, we would say today.

18) Therefore [because they have this attitude] will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them. (KJV)

This is the culmination of a core of a problem and the core of the problem is that Israel, down through their existence, worshipped anything but God. They worshipped idols, they worshipped man-made statues: gold, stone, wood, whatever—they would worship anything but God, and Satan was right there provoking them to do that and they yielded.

We've taken a look at what Israel did in the house where God dwelt and you think about that: God, because He loved them, came down and dwelt in the temple, and how did Israel repay God? They turned around and did what we just read about. These acts demonstrated Israel's rejection of God and they have rejected Him over and over and over again. Remember what the prophet Isaiah said? We won't turn there—very familiar scripture—he said your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid His face from you that He will not hear. Isaiah 59:2—this is what's happening. It's a true principle today that sin (and when we sin) it separates us from God. God doesn't move but when we sin, we move away from God. Look at how far Israel had moved from God.

God is patient and long-suffering and kind and gentle, and we can be thankful for that. He wanted to be near His people and they should have been thankful for that but look at what Israel did in return. Look at their attitude and their actions. Why would God want to stay in a house where all of this is going on? Why would He want to do that? Why would He stay in a house where the people, the priests in the house that are supposedly dedicated to God, they say, we don't want you, we want other gods, we want anybody beside you. Give us another god—we don't want you. When you see that, it's just mind boggling that Israel could do this, but Ezekiel prophesied God's departure from the temple. You can read in detail chapters 9 and 10 of Ezekiel. Let's go to Ezekiel 10:18 because Ezekiel prophesied there would come a time when God would leave the temple. We're breaking into this, but if you want to get the context and follow it through, read chapters 9 and 10.

Ezekiel 10:18 *Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims.*

19) And the cherubims lifted up their wings, and mounted up from the earth in my sight: when they went out, the wheels also were beside them, and every one stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's house; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above [as He, between the cherubims, was leaving the Most Holy Place of God]. (KJV)

This is a prophesy of what would happen. God left the Most Holy Place before what happens next. Let's go to 2 Chronicles 36 and see what happens next. It happens because of all that we've read so far of Israel rejecting God, turning their back on God, not wanting God, not wanting God in His house. 2 Chronicles 36:11—we're now reading history. Ezekiel was a prophesy, it has come to pass.

2 Chronicles 36:11 *Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.*

12) And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God [this same God], and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. (KJV)

God warned him directly, through Jeremiah, but guess what ...

*13) And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear [the margin in the King James, *made him swear an oath*] by God: [but he didn't do that] *but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. (KJV)**

He would not do it, he would not turn to God, he hardened his heart.

14) Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. (KJV)

Just as Ezekiel prophesied. They polluted God's house—the priests, the people—and they followed all the abominations of all the heathens all around them. It is just amazing. So what is the conclusion? You can only conclude one thing—Israel, Judah, willingly rejected God, they willingly turned their back on God. Of course that's a huge lesson for us—that we can never, ever, knowingly turn our back on God, but they did because they wanted other gods. They did not want the true God. Going on in verse 15:

*15) And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers [meaning the prophets of old], *rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and [notice this] on his dwelling place: (KJV)**

God didn't want to see His dwelling place polluted. He didn't want His dwelling place destroyed so He warned them, down through the centuries, by the prophets.

16) But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words [God's words], and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till [notice this] there was no remedy. (KJV)

God had no other choice. He warned them over and over again, turn around, commit yourself to Me, I'll forgive your sins, I will bless you—they refused to the point that God said, they're never going to do this—there is no remedy. At some point, God runs out of patience.

17) Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: He [referring to God] gave them all into his [Nebuchadnezzar's] hand.

18) And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.

19) And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. (KJV)

That happened in 585 BC, but the point is, by that time, God had already left. God was not present in the Holy of Holies when that occurred. He had already gone because Israel rejected Him and they did not want Him. After the destruction of Solomon's temple, there is no scriptural record—none whatsoever—of God coming back to the Most Holy Place. This is when He left, never to return. Therefore, and here's the important thing, at the time of Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Place was—what?—it was empty. God wasn't there. He had left because Israel had rejected Him; Judah had rejected Him.

