

Chapter 11

Houses For Men And A House For God

Houses For Men

Tents

A tent is a house that can be moved. Suppose that your family wanted to move to a place five miles away. This would be a major project. You would need to sell your house and buy a new house. You would need to get a truck or moving van to carry all of your furniture to your new home. In Bible times making such a move would not be a major problem because many people lived in moveable homes called tents. It would be very simple to take down the tent and to set it back up at another place five miles away.

In Genesis 4:20 we find the first mention of people living in tents. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all lived in tents (see Hebrews 11:9--the word "tabernacles" means "tents"). For 40 years the children of Israel wandered in the desert wilderness. There were no motels for them to go to each night. Where did they dwell during these 40 years (see Numbers 1:52 and 24:2)?

When a tent is set up, poles are put into the ground and these poles hold the tent up (just like camping tents that we see today). Often the tents were made of black goat's hair. Sometimes mats or carpets were laid on the ground.

The inside of the tent was divided into two or sometimes three apartments. The entrance of the tent would lead into the first apartment which was for men. This first apartment was also the place where guests were welcomed and received. Beyond this was a second apartment for women. Sometimes there would also be a third apartment for servants or cattle. Curtains (made out of goat's hair) were used to separate the apartments.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob lived in tents all of their lives. They never built permanent dwelling places. They never settled down in one place. The way they lived carried a message: "This world is not our home and we do not want to permanently settle down anywhere in this world. We are looking for a better and more permanent place to live." What kind of permanent living place was Abraham looking for (Hebrews 11:10)?

Is it possible to become too attached to the things of this world? Some people act as if they are going to be here forever. Is this true? How long are you going to live in this life (compare Psalm 90:10)?

How long are you going to live in eternity? _____ This life is temporary. The next life is permanent.

Houses

Common people would often live in a house that only had one room. How many rooms does your house have? People in Bible times would spend much time in God's out-of-doors, but the homes did provide a place of shelter.

Often the ground served as the floor. The earth could be smoothed off and packed hard. The walls were sometimes made of bricks which were dried in the sun (sun-hardened clay). Sometimes the walls were made by setting stones (sandstones) in mud or clay. Either way the walls were not very solid and it would be possible for a thief to dig right through the walls of the house (Job 24:16). Jesus spoke about thieves breaking through and stealing (Matthew 6:19). Instead of storing treasures in a house on earth, where is a better place to store treasures (Matthew 6:20)? _____ How can a person do this?

The roof which covered the house was flat (most roofs today are slanting). The roof was often made as follows: first beams were laid from wall to wall. Then a mat of reeds or thorn bushes was placed over the beams. Then a layer of earth or clay was put down. Finally sand and/or pebbles were scattered on top of the earth or clay. In the Bible a roof is usually called a "HOUSETOP."

Because dirt was often used in making the roof, it was possible for grass to grow on top of the house (it's one thing to mow your lawn, but how would you like to mow your roof?). The Bible speaks of "G_____ upon the H _____" (Psalm 129:6). Also this kind of roof was not always completely waterproof. When it rained the water could leak through and drip down to the house below. The book of Proverbs compares a nagging wife with a leaky roof (see Proverbs 19:13 and 27:15). Both are very annoying:

drop.....drop.....drop.....continually (leaky roof)

nag.....nag.....nag.....nag.....continually (nagging wife)

How often do you use your roof? People living in the days of the Bible used their housetops for many different purposes:

1. The roof was sometimes used as a place to sleep. Sometimes people would even set up a tent on the top of a house (see 2 Samuel 16:22).
2. The roof was an excellent place to set out food. Grain, figs and other fruits could be dried on the housetops. Rahab dried stalks of flax on her roof (Joshua 2:6).
3. The roof was often used to proclaim a message. If a herald had a message to proclaim, he could go to the top of a house, and in this way everyone could see him and hear him. This kind of preaching is mentioned in Matthew 10:27.
4. The roof could be used as a place of worship. In Zephaniah 1:5 we learn of people who would worship the "host of _____" (the stars) on their housetops. Is this the right kind of worship (Deuteronomy 4:19; 17:3)? _____ Why did Peter go on the roof (Acts 10:9)? _____ Is this the right kind of worship? _____

Since people used the roof in so many ways, God commanded that a railing be put around the edge to keep people from falling off by accident (Deuteronomy 22:8). If God is concerned for the safety of people, should we be too? Can you think of rules or laws that we have today that show concern for the safety of people?

