

God Dwelling Among His People

Cornerstone 1131 Sunday School • Lesson 4

From Creation to Restoration

A 50-minute teaching guide for adults or older teenagers. Complete KJV Scripture readings follow the teaching notes. A separate student worksheet with the same readings accompanies this guide.

The central truth

God desires to dwell among His people, yet no building can contain Him. The tabernacle and temple reveal the seriousness of His presence. In Jesus Christ, the Word becomes flesh, and through His Spirit God forms His people into a holy dwelling built upon Christ.

What students should learn

- Identify the purpose of the tabernacle and distinguish God dwelling among His people from a building containing Him.
- Read Solomon's prayer and God's response within their setting in Israel's covenant life.
- Explain how John connects God's presence with Jesus and the temple with His body.
- Describe how God's people are called to build one another up as His dwelling place.

Readings and preparation

Class readings: Exodus 25:8; 40:34–38; 2 Chronicles 6:18–21; 7:12–16; John 1:14; 2:19–22; 1 Corinthians 3:9–17. Supporting reading: 1 Peter 2:4–6. Full passages appear after the worksheet, including preparation for the next lesson. Scripture quotations use the King James Version.

Companion readings: When God Heals the Land and The Kingdom Within in the Cornerstone Journal. Have the included Scripture readings, pens, and student worksheets ready. Keep Scripture at the center; use the essays to support reflection.

Class plan

Welcome, review, and prayer — 5 minutes

Opening question — 5 minutes

Scripture and teaching — 20 minutes

Discussion — 10 minutes

Personal response and service — 7 minutes

Closing prayer — 3 minutes

Opening the class

Recall Lesson Three: God calls people into a covenant relationship and invites wholehearted return. Ask: "What is the difference between knowing about someone and living in their presence?" Connect the answers with relationship and attentive response, without treating God's presence as a feeling we must produce.

Pray: "Father, God bless the reading of the Word. Teach us to honor Your presence, hear Your voice, and recognize what You reveal through Jesus Christ. Help us care for the people You are building together. Amen."

The tabernacle and the temple

Allow about 10 minutes for these first two teaching movements. Read the short passages from the Scripture section and distinguish the account itself from the application.

1 God makes His presence known among His people

Read Exodus 25:8 and 40:34–38. Explain that the tabernacle is the sanctuary associated with Israel's wilderness journey. Ask: "What purpose does God name, and how does His presence affect the people's journey?"

"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." — Exodus 25:8, KJV

Suggested teaching: "God's purpose concerns a relationship with His people. The sanctuary belongs within their life with Him. When the tabernacle is completed, the cloud covers it and the glory of the LORD fills it. This is holy ground for a people called to respond to Him."

"The cloud also guides their journey. When it is taken up, they move; when it remains, they stay. God's presence is connected with the way they live and travel. The people are called to attend to Him."

Ask: "How might attention to God shape an ordinary decision or responsibility?" Encourage responses grounded in Scripture and faithful conduct. Do not ask students to reproduce Israel's cloud as a method for making decisions today.

2 No building can contain God

Read 2 Chronicles 6:18–21 and 7:12–16. Set the scene: Solomon has built and dedicated the temple in Jerusalem. He prays for God to hear His people, and God addresses him concerning the temple and Israel's covenant life.

Suggested teaching: "Solomon asks whether God will indeed dwell with people on the earth. He acknowledges that even heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. A temple cannot make God small enough to possess or control."

"Yet Solomon asks God to hear the prayers offered toward this place and to forgive. God's greatness does not make prayer meaningless. The people are invited to turn toward Him with dependence and reverence."

"God's response includes humility, prayer, seeking His face, and turning from wicked ways. The temple does not make disobedience harmless. Worship and the conduct of the people belong together."

Teacher note: The promise of healing the land in 2 Chronicles 7:14 addresses Israel in its covenant setting. It is not an automatic promise of national prosperity for every country or a guarantee that an individual hardship will end. Draw out humility and repentance without removing that setting.

Christ and the dwelling God builds

Allow about 10 minutes for these two teaching movements. Move from the sanctuary and Solomon's question to the way John presents Jesus and Paul addresses the community of believers.

3 The Word becomes flesh

Read John 1:14 and 2:19–22. Ask: "What does John say has happened, and what does he explain Jesus meant by the temple?"

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." — John 1:14, KJV

Suggested teaching: "Solomon's question gives us reason to listen closely when John speaks of God's Word dwelling among us. God makes Himself known through the life of Jesus Christ. The glory John describes is encountered in the Son, full of grace and truth."

"In John 2, Jesus speaks of destroying the temple and raising it in three days. His hearers think of the building, but John explains that He spoke of the temple of His body. After His resurrection, the disciples remember and believe."