Let's make a fourth point—this is a very important point.

4. If God's not in the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem, why was the veil before the Holy of Holies rent at Christ's death?

That's an important question. If God wasn't there, then when Christ died—the instant He died—that veil was torn in two. Why did God do that? What's the point? Let's go to Matthew 27 and we'll read that account starting in verse 35. Talking about Christ's last minutes, hours:

Matthew 27:35 *And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. [That's Psalm 22:18] (KJV)*

Jumping to verse 45:

45) Now from the sixth hour [that's about noon time] there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour [about 3 pm]. (KJV)

Verse 50:

50) Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. (KJV)

The King James says the Greek means *pneuma*, or His *life*—He gave up His life; life drained from Him.

51) And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain [rent in two] from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; (KJV)

Let's stop a minute and see what was actually torn. Let's read you a couple of comments about the construction of the veil. The Ryrie Study Bible says, "Josephus reported that the veil was four inches thick, was renewed every year, and that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart." Very, very thick curtain or veil. In his book, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Alfred Edersheim says, "The veils"—referring to the veils in the temple—"before the Most Holy Place were the thickness of the palm of the hand." That means this thickness, this way [indicates thickness with hand gesture]. "If the veil was at all such as described in the Talmud it could not have been rent in two by a mere earthquake." Especially just zap, top to bottom. An earthquake would make it fall down, but to pull it apart, top to bottom—no, it wouldn't happen.

So we know that at the time of Christ's death the Most Holy Place in Jerusalem was empty. God had long ago left. So given that fact, what is the symbolism of the tearing of the veil? It was symbolic. Let's let the Bible define the Bible. Let's see what happened three days and three nights after Christ was dead. Let's go to Acts 5:30. There are other scriptures that say this but we'll just choose this one. At the end of the three days and three nights we know what happened. Notice how it's worded though.

Acts 5:30 *The God of our fathers ... (KJV)*

Acts 3 tells us who the God of our fathers was; it's already been described.

30 continued) ... raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. (KJV)

We see here that the Father resurrected His Son back to life. When Christ was resurrected back to life, where did He go? Very important question—let's go to Hebrews 9 and see—we'll begin in verse 11. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation. It's just easier to understand and is very meaningful. Paul is talking to the Jews and he says:

Hebrews 9:11 *So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. [Where did He go?] He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven [that's the Most Holy Place in heaven], which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world.*

12) With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. (NLT)

As Aaron had done with the tabernacle and was done later by the high priest in the temple—this is different.

13) Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people's bodies from ceremonial impurity.

14) Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. (NLT)

We've talked about who is the Living God, it's God the Father—gave a sermon on that a while back. Christ did all that so we can worship the Living God.

14 continued) For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself [who did He offer Himself to?] to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. (NLT)

Christ offered Himself to His Father and when He came into God's spiritual temple with His blood after He was resurrected, He was offering Himself and His blood to His Father. He went to the Holy of Holies in heaven, once and for all to offer His blood to the Living God who is His Father. Remember, He was a resurrected human—He was a human. God resurrected Him to Spirit and now once again Christ appears before His Father, as God, as Spirit, having been previously a human being. That's a whole subject in and of itself, just there.

So the tearing of the veil symbolized that act of Christ dying, going to His Father—and here a human being is resurrected as God—restored to His former existence as God, and going to His Father, and saying, Father it's done, here is My blood. The tearing of the veil symbolizes that act and it also shows the Jews that were there that this was indeed the Son of God. Christ told them over and over, I'm the Son of God—they refused to believe Him and because He said He was the Son of God, they wanted to kill Him and sure enough they did. So now when the veil is rent that's a message to the Jews that says, guys, you screwed this one up, you really did. On the Day of Atonement, Aaron took blood from the goat—that was the LORD's goat—into the Most Holy Place and he sprinkled that blood in front of the mercy seat and on top of the mercy seat. We talk about that a lot; we will coming up on the Day of Atonement.