A House For God

Can any house really contain God (1 Kings 8:27)? _____ God cannot be limited or confined so as to be put into one place. God fills the universe and beyond! God is present everywhere!

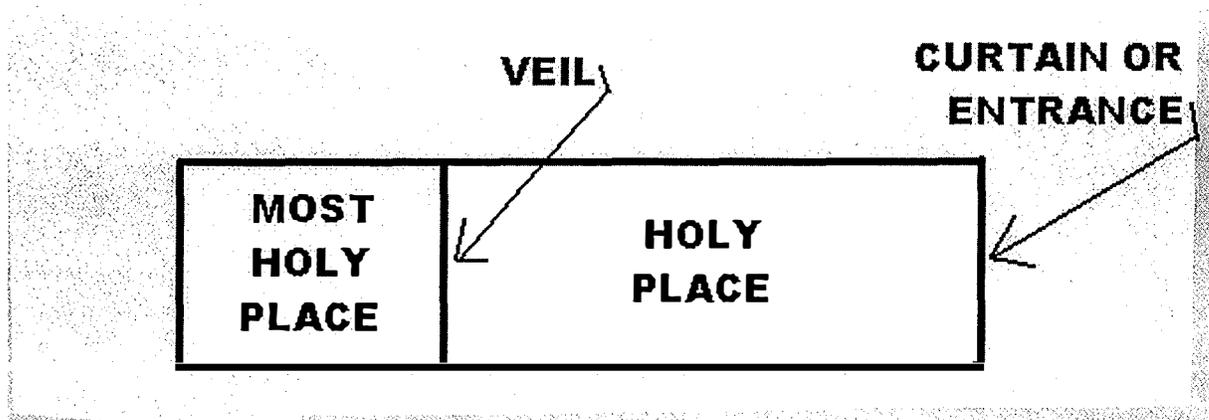
Does God need a place to live? Does God need a place of shelter? Does God need a place to sleep (Psalm 121:4)? _____

When the Bible mentions "THE HOUSE OF GOD," it is referring to a place where God makes known His presence in a very special way. Read Genesis 28:10-19 which is the story of Jacob's dream. God made Himself known to Jacob in a special way, and Jacob called this place BETHEL, which means THE HOUSE OF GOD (verse 17,19). He gave it this name because "the LORD is _____ this _____" (verse 16). God made known His presence to Jacob in a very special way.

The Tabernacle

After the children of Israel had come out of Egypt, God told them to build a very special tent called the tabernacle. God wanted to meet with His people and dwell with them and make known His presence to them in a very special way. God said to them, "And let them make Me a **sanctuary** (a holy place); that I may _____ among them" (Exodus 25:8).

This large tent could be moved from place to place. It was portable. Inside the tent there were two rooms. The first room was a larger room and it was called the sanctuary or the holy place (Hebrews 9:2). The second room was smaller and it was called the most holy place or the Holiest of all (Hebrews 9:3). A veil or thick curtain separated these two rooms.



The second room (THE MOST HOLY PLACE) was the place where God made known His presence in a very special way. Only one man was allowed to go into this room and he was only allowed to do this once a year (see Hebrews 9:7).

When the children of Israel finished building the tabernacle, what happened (Exodus 40:34-35)?
 _____ God was making known His presence in a very special way. Every day God's glory could be seen in a cloud over the tabernacle and every night God's glory could be seen in a fire over the tabernacle. The cloud and the fire both carried the same message: GOD IS HERE! GOD IS DWELLING IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE! See Exodus 40:38.

What happened to the tabernacle? Did it remain as God's dwelling place forever? Did God's glory remain there forever? Is the tabernacle still around today?

