

119

MINISTRIES

“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”

The Tabernacle: The Tent of Meeting

The tabernacle in the wilderness was God’s dwelling place among the Israelites after he freed them from slavery in Egypt. It can be a chore to read through the passages that describe the tabernacle, but it turns out that the tabernacle is full of symbolism and spiritual lessons that teach us about our relationship with God. For a quick introduction to what the tabernacle was, we recommend watching our teaching, [The Tabernacle: An Introduction](#). In this teaching, we’re going to take a close look at one particular part of the tabernacle: the roof. Let’s get started.

The roof is also called the “tent” over the tabernacle. This tent is described in Exodus 26:

Exodus 26:7-14

You shall also make curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains shall you make. The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. The eleven curtains shall be the same size. You shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and the sixth curtain you shall double over at the front of the tent. You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in the second set. You shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be a single whole. And the part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. And the extra that remains in the length of the curtains, the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and that side, to cover it. And you shall make for the tent a covering of tanned rams’ skins and a covering of goatskins on top.

The innermost layer of the tent was made of eleven curtains of goats’ hair. This layer would have provided insulation from the cold. The next layer was made of tanned rams’ skins, basically a tough leather, which would have provided some structure and strength. The outermost layer was made of skins from an unknown animal—the translation used here, the ESV, says “goatskins,” but other translations say “seal skins,” “badger skins,” or even “dolphin skins.” The Hebrew word this is translated from has not been used since ancient times, so it’s not totally clear what kind of skins these were. Whatever it

was, as the outer layer, it would have kept out the sun and the rain.

(For those interested, an interesting article on this mysterious word can be found at <https://www.thetorah.com/article/what-was-the-tachash-covering-the-tabernacle>)

While this tent served a very practical purpose, it also had symbolic meaning: it represents our physical bodies. There are several scriptures which refer to our mortal bodies as “tents.” Here is one example:

2 Peter 1:13-14 (NKJV)

Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this **tent**, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my **tent**, just as our Lord Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua] showed me.

One of the parallels between our bodies and the tent of meeting, is that God covered both of them with skins.

Genesis 3:21

And the LORD [YHWH] God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Both our physical bodies and the physical tabernacle have skin on the outside. So then, what do they have on the inside? There are many potential parallels here, but one that stands out above the rest is the spirit of God. We know that God dwelled in the Tabernacle; that’s the very purpose for which it was built:

Exodus 25:8

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

Psalms 26:8

O LORD [YHWH], I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells.

Just like the tabernacle, we were built so that God could dwell in us. God put his own breath into man, which made man alive:

Genesis 2:7

then the LORD [YHWH] God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

The word translated “breath” here is the Hebrew *neshamah*. There is another Hebrew word, *ruach*, which can also mean “breath,” but is usually translated “spirit.” Just like God wanted to dwell in the Tabernacle, God wants his *ruach*, his breath, his spirit, to dwell inside of us:

Isaiah 42:5

Thus says God, the LORD [YHWH], who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath [*neshamah*] to the people on it and spirit [*ruach*] to those who walk in it:

John 14:15-17

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot

receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

John 20:21-22

Jesus [Yeshua] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

So, we are like God’s Tabernacle. We have skin on the outside, and God’s spirit on the inside. We are a physical dwelling place for God. Paul even calls us “God’s temple”:

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Another significant similarity between the tabernacle and our bodies is that both of them are *temporary*. The tabernacle was a temporary structure that was designed to move around in the wilderness. It was made of relatively fragile materials, things like skins and cloth, and it would have gotten worn down by the weather over the years. Eventually, when the Israelites reached the promised land, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple, which was a permanent and immovable structure made of stone. In the same way, our bodies are temporary. They are fragile, and they break down over time. Eventually, they will die and be replaced by something permanent and immortal (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 51-53). But, for now, we are in these temporary dwellings, these tents of skin.