The Church has correctly taught for decades that Aaron was a type of Christ in doing that. The Church has got that right for decades. The question is —Aaron being a type of Christ—who, as a type of Christ, did Aaron appear before? You ever think about that? If Aaron was a type of Christ and he walked into the Holy of Holies and he sprinkled the blood over the mercy seat, who was he appearing before?

If one believes that Christ was the God of the Old Testament and Aaron is a type of Christ then Christ would be appearing before Himself. Does that seem to follow scripture or is that logical? But if the Father is the God of the Old Testament then Christ brought His own blood before His own Father and that was symbolized on the Day of Atonement, and that was symbolized by the tearing of the veil. When the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies was rent it also symbolized the fact that a barrier was removed. There was an opening in the barrier and it symbolized that you could have direct contact

with whom?—God the Father—the one on the other side when Aaron walked in. But, let's prove that—the barrier was removed—who was on the other side?

Let's let the Bible define the Bible—let's go to Ephesians 2:12. Paul is talking to the Church at Ephesus obviously. The Church at Ephesus had a bunch of Gentiles. The Gentiles were coming into the Church; there was no small controversy about that. I'm sure there was animosity between Jews and Gentiles before everybody got used to it and got over it and had to get past their traditions of their fathers, which they had to do. Paul here is talking to the Gentiles and notice what he says:

Ephesians 2:12 *That at that time ye [the Gentiles] were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

13) But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14) For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; [meaning between the Jews and the Gentiles] (KJV)

Christ's sacrifice had made Jews and Gentiles one—equal in God's sight, and that sacrifice broke down the middle wall of partition. What does that mean—the middle wall of partition? There are four courts in the temple: The courts of the priests, the courts of Israel, the courts of women and the courts of the Gentiles. Each was separated by a chest-high wall, and the middle wall of partition was the wall that separated the Gentiles from the Jews. They couldn't go any further, they couldn't get any closer to the temple, they were limited in what they could do. Just as an aside, around 30 AD, Caiaphas, the high priest, apparently was interested in money and he instituted the selling of merchandise in the court of the Gentiles because that court was considered the least holy by the Jews. So well okay, if it's the court of the Gentiles we can go sell all kinds of stuff there and when Christ overturned the tables in Matthew 21, He was cleansing the court of the Gentiles—of the merchants and the merchandise, all the animals and all that kind of stuff. We see here that this middle wall between the Jews and the Gentiles was broken down—verse 15.

15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, [this division, this barrier between the Jews and Gentiles] even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; (KJV)

Because, there were laws in place at the time of Christ that if a devout Jew's sleeve rubbed up against a Gentile's sleeve he would have to go home and wash.

15 continued) ... for to make in himself of twain one new man [a Christian], so making peace;

16) *And that he [Christ] might reconcile both [meaning Jews and Gentiles] unto [whom, who is it listed here?] God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:*

17) *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, [referring to the Gentiles] and to them that were nigh [referring to the Jews].*

18) [Here's a key] *For through him [meaning Christ, His sacrifice, His blood] we both [Jews and Gentiles] have [what, what do they have?] access by one Spirit unto [whom?—well, it says here] the Father. (KJV)*

Very clear—access to the Father. The Hebrew word for “access” means *admission*. In his Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament, [Spiros] Zodhiates says this, “The term was commonly used for the audience or the right of approach granted to someone by high officials or monarchs.” We know that you couldn’t just bop into the throne room of the king unannounced—that was certain death. You couldn’t go into the king unless you were invited. He’s using this example by saying, now we have access—we have admission to God the Father. Verse 18 makes it very clear.

Christ going through the veil with His blood reconciled all humanity to God—we just read that—and it provides unlimited approach, unlimited admission, unlimited access to God Almighty. We don’t need an invitation, we don’t need to schedule an appointment. We have unlimited access, at any time, to go directly to God Almighty.