The tabernacle did not remain forever. In the days of Samuel, the children of Israel fought against the Philistines. The Philistines won the battle and the ark of God was _____ (1 Samuel 4:10-11). The ark was a small box or chest which contained the Ten Commandments. This was the most important piece of furniture found in the tabernacle. It was located in the most holy place. After the ark was taken it was said that "the G _____ is departed from Israel" (1 Samuel 4:22). After the days of Samuel we read very little about the tabernacle. God puts aside the tabernacle. His next dwelling place would be the temple.

Solomon's Temple

The first great Jewish temple was built by King Solomon. It was one of the most beautiful buildings ever built by man. You can read about the temple being built in 1 Kings chapters 5-7.

Solomon's temple was like a **permanent tabernacle**. It contained the same two rooms (the holy place and the most holy place), but the temple was different than the tabernacle because it could never be moved. The temple was located in only one place: JERUSALEM! It was the place of God's choice.

When the children of Israel finished building the temple, what happened (1 Kings 8:9-10)?
 _____ God was making known His presence in a very special way. GOD WAS DWELLING IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE!

What happened to this great temple? As time went on the children of Israel sinned and turned away from the Lord and finally God had to judge them. In 586 B.C. God sent the Babylonian army to the city of Jerusalem and they completely destroyed the city. You can read about this in 2 Kings chapter 25. What happened to the temple (2 Kings 25:9)?

_____ Solomon's great temple was destroyed.

The Rebuilt Temple

The Jews were carried away as captives to the land of Babylon. They were there for many, many

years. Finally a Persian King named Cyrus gave the Jews permission to return to their land. Many returned to Jerusalem, and one of the first things they wanted to do was to rebuild the temple which had been destroyed by the Babylonians. We can read about the building of this temple in the book of Ezra. This second temple was not nearly as great or as beautiful as the temple which Solomon built. In fact, some of the older Jews still remembered Solomon's great temple. What did they do when they saw this new temple (Ezra 3:12)? _____ It was nothing compared to the greatness of the first temple (see also Haggai 2:3).

At a much later time Herod the Great worked on this temple to make it much larger and much more beautiful. This is the same Herod who had the innocent children slaughtered, as we read in Matthew chapter two. Herod loved glorious building projects, and he spent many years improving the temple and making it great (compare John 2:20). Sometimes this is called ***Herod's Temple***. This is the same temple that we read about in the gospels and in Acts (see Luke 2:46; Acts 3:1; etc.).

Again the Jews did not turn to God. This time they rejected and crucified the very One that God had sent to be their Saviour. Once again God judged the nation, and in the year 70 A.D. the Roman army came to the city of Jerusalem and completely destroyed this temple. About 40 years earlier, Jesus predicted that this would happen (see Matthew 24:1-2).

Once again God put the temple aside by way of a destructive judgment. Many hundreds of years have passed since 70 AD. Have the Jews built another temple? No, the Jewish people have been without a temple for all of these years. But someday another temple will be built.

The Tribulation Temple

In the future, there will be another temple built in the city of Jerusalem. However, Satan's man (known as "the man of sin" or "the Antichrist") will take over this temple and demand that everyone worship him (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9 and Revelation chapter 13). Instead of being "THE MOST HOLY PLACE" it will be "THE MOST UNHOLY PLACE" (the Bible calls it the "abomination of desolation", referring especially to the image of the Antichrist that will be set up in the temple--Matthew 24:15). Who will destroy this wicked man (2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 19:20)? _____

What will happen to this "unholy" tribulation temple? God will put this temple aside also. This temple will only last until the second coming of Christ.

The Kingdom Temple

After Jesus Christ returns to the earth another temple will be built. This will be the greatest temple that has ever been on the face of the earth. Solomon's great and glorious temple was nothing compared to this future kingdom temple! The prophet Ezekiel describes this temple in detail in chapters 40-48 of the book of Ezekiel. What will fill this great house (Ezekiel 44:4)? _____

God will make known His presence in a very special way. GOD WILL DWELL IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE.

What will happen to this great kingdom temple? God will put this temple aside also. God is going to take the heavens and the earth (including this kingdom temple) and He is going to burn

it all up (see 2 Peter 3:7-13). The kingdom temple will be no more.

