

# The tent

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 09 May 2021

Preacher: Philip Wells

[ 0 : 00 ] Okay, this is going to be the children's. Actually, it's the whole thing, pretty much. We'll try and sing. If we lose concentration, we'll sing a song in the middle of it.

Right, boys and girls, this is your bit. I want you to really be nice and awake. Everybody there. Let's wave at the boys and girls. Any boys and girls here? Anybody awake? Possibly. Yeah, okay.

Good, good, good. Right, we're going to look at the Mishkan this morning. Mishkan. Do you know what a Mishkan is? Let's find out what a Mishkan is. Right, here's some words and I want you to know what they mean. And they all sound about the same. So there's barnacle, rubbitacle, barnacle, rubbitacle, carbuncle, we've got a cool at the end of them, tabunacle.

Okay, so there's, now then, so those are the words and the meanings. So one of them is a shellfish. One of them is a cluster of infected spots. One of them is part of a ball game.

And one of them is a tent where God meets people. Okay, shall we work out which one's which? So the barnacle, which one of that is one, two, three or four? The barnacle, what do you think? You think it's one. Okay, what did you think? Barnacle. Hang on, barnacle. What do you think? Barnacle is A. Yeah, is it a shellfish or a cluster of infected spots or part of a ball game or where God meets people? One. Okay, let's see. Yeah, that's right. Okay.

[ 1 : 43 ] Okay. Rugby tackle. So is that a shellfish, a cluster of infected spots, part of a ball game or where God meets people? I always go for you because you put your hand up first. But let's, anybody upstairs? Rugby tackle. Is it shellfish, cluster of infected spots, part of a ball game?

Number three, part of a ball game. Who says number three? Okay. Yeah, that's right. Carbuncle.

Carbuncle. You know what carbuncle is? Yeah, some really horrible pictures on, if you Google that, if your mum and dad let you Google it, you get some really horrible pictures of carbuncle. Yeah. So which leaves tabernacle as being number what? Number four, a place where God meets people.

It's a funny word. I always think tabernacle sounds like some medical problem, but actually it just means, in Hebrew it's mishkan, in Greek it's skini, I think. It just means tent. I don't know why they don't write tent. But anyway, they use this funny word tabernacle, it's a tent. And we're going to look at the history through the Bible from beginning to end of the place where God meets people. It was a tent where God lived and people came to visit God in his house, and that was the tent where he lived in. And that's what we're going to look at. So we'll just go through this this morning from beginning to end. That's pretty much all we're going to do. The Hebrews is talking about the tabernacle, and we're really just sort of creeping up on this subject this morning rather than doing the text directly. Okay, so this is the tabernacle, is the tent, and that was where God met people.

And later on it turned into the temple, which was the same sort of thing, only not made out of cloth. So first place where God meets people. Okay, boys and girls, here we go. First place where God meets people is a garden. There's a garden.

And it was a place. Does anybody know the name of the place where the garden was? It was in the mountain region of Eden. Yeah, well done. And it had some people in it. Because this is when God meets people, it's a place with people. Who are the people? Anybody know the names of the people? Up at the top, Gracie. Does Gracie know? Adam and Eve. Yeah, that's right. There they are. There's Adam and Eve people. And they had, they lived under God's word. They lived under God's blessing that God had a word, a particular thing that he said to them to do. Now this is a bit more difficult, so you might need help from an adult near you. What was the particular word or thing that God said to them in the garden?

Oh. Yeah. That's right. Yeah. And what about the other trees? Yeah. Okay. You could eat all the trees except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Just don't touch that one.

That was the sort of word over the top of that. That was a good answer. I think that's worth a round of applause. And there's something about walking. Again, this is a bit of a difficult one. Does

anybody know the reference to walking in the garden? Walking. Nice to walk in a garden. Okay. Adult. Adults. Rosie? Yeah. And the walking bit? You're right. There was one sentence that says walking. God was walking in the garden of the cool of the day. Yes. They had the voice of the Lord walking in the garden of the cool of the day. There's a walking word in there.

[ 5 : 51 ] And it just tells us, boys and girls, that right at the beginning, liked to be with people. He liked to meet with his people. He had a nice garden and the Lord was there and walked amongst his people. And that's the sort of thing God liked to do, which I find pretty amazing because he's very different to us. He's holy. We're sinful. And we can make lots of mistakes and we do lots of things wrong. And I wouldn't be surprised if God said I don't particularly like those sorts of people. But God likes people and he liked to walk with his people in the garden. Okay. So that was the garden. Did everything... This is a silly question really. Did everything go right in the garden? Good answer. Yeah. No. I need a round of applause for that. Yeah.

