

Habitation of God

By Lynn Warner

HOLINESS is the habitation (dwelling place) of GOD. HOLINESS is the separation of the sacred from the profane, common, or worldly. A dwelling has limited access, and GOD limited access to Himself. He could only be approached in a way that He instituted by Law in the Old Testament. Through Jesus CHRIST, the door to GOD's dwelling place was revealed. All who follow JESUS may enter GOD's dwelling and be filled with His life-giving Spirit. In fact, the follower of Jesus Christ becomes indwelt by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and GOD dwells within them.

The first two disciples introduced in the Gospel of John were interested to know where *"the Lamb of GOD that takes away the sin of the world"* dwelt (John 1:29, NASB). They left John the Baptist and followed Jesus. He saw them, turned, and asked, *"What do you seek?" They said to Him, 'Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come, and you will see'"* (John 1:38b-39a). The disciples wanted access to JESUS, to His dwelling place. He further described His mystery, that He is the Door to Heaven, GOD's dwelling place, when He told his disciples, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man"* (John 1:51).

Jesus came so followers could have access, a relationship, and fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He said, *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him"* (John 14:23b). Paul further explains GOD's indwelling when he explained to the Christians in Corinth, *"Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are"* (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Jesus taught that when we believe and follow Him, we are born again. We have access to GOD's dwelling place; we are enabled to see the kingdom of GOD and can enter the kingdom of GOD, as Jesus described in John 3:3-6: *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'"*

And we are given the desire to value spiritual things (true relational intent), to pray to receive the spiritual things of GOD, and become conformed to the image of Christ Jesus through the Holy Spirit as He transforms our minds through the Word of GOD, gives us a new heart, and mortifies the flesh.

The local church, I believe, is a picture or type of heaven, our true dwelling place, where we are indwelt by GOD and dwell in Him and with each other. We value and esteem the fellowship of others who value and esteem and know GOD. But the world system, our spiritual enemy (satan), and our flesh war against the fellowship John describes in 1 John 1:3: *"What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ."* John also stated, *"If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin"* (1 John 1:6-7). JESUS said in Matthew 25:42-

43 in regard to dismissing others and their needs, *“For I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.”*

Hatred is really valuing and esteeming other things or other people over something or someone. Because Jesus often taught by parables, using physical examples for spiritual ideas, to hate our brother may have more to do with dismissing and not valuing him. The world system keeps us “busy” and “self-centered” with “our lives” and “our things.” GOD opened up access to Himself for living life with Him. How well do we open up access to others who belong to Him – His other sons and daughters, boys and girls? When someone is “hungry and thirsty” for fellowship, do we think, “I’m too busy now”, “my house or apartment is not clean enough (or nice enough)”, or some other excuse? Another example is the word “stranger” – how well do we know or even want to know our brothers and sisters?

Through Jesus Christ, the door to GOD’s dwelling place has been revealed. We ARE NOT strangers – we are adopted into His family. We can go in and out and “find pasture,” eating and drinking and fellowshiping with Him. We become GOD’s habitation, His holy temple or dwelling place, with instructions to love and esteem one another, as Jesus loves us. As He gave us access to Him and His highly valued qualities and character, we are to give others access and respond to our brothers and sisters, as they hunger and thirst and may feel like “strangers” to us at times. We are all relational beings with relational intent. Ultimately, we desire to be with GOD in our eternal, heavenly dwellings. May the Spirit of the LORD perform a new work in us, reducing worldly desires and enlarging the habitation of GOD within us, so that we desire to grant access to others in the faith and have spiritual fellowship. Amen.