

Where God Has Placed His Name

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BIG SANDY, Texas—As many disciples approach the Feast of Tabernacles, I want to show how scriptures from the Old Testament were the forerunner of a concept in the New Testament.

The Old Testament scriptures surround the idea of “where God has placed His name.” I want to remind my friends that some religious groups (including some of those who call themselves the Church of God) use that phrase to claim direct authority from God.

What do I mean by that?

- They project themselves as the one true church (some call themselves the “remnant church”) because they claim that their denomination or particular branch is the place where God has placed His name.
- They teach that the locations of their weekly worship services are the only places where God has placed His name.
- They teach that the locations of their annual worship services are the only places where God has placed His name.
- They teach that their service projects (Internet, television, radio, missionaries, etc.) are the only projects where God has placed His name.

I realize that many people can see the folly of such conclusions. However, I know sincere people who have come to such erroneous conclusions.

In this article, I will quote many Old Testament verses. Understand that sincere people twist these verses as proof that they have some special relationship with God that causes them exert some special authority—even though God has not given them such authority.

I ask you to view these verses historically and see the role of the tabernacle and the temple.

New Testament teaching

Before we go to those Old Testament verses, let’s look at a teaching of Jesus Christ. I want to start here, because it should help Bible students to under-

stand the Old Testament verses that they may use incorrectly.

The story is about Christ talking with the woman of Samaria.

Let's get a quick background.

- Christ asked a woman of Samaria for help in getting water from a well (John 4:7).
- The woman was puzzled that a Jewish man would have any dealings with a Samaritan (verse 9).
- Christ had a discussion with the woman about living water that He could provide (verses 10-15).
- Christ correctly tells the woman about her marital history (verses 16-18), so she calls Him a prophet (verse 19).

Let's quote her comment in verse 20.

John 4:20—"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

As she said, the Samaritans worshiped on that mountain and the Jews worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem.

- Christ went on to tell her about the opportunity to worship God in Spirit and in truth (verse 23).

Keep in mind how much the temple was involved historically with their worship.

Worship began with tabernacle

As we now go back to some Old Testament scriptures that discuss the concept "where God has placed His name," consider the role of the tabernacle and the temples in the history of worship.

Deuteronomy 12:5-7—"But you shall seek the place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. And there you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you."

Deuteronomy 12:10-11—"But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD."

Deuteronomy 12:14-16—"But in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do

all that I command you. However, you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; the unclean and the clean may eat of it, of the gazelle and the deer alike. Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water.”

Deuteronomy 12:17-18—“You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the heave offering of your hand. But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who is within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all to which you put your hands.”

Deuteronomy 14:23-26—“And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.”

Deuteronomy 16:2—“Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the LORD chooses to put His name.”

Deuteronomy 16:5-7—“You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there you shall sacrifice the Passover at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. And you shall roast and eat it in the place which the LORD your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents.”

Deuteronomy 16:10-11—“Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.”

Deuteronomy 16:15—“Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.”

Deuteronomy 16:16—“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened

Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.”

Deuteronomy 26:1-2—“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put it in a basket and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.”

Deuteronomy 31:10-11—“And Moses commanded them, saying: ‘At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.’ ”

Worship moved to a temple

In the course of history, the people moved their emphasis of worship from the tabernacle to a temple.

2 Samuel 7:1-3—“Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.’ Then Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.’ ”

2 Samuel 7:4-7—“But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ‘Go and tell My servant David, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’ ” ’ ”

2 Samuel 7:12—“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.”

1 Kings 8:22-23—“Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; and he said: ‘LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.’ ”

1 Kings 8:28-29—“Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.”

2 Chronicles 7:12—“Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: ‘I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.’ ”

Spiritual temple

After seeing some history about the tabernacle and the temple, let's now consider the New Testament.

After the mission of Jesus Christ (birth, teaching, suffering, death and resurrection), God began working with a spiritual temple.

John 2:19-22—"Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

Acts 7:48-50—"However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?' "

1 Corinthians 3:16-17—"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20—"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

2 Corinthians 6:16—"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' "

Ephesians 2:19-22—"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

1 Peter 2:4-5—"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

Happy reminder

May all of my friends who are observing the Feast of Tabernacles have the opportunity to worship God in spirit and truth.

I pray that, as you tabernacle with God during the eight days, you will be spiritually uplifted, strengthened and encouraged.

Please remember that God has placed His name within His begotten children.