Yeah. It didn't go right. So things became much more complicated for meeting God as we go through the Bible. So here is the tent or the tabernacle.

So that's the picture there of it. We'll do more about the details another time. But that's roughly speaking the tent. And who... So this is... No, think about this. Who...

...gave the instructions for the tent. Who was it in the Bible who gave the instructions for the tent? It was a very famous person. Don't say God because I'm... Who was it?

Moses. This is the correct answer. Yeah. Moses. Okay. Well done. So... It came by Moses. And the place. So the place. Where did they have the tent?

[ 8 : 01 ] To begin with at least. Do you know where they had the tent? Because I'll give you a clue. They went from one place where they didn't like it to another place which was lovely. And the tent is part of that. So I'm looking for place. Oh, I've stumped everybody.

Well, what I was thinking of was that the place was in the desert actually. Because they left Egypt and went to the Promised Land and they went across the desert. So they were on a journey.

They couldn't build a house. They had to have something that would move with them as they moved along. And God moved with them. And who were the people in this case? It wasn't Adam and Eve, was it?

Who were the people that met God in the tent? Yeah. Israel. There's some people. We've got clothes on this time. Yeah. Israel. So this was the nation.

The people of Israel met God in the tent. And was there any particular word that... that or words that... that wounded them.

[ 9 : 07 ] They went across the desert and as they were God's people. Any particular word or words? Moses. Moses and the...

lost ark. I don't know. Okay. My wife's going to do this one.

Yeah. There were ten words. The ten commandments. And that sort of... there was a whole lot of... said. But one focus of it was the ten commandments. Yeah. Ten words.

And where were they walking to? There was a walking. So they were travelling. Where were they walking to? I gave it away before. Where were they walking to? You guys, any suggestions?

No? No? Yeah? No? The promised land. Yes. So they're walking from the place of slavery to the land of milk and honey.

[ 10 : 07 ] The promised land. The land that's got... milk and honey.

They're walking to the promised land. And they're like us. Because we are on a journey in this world to go and be with God in heaven.

And God walked with them through that journey as he walks with us. One of the things about this is it's got a wall. And it's got various...

Walls that you walk through and doors that you have to go through. And there's a compartment in there that hardly anybody ever gets into. So there's walls and barriers. So here's a... Barriers.

The garden didn't have walls and barriers. But this tent does. The Ark of the Covenant was in there. That's right. The Ark of the Covenant was right inside there. That was the bit that was like God's throne.

[ 11 : 05 ] And it had two cherubim. And I don't know quite what they looked like. But they had wings. And maybe they had one set of wings like that. Set of wings like that. And God's throne was...

He was enthroned on the cherubim. But the walls and barriers... So right on the inside we've got the Ark of the Covenant. So let's just tease this out a little bit. Why were there... Why is it not like a garden where you can just walk straight up to things in a garden?

Is it a mission? Is it a mission? Is it a mission that we're allowed? Is it a very large time that we're going to see in a garden where you can just walk straight up to things in a garden? Yeah, that's a good answer.

Yes. There's something very special. Yeah, you've got a round of applause for that. It's right in the very heart of this tent. That's where the Ark of the Covenant is.

This last bit of the tent is a cubic. So this bit is long and thin, as it were. But the right bit at the end is cubic. And that's the bit where God is.

[12:03] It's a perfect cube. And it's difficult to get there. And if you go there wrongly, it's deadly. Because it's really hard for sinners to approach God.

Because God is so different from us. And if you approach God unprotected, it's like going into a nuclear power station or something.

You get frazzled up unless you've got protective clothing. Or have any of you got anywhere near you an electric power station? Sometimes they're just that sort of size.

And it says on the wall, electric power, don't go in there. Otherwise, you'll be frazzled to pieces. Have you got one near you? You've got one near the train station.

And it was like that. That if you try to get near God without protection, we get frazzled up. But God still wants to be with people. But there are these walls and barriers.

[13:04] And there is something here called an altar. If you're on your way to meet God, you go past this altar. Boys and girls tell us what happens on an altar. What happens on an altar?

Yeah? You kill an animal. Absolutely right. You sacrifice it. Yeah, okay. That one's a good one.

Yeah. So in order to get near God, it isn't that you just go up to God and rock up to God. You have to go through a process.

And in the tabernacle, it's very clearly spelled out that an animal has to die. Somebody has to die. And instead of us getting frazzled up, the animal gets frazzled up.