Does it make *any* sense that the tearing of the veil symbolized Christ’s access to Himself? Does that make any sense at all? Sacrificing Himself so He could reconcile all to Himself? We just read it here: We are reconciled to God, to the Father. Well, let’s ask the question—because people rightly say, in the Old Testament there was access to God—how is that different from the New Testament? Ancient Israel had *limited* access to God—emphasis on limited. Yes, they had the commandments, they had the statutes and they had the judgments, and if they obeyed, guess what their promise was—it was physical blessings. Life would go well, their crops would prosper, they wouldn’t have to fight their enemies—God would take care of all that. But as we’ve seen, they ultimately rejected God because, as we know, they didn’t have the spirit of God, but in the New Testament, because of the tearing of the veil, we have spiritual access to God through the Holy Spirit.

Remember what Christ said the night He was betrayed? He says, We will come and make Our abode in them, referring to God and His Father through the Holy Spirit, making Their abode in those He would call—particularly then, the disciples in John 14. But what was the ultimate purpose, of Christ making, and God making, His abode in us? What is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament access? Was it for physical blessings? Some people think so today—that being in the Church it’s all about physical blessings and being blessed, you’ll have a good job and no bad things will happen to God’s good people. That was a mantra years ago. But, you see, this was done for something far greater—not for physical blessings. Those God calls now have a

spiritual connection to Him. For what purpose—for the purpose of salvation—eternal life; a spiritual connection, spiritual access, spiritual approach.

I can remember when I was a kid, I built model airplanes because I wanted to be a pilot in the worst way. I built model airplanes—I can't tell you how many hundreds of model airplanes I built—and while I was building them I was dreaming of being a pilot. Those model airplanes represented the real thing. You couldn't get into a model airplane and fly it—they represented something that's real. The temple and the tabernacle represented the real thing. They were *models* of the real thing. Let's go to Hebrews 9:24. The entire purpose of the Most Holy Place in the temple and the tabernacle were symbolic pictures of God's throne in heaven, we know that. Just like I built my model airplanes, and they were symbolic of what I wanted to fly, but we see here the far greater importance of the temple and the tabernacle because they were pictures, representations, models of what was really in heaven. Christ, after He was resurrected, went back to heaven, God's throne, Most Holy Place ...

Hebrews 9:24 *For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures [the Greek can mean the representatives] of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: (KJV)*

God sitting on His throne, Christ going through the veil, so to speak, to sit beside God on His right hand. When the veil was torn, it symbolically represented Christ going in once and for all to the Most Holy Place, in heaven, to offer *His* blood to *His* God. God had been there all the time. He had always been there—nothing had changed. And why did He do it? He did it for our salvation. Romans 5:10, let's go there. The purpose was far greater than the promise to Ancient Israel of physical blessings. The purpose was salvation—eternal life as God's children.

Romans 5:10 [Paul says] *For if, when we were enemies, [and we all were, Jews or Gentiles, makes no difference] we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (KJV)*

Does it make any sense that the tearing of the veil symbolized Christ going to the throne to have direct contact with Himself? Does that make any sense at all, with God nowhere to be found? Christ doing everything and God just isn't there—He's just not there? Does it make any sense to believe that Christ was in the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament and God is in the Holy of Holies in heaven in the New Testament? Does that make any sense? Scripture makes it very clear that God was in the Most Holy Place all along—in heaven always, in the temple and the tabernacle as long as they existed before He left. Then three days and three nights later Christ offered His blood, His own blood to His own Father—it's perfect, absolutely perfect.

Let's summarize here. All we are doing—people accuse of us of doing other things—but all we are doing, all we are striving to do is more fully understand the relationship between God and Christ, the roles of God and Christ, the titles of God and Christ, the

activities of God and Christ in the record of scripture—that's all we are doing. We get accused of a lot of other stuff but the truth is that is what we are doing. What have we seen in these two sermons? It was God who came to dwell in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and then later it was God who came to dwell in the Most Holy Place in the temple, and we've seen that God so loved the people He was dealing with that He wanted to dwell amongst them. First in the tabernacle, later in the temple, and He wanted to show them He was there and He was nearby. As we read in Ezekiel, they rejected Him—they did horrible, evil, satanic things in God's own house. So God departed from His own house because Israel rejected Him.

