

IN GOD'S TABERNACLE

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Hebrews 11:8-10 says, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: *for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*" Verses 13-16 speak of the faith that was in him, in his wife Sarah, in their son Isaac, and grandson Jacob: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. *But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*" Our time on this earth is very brief. James 4:14 says, "*For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*" And Job observed, "*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble*" (Job 14:1). Therefore, as 1 Corinthians 15:19 says, "*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*" But, like our fathers in Hebrews 11, by faith, we also may sojourn here with great hope, as God has indeed prepared a tabernacle for us to dwell in for eternity.

A spiritual, eternal home for God's servants

In 2 Peter 3:1-7, we are warned about those who will scoff at the notion that this world will have an end, and that there will then be Judgment Day. These heavens and earth truly are "kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet 3:7). "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet 3:10). "*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*" (2 Pet 3:13). What is this "new heavens and new earth?" It is not a new *physical* home for us to dwell in. It is not a remade physical world. For one thing, all material things by definition are temporary in nature, and only the invisible spiritual things are eternal (2 Cor 4:16-18). Furthermore, God has assured us that his own tabernacle will be our dwelling place if we do his will in this life.

The place prepared

In John 14:1-6, Jesus Christ the Son of God says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. *I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father,

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but by me.” Matthew 25:34 foretells the words Christ will speak to his sheep on Judgment Day: “Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, *inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*” This place that Christ has prepared is that same “new heavens and new earth” promised in 2 Peter 3, and again in Revelation 21:1-4: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, *Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*” This “tabernacle of God” is the “city foursquare” described in even greater detail for the remainder of Revelation chapter 21 and on into chapter 22 (see also Rev 7:9-17).

Who will be there

The Lord is preparing a place for us. But we also must prepare ourselves to inherit that place (1 Sam 7:3; Luke 1:17). The question is asked in Psalm 15:1: “Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” Verse 2 answers, “*He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*” Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says, “*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.* For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” This principle has not changed in the New Testament: “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that *God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*” (Acts 10:34-35). Romans 10:16 says that those who do not obey Christ’s gospel have not believed his report. Indeed, Matthew 7:21 says, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*” Jesus Christ is “*the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Heb 5:9). This is the point of 2 Peter 3:11-14: “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, *be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*” The promise of God’s tabernacle in Revelation chapter 21 includes this statement in verse 7: “*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*” Therefore, for those who die in Christ, we have hope that they will “ever be with the Lord” in his holy tabernacle one day (1 Thes 4:13-17). “*Wherefore comfort one another with these words*” (1 Thes 4:18).