It gets killed. And it's shown that it's killed because its blood is sort of splashed in different places. To say, actually, somebody has died. And somebody has died, or something has died, instead of the person who wanted to come close.

[14:03] And that, and here is, oh yeah, this one here. Anybody recognize that guy there? Anybody tell us who that is? Yes?

He's the priest. He's the priest. And this is the chap who does, who works all the sacrifices. He knows what to do with the animals, how to slice them up, what to do with the, that sort of thing. And he is the assistant to help these people come near to God there. And that's what the priest does. He gets, he brings them close. He does the work to bring people close.

Okay. I think that's about it. This is, it says in Exodus 29, 44, let's just see what it does say in Exodus 29, 44. I better read it.

You can look it up if you can get there before me. Exodus 29, 44 says, I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar and consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests.

[15:04] Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the Lord, their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them.

I am the Lord, their God. I'll just read that last bit again. I brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the Lord, their God. I think that's fantastic that God says, I've taken these rubbish from Egypt and I've brought them, I've ordered this tent to be constructed and this altar and these priests so that I can live with them because I want to be with these people.

And I think that's rather amazing, isn't it, that God would want to be with people like us. And here in the Old Testament there's this very creative way of doing it. But he wants, I brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them.

And here's a picture from the Theopolis channel on YouTube. That's rather a nice picture of the tabernacle, isn't it? You see it there in the desert? It makes it look really desertish, doesn't it?

There's the temple, that's right, there's the altar and there's the walls and that's the tabernacle.

Okay, so let's go on because something else happened.

[16:26] There wasn't always a tabernacle, it changed into something else. So click, there was a temple, a temple, just one temple.

It's not like churches where you have churches in every town and city. You don't have temples in every town and city in the Bible. You have one temple, a place where God meets with people. Now here's a question, boys and girls. This was not done by Moses, it was built by, built by, the temple was built by, David is half an answer.

Yeah, go on. You think it might be Solomon and Solomon was David's son and David planned it but Solomon built it.

So that's two halves of the Christ answer so a little round of applause. That's good. So that's my little picture of the temple. So this time it's a building.

[ 17 : 36 ] It's still got walls and inside it's still got a cube for the holy place and it's still got cherubim in there and it's a fantastic place. There's gold all over the place.

If you went in there you'd think, wow, what a place. You really would. Just fantastic. So it's a place. Just say, oh, I've unclicked something.

Do you know which place it was in? But this time, it's stuck in one place. Do you know which place it's in? The temple was where? Yeah? Well done!

In Jerusalem. Yeah, that's right. So that was the place. Yes, yes. That was the place where it was and the people, so we, which people was it? This is their temple.

Which people? Italians? Italians? Italians? Italians? Italians? Italians? Italians? Italians? Israelites. Israelites. Yes, well done.

[ 18 : 38 ] And this also had an altar. And so this is the temple. And Isaiah 2, verse 1 talks about the vision for the temple. Any of the grown-ups know of, by heart, or can remember a bit of Isaiah 2, verse 1?

If you want to look it up and tell us what it says about the temple. It says, in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house will be established, raised, or, yeah?

Go on, yes. Shall we look it up? In Isaiah 2, verse 1, in the last days the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains, it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

And there's a vision of the place where God lives in the last days, so meaning to say, I guess, when the old covenant had transformed into something else, that in some way there would be a place where all the nations will flow, they'll all go to meet with God.

And I think that's what's happening here. Because, let's just see how many different nationalities have we got here. So, how many people of old standard English here this morning? Okay, quite a few of us.

[ 20 : 08 ] How many people of Greek heritage? Yeah. How many people of German heritage? How many people of Italian heritage? Okay. Ukrainian heritage?

Yeah. Okay. You're not a Ukrainian. I won't... We're international here this morning. And this is part of the fulfilment of this, that all nations will flow to where God makes his home and where God speaks the idea of the temple.

However, something happened to the temple. Did it all work out well for the temple? You can give the same answer as you did before. Did it all work out well for the temple?

Good answer. No, it didn't. Yeah. It got... Do you know what happened to the temple? Yeah? It got destroyed. It was awful. Just awful because all the promises that God had made like this about all the nations flowing to the temple just seemed to have gone wrong.

And there's nothing worse for a spiritually minded person to think actually this proves that God's gone wrong. And that God doesn't go wrong but sometimes it looks as though he does.

[ 21 : 29 ] And you really have to have faith to trust that God knows what he was doing. And this was a real crisis of faith. That the temple got destroyed. Now God had a plan and he said I'll still do what I've said I'm going to do.