If people want to reject God, God says I'm not going to hang around—at some point I'm going to leave and you are going to have to suffer the consequences, and they indeed did. At Christ's death, the veil was torn to represent Christ after He was resurrected, offering Himself and His blood to the Father, in the true Most Holy Place in heaven, and He did so for our salvation. He gave Himself for each one of us. God the Father had to watch His Son die, knowing what was going on, because He designed the human body along with Jesus Christ—He had to watch that. When that veil was torn, Christ offered Himself up to God, went to God, being resurrected for our salvation. And to show that He was indeed the Son of God and to usher in unlimited access to God—unlimited access.

We have access to God in the instant of a prayer—direct access to God. We don't have to go through a man, we don't have to go through a priest, we don't have to go through an organization—direct access to God.

What we've also seen is there is a Most Holy Place. God designed it—remember He designed the tabernacle and the temple and He designed into those two buildings, those two entities, a Most Holy Place. That's not by accident, it's on purpose.

We've seen there is a Most Holy Place and we've seen there is a Most High God. We know Christ is God; John 1:1 says that very clear. We are also told that Christ is the Son of the Most High, that's in Luke 1. Christ said in many places that His Father was greater than Himself. He said, My Father is greater than I in John 14. He said, I can do nothing of Myself except what the Father has taught Me. In 1 John 8 we're told that. Remember in the garden right before He was taken, Christ was kneeling down, praying, and He said, God, can you take this away from Me, please remove this cup from Me, but how did He conclude that?—He said, nevertheless not what I want but what You will. There are two Gods but it is obvious God the Father is the Most High—He is the Almighty.

So what is the conclusion to the whole deal? Summarizing both sermons, summarizing all the study that we've all done—what is the conclusion to the matter? What have we seen from God's word? Believe me, there is a mountain of evidence. It can be summarized in one sentence when you think about it: The Most High God dwells in the Most Holy Place. Really simple—the Most High God dwells in the Most Holy Place. It

occurred in the tabernacle, it occurred in the temple and it has been in existence for eternity. It never had an existence—it never had a beginning. God, the Most High God, *the* God, the Almighty God, has always dwelt in the Most Holy Place, in heaven, and twice on this earth.

God so loved His people, He wanted to dwell among them. What does that say about the nature and character of God? That God would come down from this splendiferous throne in heaven, that we can't even imagine, and come and dwell in a *tent* and then later in a *building*—and yes, it was a magnificent building, but it could not even compare to His throne in heaven, the Most Holy Place in heaven. He wanted to dwell among His people and He did so, in the Old Testament—in the temple and the tabernacle. In the New Testament, as we know, where does He want to dwell now? He wants to dwell inside us.

Remember, we are the temple. God wants to dwell in us—what a concept! He's always dwelt in the Most Holy Place in heaven. He dwelt in the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle, and then later in the Most Holy Place in the temple, and once Christ came to the earth and died and sacrificed Himself for our sins, remember what Christ said?—We will come and make Our abode in them.

So God is living now, not only in His incredible throne in heaven, He's living inside each one of us. We have to ask the question—we need to remember that this is the Church of God and we are seeking the Kingdom of God—how is it that God would *not* be intimately involved in a Church or a Kingdom that bears His name? Why would He be *distanced* from something that bears His own name? Why would He not want to be intimately involved with the people He has called? He did—He was intimately involved with Ancient Israel and the tabernacle and in the temple, He was right there. But He is more intimately involved in us, now, through the tearing of the veil, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, because, you can't be more intimately involved than living inside us. That's just something that's hard to get our minds around, but what a God we serve. The lesson is, we dare not reject Him as Ancient Israel did—that's the key—they turned their back on Him. The priests were looking to the east of the sunrise with their back to God. We dare not ever do that. Let's be thankful of God's revelation to His children in these last days.