

**St. Matthew AME Church  
Bible Study  
Monday, June 21, 2010**

**A Dwelling Place for God**

- I. **God is in the business of restoration and the Bible is a record of His efforts to get us back into His presence. Therefore, the stories in the Old Testament are not primarily about the patriarch's, judges, kings and prophets, or about the victories and defeats of God's people. It is really about God getting us back into His ideal environment.**
  - A. **The first attempt to get us back into God's ideal environment is recorded in Genesis 4. Repeatedly, God's people built altars to prepare a place for the presence of God to come and offer sacrifices to invite God to come.**
    1. **The first was Cain and Abel who brought offerings to the Lord. (Genesis 4:3-4)**
    2. **Then came Noah. After the flood, when Noah, his family, and all the animals had emerged from the ark. Noah built an altar and offered burnt offerings unto God. (Genesis 8:21-9:1)**
    3. **Following Noah came Abraham and he too built many altars to God. The most familiar altar was the one Abraham built on Mount Moriah when God commanded him to build an altar and sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering. (Genesis 22) Not only was Abraham a worshipper, but so great was his passion, commitment and trust in God that he was willing to give Him, even his son, the son of promise.**
    4. **After Abraham comes David, the sweet singer and King of Israel. David too is a worshipper. He has sinned by counting the fighting men of Israel and God has shown His displeasure by sending a plague on the people. When David sees the consequence of his actions, he pleads with God to punish him, not them. God tells David through the prophet Gad, to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah (associated with Mt. Moriah) so that the plague will stop. (2 Chronicles 3:1) Like Abraham, many times David built an altar to the Lord. David was use to having his own private worship services with God. Through all of his ups and downs, triumphs and failings, David sought to keep in the presence of God.**
- II. **The outdoor altars of Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham and David gave way to enclosed sanctuaries of the Tabernacle and Temple. All were places of God's presence and sacrifices were offered there with the belief that God would accept and be pleased with them. But in the temple and the tabernacle the worship of God became more regulated. (Exodus 25:1-3,8) God told Moses to gather an offering from the people because He wanted to get His presence into their midst. Building a place for God is always about having the presence of God in the midst of His people. God's presence is the only essential ingredient in worship. Our praise and other things we do must lead us into the presence of God. If they don't there is no need to do them.**
  - A. **God's blueprint for the meeting place between Himself and man ensured that man could not just stumble or wander into His presence.**
    1. **This is why God's dwelling place was in the central part of the Tabernacle. (pulpit or Holy of Holies)**
    2. **God gave specific instructions for everything in the tabernacle. There was the Inner Court, also called the Holy Place. (Inside the altar rail)**

3. All that God did was to provide a place where He could live in the midst of His people.
- III. In the New Testament Jesus is the “temple” by which we come to God. He is the sacrifice, the blood, the dwelling place, and the presence of God. He is also the One whose death destroyed the veil that separated God’s dwelling place from His people. Now everyone has access to God- everyone that accepts the gift of grace that is made available to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- A. The way provided to God (Jesus) is the same today as it was two thousand years ago. There is no improved savior and no improved blood. The Savior has been, is, and always will be Jesus Christ.

#### **God’s Dwelling with Us**

1. All God’s work throughout history has been to get His presence back into man’s environment.
2. Altars, sacrifices, and offerings invite God’s presence to come or they commemorate where He has been.
3. God’s friends are worshippers.
4. The whole purpose of the tabernacle and the temple was to provide a place for God to live in the midst of His people.
5. God’s presence is the only essential ingredient in worship.
6. The design and worship of the Tabernacle looked forward to Jesus and the return of the Holy Spirit.
7. God wants His people to follow His instructions when they come to meet with Him.
8. God wants to live with you today.