But the temple was destroyed and people really had to think hard about that. What would you say? The Samson destroyed the temple.

He did. It wasn't this temple. It was a pagan temple for a foreign god. And he got captured and they did horrible things to him.

They took his eyes out didn't they so he couldn't see. But he still trusted God right to the time when he died and he said even as I die let me just be on your side and knock this temple down.

And they put him near some pillars of the temple didn't he? And he pulled it down and they all got squashed. And even in his death he trusted in God. So that's the story you meant isn't it?

[ 22 : 29 ] Yeah. So there's this temple the Jerusalem temple going up in smoke. So this is a place where God lived but and that's a huge issue that God should move out.

In Ezekiel and that's a prophecy of Ezekiel about this time the people went to Babylon and they were made prisoners there and that was horrible.

Ezekiel's prophecy begins with seeing God's throne sort of flying and moving is that God wasn't actually stuck in the temple but his presence can go anywhere and even go to Babylon and that was a great encouragement to them.

But what this shows is God destroyed the temple because because of what? Now that's a bit of a complicated question. Why did God not stay with the temple?

What went wrong? He went with the temple because oh I think I put the answer up there actually. Yeah because people weren't obeying his rule they weren't living under his word.

[ 23 : 43 ] And God wants to be close to people and when we're close to people we want to please people and God wanted the people to please him but they kept on being rude to him they kept on being obnoxious to him they kept on sort of spitting on him basically and saying we don't care you've done all good things for us but we don't care about that we don't want to please you and God in the end 400 years of this he put up with he said okay well I'm going to just you can go and I'll go as well but in the New Testament we have another promise for the New Testament people he'll never leave us I will never leave you nor forsake you it says in the New Testament for God's New Testament people yeah we might feel distant from the Lord and might get distant from the Lord but he says if you're mine I'll never leave you I'll never abandon you I'll never leave you to squirm I will always be there for you so that was the temple and the temple was rebuilt and that was fantastic they came back from being imprisoned in Babylon came back and the temple was rebuilt whoops let me try doing that again this silly thing won't click properly see what happens ah right let's try that again the temple was rebuilt did person in the New Testament do we know that went and visited the temple quite a few times somebody in the New Testament visited the temple a few times yeah correct

Jesus that was a good answer yeah Jesus went to the temple a number of times didn't he and got into arguments there and things like that when he was little his parents brought a sacrifice to the temple but even when the temple was rebuilt it still wasn't right God had made lots of promises for the temple but it still wasn't right the temple was rebuilt it still wasn't right the people weren't right the nations weren't coming in it it still wasn't as it should be so another change happens and I want us to think of another place where God lives where God comes down to be and if you want to meet God you can go there and that is to say Jesus is the temple so here's Jesus I've got a J there person J a human being and yet we we read that in

Jesus in Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily so Jesus is the place where God lives and in John 2 21 he said destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days so he's in the temple and he says to the Jewish people destroy this temple and I'll raise it in three days and they said that's ridiculous it's taken us 46 years to build this temple and you're going to build it in three days but the temple he spoke of was was what the temple he spoke of was what he's God well done Jesus says I am the fulfillment of all these things that we're thinking about the place where God is where a place where God can be found so people can come and meet

God in the temple and if they belong to Jesus they sort of become a temple themselves Ephesians 2 21 in him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord and in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit and he says that people who belong to Jesus sort of form a temple so as we're here as a community of God's people God is here not visibly but there's a sense in which God lives amongst the community of his people and as we gather together that's particularly present in that sense and he says we're being built up together and that's been one of the awful things about being separated that our relationships begin to get a bit frayed and distant it's all about being built up together knowing one another praying for one another caring about one another helping one another

Paul says greet one another with a holy kiss well we couldn't do that could we but it's expression affection to one another I mean I suppose in our culture we'd hug one another but all these things about being built up together that's all been put under pressure over these past months so the temple is Jesus and the temple in a sense is us ok let's go one more step forward so this is where we get Hebrews just have a look at Hebrews 8 verse 1 boys and girls you're doing really well because this is quite a long children's talk isn't it Hebrews 8 verse 1 the point of what we are saying

is this this is the writer of the Hebrews this is exactly what we're trying to say the point of what we're saying is this we have a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven who serves in the holy place the real tabernacle the true tabernacle set up by the Lord not by man so that's the whole point of what we're trying to say that Jesus is operating in the heavenly place and he's operating in the real tabernacle the real place where all these things happen where God is and that's the bit we need to focus on a little bit more as we go through so that earthly tabernacle no longer does its stuff and the same is true of the temple it doesn't do what it says on the tin what actually is the real thing is what