As we mentioned earlier, there are scriptures that compare our bodies to tents, and that look forward to our permanent home. This presents a question, though. Since our earthly bodies are temporary and are going to pass away, we might wonder why they exist. Why did God make these temporary dwellings, when he has a permanent dwelling waiting for us? A similar question would be, why did God have the Israelites make a temporary tabernacle, only to have it replaced by the permanent temple after they reached the promised land? If the goal was to have a permanent dwelling place in the end, why have a temporary one beforehand?

Paul addresses this question in 2 Corinthians. Here’s what he says:

2 Corinthians 5:1-9

For we know that if the **tent** that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this **tent** we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this **tent**, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

Paul brings up something very important here. He acknowledges that we long to put off our “tent,” our mortal bodies, and enter God’s permanent dwelling place. We want to dwell with God forever. But Paul emphasizes that we still have a purpose here. He says that God has “prepared” us for our heavenly dwelling by giving us his spirit now, while we are in our earthly dwelling. Our time here is preparation

for our time there. We are learning how to live with God now, even while we are in these temporary tents. God wants to meet with us now, while we are in our mortal bodies, just like he wanted to meet with the Israelites in the wilderness before they reached their permanent home. This is why he used the phrase “tent of meeting”:

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 [YHWH], where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD [YHWH] their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD [YHWH] their God.

God met with Israel in the wilderness at the physical tabernacle, and he will meet with us in the wilderness of this world while we are in our physical bodies. The tent of meeting reminds us of this fact. How does God meet with us in our physical bodies? By breathing his spirit into us. He makes us into a dwelling place for him, into a tabernacle that is covered with skin, but filled with his spirit. Ezekiel uses this same imagery in the famous vision of dry bones. The bones, which represent Israel (Ezekiel 37:11), become covered with skin, and filled with God’s spirit:

Ezekiel 37:3-6

And he said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord GOD [YHWH], you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD [YHWH]. Thus says the Lord GOD [YHWH] to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath [*ruach*] in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD [YHWH].”

Just like Adam became alive when God breathed into him, these bones become alive when God breathes his spirit into them. Paul speaks of this same phenomenon in Romans. He says that even though we are still in our mortal bodies, God fills us with his spirit and restores us to life:

Romans 8:8-11

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus [Yeshua] from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus [Messiah Yeshua] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

This passage says that the spirit gives life to our “mortal bodies.” Again, Paul is emphasizing that God is dwelling in us now, even while we are in these “tents of skin.” When God puts his breath, his spirit into us, we’re no longer lifeless bodies, dry bones so to speak. We become truly alive. We’re not just waiting around for our permanent home. Just like the Israelites in the wilderness got to meet with God at his temporary dwelling place, we get to meet with God in our temporary bodies, because he dwells inside of us.

What happens to a place where God dwells? That place becomes sanctified, which means set apart for

sacred use. We see this in the tent of meeting:

Exodus 29:43

There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory.

The exact same language is used in reference to God's spirit dwelling in us. His spirit sanctifies us and fills us with his glory.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua]. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

Just like God's presence sanctified the tent of meeting, his presence also sanctifies us. In order to maintain that sanctity, Paul instructed the Thessalonians to hold to the traditions they were taught. What traditions were they taught? They were taught to obey God's word. They were taught to stop sinning, and to keep God's commandments instead. This is what someone who is filled with God's spirit does.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ [Messiah Yeshua] and by the Spirit of our God.

Our sins separate us from God; they make it so we cannot meet with him. But the blood of Christ atones for our sin, and God's spirit sanctifies us so that we stop sinning. When we walk in obedience, we maintain that sanctity and God's spirit continues to dwell in us. We maintain ourselves as holy tents of meeting.

So, let us strive to be such a dwelling place for God. Like the tent of meeting, we are covered with skin, but let us also be filled with God's spirit. Let us have God breathe into us and make us alive, even while we are in these mortal bodies. Let us experience God's presence now, in preparation for the time we will spend with him for eternity. And, let us maintain the sanctity of our temporary dwellings by walking in God's commandments, the traditions that we learn from the Scriptures. Let us be tents where we can meet with God himself.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net

TWITTER: www.twitter.com/119Ministries#