"The course now points us toward Christ's own life, death, and resurrection. Our understanding of God's dwelling among humanity must take seriously the One who lived among us in the flesh and rose from the dead."

Ask: "Why is it important that John explains what Jesus meant, rather than leaving us with the crowd's first interpretation?" Listen for careful reading, context, and attention to Christ's resurrection.

4 God builds His people upon Christ

Read 1 Corinthians 3:9–17. If time permits, read 1 Peter 2:4–6 as a supporting passage. Ask: "What is the foundation, and who is being described as God's building and temple?"

Suggested teaching: "Paul calls the believers God's building and identifies Jesus Christ as the foundation. He then asks whether they know that they are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in them. Here he addresses the community together. Their life with one another has spiritual importance."

"Paul's warning about defiling God's temple makes this a matter of responsibility. What we teach, how we speak, and how we treat one another can build up or damage the community. A claim to honor God must reach the people among whom His Spirit dwells."

"Peter adds the picture of living stones being built into a spiritual house. Christ is the chosen cornerstone. We receive a place in a life that joins us to Him and to one another. We will return to this theme when we study Living Stones in Service."

Bridge to the next lesson

Say: "We have followed the question of God's presence toward Christ. Next we will study Christ, the Faithful Son: His temptation in Luke 4 and His obedience where humanity failed."

Discussion and care for the community

Discuss together for 10 minutes

Choose two or three questions. Begin with the passage, then invite practical responses. Suggested answers guide the teacher.

1. What is the purpose of the sanctuary in Exodus 25:8?

Suggested response: God says that He will dwell among His people. The sanctuary belongs within their relationship with Him, and His presence calls for reverence and response.

2. How does Solomon hold God's greatness and prayer together?

Suggested response: He acknowledges that heaven cannot contain God, yet asks Him to hear and forgive. Dependence and reverence belong together; the building does not give people control over God.

3. What do John 1:14 and 2:19–22 reveal about Jesus?

Suggested response: The Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. Jesus speaks of His body as the temple, and John connects the saying with His resurrection.

4. How should being God's building affect a class or congregation?

Suggested response: Christ is the foundation, and the Spirit dwells among His people. Teaching, speech, and conduct should build up the community rather than damage it.

Personal response and service for 7 minutes

Invite students to consider privately: "Am I giving more attention to religious appearance than to the way I treat people? What could I do this week to strengthen the community God is building?"

Choose one action: include someone who is overlooked, offer practical help to a person who is weary, correct a damaging statement, or give patient attention to someone's question. Ask what would be helpful rather than assuming what another person needs.

Explain: "Our care for a building can serve a community, but it cannot replace care for the people. The lesson calls us to connect worship with faithful relationships and service."

Check understanding

Complete: "No building can contain God, yet..." and "Because Christ is our foundation, I can help build up others by..." Listen for God's freedom and greatness, His self-revelation in Christ, and a concrete response of care.

Closing prayer for 3 minutes

"Father, heaven cannot contain You, yet You draw near to Your people. Thank You for making Yourself known through Jesus Christ. Teach us reverence, humility, and faithful love. Keep Christ as our foundation, and help our words and actions strengthen the people You are building together. Amen."

Preparation for next week

Read Luke 4:1–21 and Romans 5:18–19 in the included Scripture section. Ask: How does Jesus respond to temptation, and how does Paul connect His obedience with humanity's need?

Sources: Exodus 25 and 40; 2 Chronicles 6–7; John 1–2; 1 Corinthians 3; 1 Peter 2. Companion readings: When God Heals the Land and The Kingdom Within, Cornerstone 1131.

Scripture readings

Lesson 4 • God Dwelling Among His People

King James Version. The complete class, supporting, and next-week passages are provided below. No separate Bible or internet connection is needed to read them in this document.

Words to know: Sanctuary means a holy place; tabernacle is the sanctuary used during Israel's wilderness journey; hearken means listen attentively; lively stones means living stones. Thou and thee mean you; ye addresses more than one person.

Class readings

Exodus 25:8 • KJV

8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

Exodus 40:34–38 • KJV

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys:

37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up.

38 For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

2 Chronicles 6:18–21 • KJV

18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

19 Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:

20 That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place.

21 Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

2 Chronicles 7:12–16 • KJV

12 And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

15 Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

16 For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

John 1:14 • KJV

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 2:19-22 • KJV

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

1 Corinthians 3:9-17 • KJV

9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Supporting reading

1 Peter 2:4-6 • KJV

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Before the next lesson

Luke 4:1-21 • KJV

1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10 For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11 And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Romans 5:18-19 • KJV

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Scripture text: King James Version, reproduced from the KJV collection at bible-api.com. Teaching notes and word explanations are separate from the Bible text.