[ 30 : 30 ] Jesus does in heaven and that's why that's why brothers and sisters when we come into our building here we don't have priests and we don't have a fairly holy place and a slightly more holy place and a very holy place that's why we don't have walls and petitions and barriers because we have access to God in heaven and we don't need to have this sort of stuff here because it's all outdated it's all obsolete we have the point of what we are saying he says this is the point of what we're saying that we have a high priest in heaven who does all this stuff for us in heaven he's at the right hand of the majesty on high he hears our prayers he sends us help he saves us because we call upon him and he's there to do this stuff for us and isn't that fantastic yeah click whoops Hebrews 9 9 says it's an illustration for the present time and all this stuff did was it showed that it didn't work it showed that this is an illustration of the present time indicating the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper they were only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonies ceremonial washings external regulations applying until the time of the new order and this is the real we have the real thing we have the real cleansing we have the real blood we have the real salvation we have the real saviour and that is that's the point of what we're saying that's the good thing for us this morning that's what we have in Jesus

Christ ok forgive me getting excited about Jesus is where our hope and our help is and the fact that he is there is a call to come to him so maybe you are still at a distance from him but the fact that he's there is a call to say why don't you call on Jesus to be the saviour of your soul the help of your life your anchor your rock your salvation because he's there and that's exactly what he's there to be and to do got one more point but we'll sing a song before we get to that point so we're going to sing before the throne of God above strong a perfect plea a great high priest whose name is love whoever lives and pleads for me so we're going to sing this in Mark so just one more point which has to be the point number seven which is very appropriate because it's looking into the book of Revelation and in the book of

Revelation thinking about the tabernacle it's sort of heaven is depicted sort of like the tabernacle with an altar of incense and with prayers going up but it's also said at the end of the book of Revelation and I'm now thinking right back to the garden what was said in the garden about God walking with his people and being there in the book of Revelation there are some trees but the big piece of architecture is what what's the big piece of architecture in the book of Revelation and the boys and girls know architecture means things you build big piece of architecture in the book of Revelation maybe don't know grown-ups garden or what is it city yeah there's a city and the city is cubical cubical like the holy place the city is huge and it's a huge cube but it's also said that there was it's also said there's no temple because the whole thing is a temple the whole of creation as God remakes it is the place where God is in other words in the new world he says it isn't as though God is partly here but you want to meet him here because that's what used to be said about Jerusalem isn't it you wanted to meet God you'd have to go to Jerusalem to meet him but in the world to come God will be everywhere in everything and the whole thing is as it were a temple so there are the people this is where we're headed we're Christian people this is and this is one of the wonderful things that said in the last chapter it isn't quite the last chapter is it now the dwelling of God is with men and he will live with them they will be his people and he will be their God he will wipe away every tear from their eyes there will be no more mourning or crying or pain for the old order of things has passed away he who was seated on the throne said behold

I am making all things new and brothers and sisters that's where we're headed to a new creation where God is everywhere and all the aspirations and longings of the presence of God that we've been going through in this world are fulfilled now the dwelling of God is with people with men and he will wipe away every tear and there will be no more mourning there will be no more crying there will be no more pain for the old order of things has gone and he makes all things new and so we've gone through the thought of the tabernacle the tent the place of God right from the garden right

through to the end the city the new creation and I hope it's been something to inspire us because there's some great great themes there everybody wants to go home and the Bible says this is home and

[ 37 : 04 ] I'll take you there Jesus says I'll take you there and you'll be home forever it's a story and when we get there we'll be truly home and this is the one story in the world of which you could say they all lived happily ever after because you'll be aware that children's fairy stories always end up saying they all lived happily ever after and we know that actually in this world that's never quite true is it even when Elizabeth Bennett married Mr.

Darcy I don't think they all lived happily ever after but in this story they do live happily ever after this is the one story of which this is true and with that thought I leave us this morning there is a place a throne of God where we can come and we will be home forever and that's the song we're going to sing to close with there is a higher throne than all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come before the sun will stand made faultless through the land believing hearts find promised grace salvation comes hear heaven's voices sing their thunderous anthem rings through emerald courts and sapphire skies their praises rise all glory wisdom power strength thanks and honour are to God our King who reigns on high forever evermore so we'll close by singing this and let's just have a little think we close by saying this could could Jerome say a reasonably loud closing prayer from up there for us to listen to then we'll be seated we'll just have a time of reflection and then we can gradually make our way out so let's stand to sing this song