Finally there will be a new heavens and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). There will also be a NEW JERUSALEM and a NEW TABERNACLE and God will dwell with His people throughout eternity (Revelation 21:2-3). Will there be a temple made of wood and stone then (Rev. 21:22)? _____ God Himself will be in midst of His people in a very special way throughout eternity.

Where Is God's Temple Today?

Today there is no temple in Jerusalem. For hundreds and hundreds of years, ever since 70 A.D., there has been no temple. Where does God dwell today? Does God have a temple today?

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on this earth He spoke about a temple (see John 2:19). The Jews thought that He was talking about Herod's temple (John 2:20), but He was really talking about "the T _____ of His B _____ " (John 2:21). His body was God's temple. His body was the dwelling place of the living God. God lived there!

Does God have a temple today? Jesus is no longer on the earth. The temple is no longer in Jerusalem. Where does God dwell today?

In 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers and said, "What? know ye not that _____ is the _____ of the Holy Spirit." Does God have a temple today? _____ Where does God dwell and live?

_____ Is this true of all people or only of believers?
_____ God has made the believer's heart His home! God has made our bodies His dwelling place!

Should this make a difference as to how you think about your body? Because our body is God's temple, each believer should GLORIFY _____ IN HIS BODY (1 Corinthians 6:20). Our body has become a MOST HOLY PLACE! Should not we do everything possible to keep it a holy place for the Lord? Suppose you were in a beautiful cathedral or some other beautiful building. What would you think if someone were to come along with a large can filled with garbage and start throwing the garbage all over everything. What if he were then to start spraying everything with spray paint? Is this the kind of thing that should be done to such a building? Yet sometimes believers can mess up God's temple by the harmful things that they do to their body.

What are some things that we can do to take proper care of our body which is God's temple?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

What are some things that we should avoid that might be harmful to the body which is God's holy temple?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

What will happen to this temple? What will happen to the believer's body? Is this temple going to last forever? Is God going to dwell in this body forever? No, Peter knew that he would have to put off "this tabernacle" (speaking of his body)--2 Peter 1:13 and compare 2 Corinthians 5:1. This body is going to be put aside, and God will give the believer a new body. The body we live in now will be put aside just like the Jewish temples were put aside.

The Synagogue

The word "synagogue" means a place where people can *gather together* for a certain purpose. The Jewish synagogue was a place where the Jews could come together to read the Scriptures, to pray, to hear someone teach from the Scriptures and to worship God.

The SYNAGOGUE is not the same thing as the TEMPLE. There was only ONE TEMPLE but there were MANY SYNAGOGUES: "for Moses...hath in _____ them that preach him, being read in the _____ every sabbath day" (Acts 15:21). The Jews had only one temple and it was located in the city of J _____. The Jews had many synagogues and these were located in every important city.

The Lord Jesus often visited the synagogue and taught there (see Luke 4:16-30). When Paul went into a new city on his missionary travels, he would often stop first at the synagogue and preach Christ to the Jews who were there (Acts 17:1-4; 18:4-6; etc.).

Today the local assembly of believers (the local body of believers) is to be both a **temple** and a **synagogue**! As a temple it is the dwelling place of the living God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Ephesians 2:21-22). God lives *in the church* and the church is called the HOUSE OF _____ (1 Timothy 3:15). As a synagogue it is the place where believers can gather together for worship and prayer and teaching and the public reading of the Scriptures.

Are you taking an *active part* in the local assembly of believers? Do you *assemble together* for all of the regular services (including prayer meeting)? When you come to church do you expect God to be present there? Do you just come to see your friends or do you come expecting to meet with God? In the local church God wants to make Himself known in a very special way. God wants all people to know that GOD IS THERE (see 1 Corinthians 14:24-26). Is what we are doing and saying pointing out to others that we are in God's presence? Is it pointing out that God is in our heart and soul? Is it pointing out that we belong to Him and that He is our CREATOR? OUR SAVIOUR? OUR LORD? OUR FATHER?

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which [Who] is in you, which ye have of [from] God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

