

*a paper:*

ON THE ISRAELITE TABERNACLE OF EXODUS THEN AND NOW

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PREFACE

What is the relationship between The Presence of The LORD, Who dwelt among His people Israel over The Tabernacle of The Exodus, and The Presence of The LORD, Who now dwells among and within His people The Church? This paper will seek to answer this question.

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## ABSTRACT

GOD is holy, and man is sinful. How is The Creator of The Universe then to dwell with man? In The Old Testament we find in the Hebrew text of EXODUS 25:8 the word **מִקְדָּשׁ** MIQDASH, which is The Tabernacle itself, the sacred and holy place on earth in which The LORD's Presence came to dwell within the camp of the ancient Israelites. The Tabernacle's exact design was decreed by GOD to the Israelites via Moses for this very purpose. EXODUS 25:9 declares, "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." So The LORD dwelt among His people Israel over The Holy of Holies of The Tabernacle in The Exodus.

In the New Testament, The Presence of GOD now dwells both among His people The Church and within them! GOD The Father is The Creator; GOD The Son is The Redeemer; GOD The Holy Spirit is The Indweller Whose Shekinah tabernacles within the saved! I CORINTHIANS 3:16 proclaims, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Christians are sealed unto GOD with The Holy Spirit after they believe The Gospel, as is stated in EPHESIANS 1:13, "...in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

To cleanse the earthly Tabernacle of the people's sins, which separated them from relationship with The LORD, Aaron as high priest was directed in LEVITICUS 16:15-16 "...kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins..."

To cleanse the heavenly Tabernacle of the people's sins, which separates us from relationship with The LORD, HEBREWS 9:12-14 reveals the work of CHRIST thusly: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to GOD, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD?"

## EPIGRAPH

EXODUS 25:8 - ...let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

## I. A PROPOSITION

What Moses and The Israelites beheld as a type, we as Christians through our Lord JESUS CHRIST behold directly: The Almighty dwelt with His people Israel by His HOLY SPIRIT among them, His Presence hovering over The Holy of Holies of The Tabernacle. But now The Almighty dwells with His people The Church by His HOLY SPIRIT, not only among us but within us!

## II. THE NAME OF GOD AS REVEALED TO MOSES

When then The LORD appeared to Moses to commission him to lead the Israelites out of bondage from Egypt, EXODUS 3:14 records that The Almighty revealed His Name as “I AM THAT I AM.”<sup>1</sup> This text from EXODUS 3:14 in the Hebrew reads<sup>2</sup>

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה I offer this transliteration: ‘EHEYEH ‘ASHER ‘EHEYEH,<sup>3</sup> or

literally “I will be which I will be.” The verb **הָיָה** HAYAH is given in both instances in the first person, common, singular Qal imperfect form, giving the state of being an ongoing sense.<sup>4</sup> The verb itself here means “to be; to exist; to be in existence.”<sup>5</sup>

Kenneth Hemphill, in “How Excellent Are Thy Names: What GOD Invites Us to Call Him Says Volumes About His Relationship to Us,” observes that “the closest thing we have to a proper, personal Name for GOD” - The Creator Who met Moses at the burning bush in EXODUS 3 - is known as the “Tetragrammaton.” This is a transliteration from the Hebrew verb “to be,” giving us “YHWH” or “JHVH.” From this we obtain through modern English The Name “YAHWEH” or “JEHOVAH,” most commonly translated in English Bibles as “LORD.”<sup>6</sup> The Almighty revealing Himself to Moses as “I AM WHO I AM” tells us that He is in fact “absolutely self-existent. He is The One Who in Himself possesses life and permanent existence. [For GOD] ...was, is,

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<sup>1</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 3:14a.

<sup>2</sup> 2, MM, EXODUS 3:14a.

<sup>3</sup> I represent the Hebrew letter aleph as ‘.

<sup>4</sup> 3, BLB, English to Hebrew/Greek lexicon concordance for EXODUS 3:14, Hebrew root and tense for **הָיָה** HAYAH.

<sup>5</sup> 3, BLB, EXODUS 3:14, Lexicon Results for hayah Strong's 01961.

<sup>6</sup> 4, Hemphill, article “How Excellent Are Thy Names,” p 96, paragraph 3-4.

and always will be.”<sup>7</sup> The Tetragrammaton then communicates to us that “GOD is The Uncaused Cause. He is the First Cause and before Him there was no other and after Him there will be no other.”<sup>8</sup>

### III. THE SHEKINAH PRESENCE OF GOD

In EXODUS 25:8 we read, “And let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”<sup>9</sup> In Hebrew, EXODUS 25:8 reads:<sup>10</sup>

וְעָשׂוּ לִי, מִקְדָּשׁ; וְשָׁכַנְתִּי, בְּתוֹכָם. I offer this transliteration:

VE”ASU LIY, MIQDASH; VESHAKANITY, BETOKAM.<sup>11</sup> Leonard Kravitz, in “Shekinah as GOD’s Shivit and Presence,” observes that “the very encampment of the Israelites is the place where GOD dwells.”<sup>12</sup> Kravitz observes, “The Targum, the Aramaic translation of The Torah, translates the Divine promises given in EXODUS... using the Aramaic verb ‘ASHRAYA’ as “to cause to rest” and the inflected Hebrew noun ‘shekinti... The ‘My Shekinah,’ ie ‘My Presence’ [of GOD] comes from the [Hebrew] root ‘sh-k-n’ “dwell...”<sup>13</sup>

Returning to the Hebrew text of EXODUS 25:8, GOD instructs The Israelites through Moses to construct The Tabernacle, “that I may dwell...” with His people in their midst.<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew verb is שָׁכַן SHAKAN, given in the first person common singular active Qal perfect.<sup>15</sup> The perfect gives here a sense of completion in this text, suggesting that The Shekinah of GOD may come to “dwell” in a specific time and place within the physical world of man, while GOD Himself is Spirit and is beyond all time and space. The Hebrew verb שָׁכַן SHAKAN in the Qal means “to settle down; to

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<sup>7</sup> 4, Hemphill, article “How Excellent Are Thy Names,” p 96, paragraph 5.

<sup>8</sup> 4, Ibid., p 96, paragraph 7.

<sup>9</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 25:8.

<sup>10</sup> 2, MM, EXODUS 25:8.

<sup>11</sup> I represent the Hebrew letter ayin as “.

<sup>12</sup> 5, Kravitz, article “Shekinah as GOD’s Shivit and Presence,” p 22, paragraph 1.

<sup>13</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 2.

<sup>14</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 25:8.

<sup>15</sup> 3, BLB, Lexicon Concordance for EXODUS 25:8, Hebrew verb and tense for “that I may dwell,” שָׁכַן SHAKAN.

abide; to dwell; to tabernacle; to reside.”<sup>16</sup> Thus for example we read in EXODUS 13:21-22, “And the LORD went before them... He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”<sup>17</sup> Kravitz observes that The Shekinah of GOD has been thought of by some rabbinical authorities as a physical manifestation of GOD’s spiritual nature that has “some kind of independent existence... from The Diety... [that] The Shekinah has descended from on high to the earth and will ascend back to heaven.”<sup>18</sup>

#### IV. BUILD ME A TABERNACLE, THAT I MAY DWELL WITH YOU

From the Hebrew text of EXODUS 25:8<sup>19</sup> we obtain the word **מִקְדָּשׁ** MIQDASH, which is The Tabernacle itself, the “sacred place; sanctuary; holy place” of The LORD in which His Shekinah dwells.<sup>20</sup> This dwelling place for The Shekinah of GOD within the camp of the ancient Israelites was as recorded in EXODUS 25:9, to be built “According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”<sup>21</sup> Toba Spitzer, in “And I Shall Dwell Among Them,” observes that “the sanctuary was conceived... as a structure that allowed GOD’s Presence to dwell among the people.”<sup>22</sup>

The great detail in construction and consecration in EXODUS 25 onward commanded by GOD through Moses to the people was necessary so that The holy and sinless GOD could manifest His presence among the Israelites, who were but unholy and sinful men. “At the center of the Biblical mishkan, in the Holy of Holies, the tablets of the covenant – instructions for creating holy community – were kept. The tablets were encased within a golden ark, and on top of the ark were two keruvim, sculptured

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<sup>16</sup> 3, BLB, EXODUS 25:8, Lexicon Results for shakan (Strong’s 07931).

<sup>17</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 13:21-22.

<sup>18</sup> 5, Kravitz, article “Shekinah as GOD’s Shivit and Presence,” p 2, paragraph 4, A bot de Rabbi Natan 38.

<sup>19</sup> 2, MM, EXODUS 25:8. Lexicon Results for **מִקְדָּשׁ** MIQDASH (Strong's 04720).

<sup>20</sup> 3, BLB, Lexicon Concordance for EXODUS 25:8,

<sup>21</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 25:9.

<sup>22</sup> 6, Spitzer, article “And I Shall Dwell Among Them,” p 13, paragraph 2.

creatures that faced each other above the ark cover. There, in the space between them, GOD's Presence would descend, and Moses would encounter and speak with This Presence." <sup>23</sup>

Interestingly, it is not uncommon for present day theological scholars to refuse to take any part of Holy Scripture's accounts of historical events on face value, in spite of the great detail often contained therein, while accepting without hesitation fragmentary historical accounts from heathen ancient civilizations that often offer far less detail. Daniel Fleming, in "Mari's Large Public Tent and The Priestly Tent Sanctuary," refuses to concede even the possibility of the existence of The Tabernacle of Scripture without corroborating evidence for the existence of large, mobile tents of worship from ancient Near Eastern pagan societies. Fleming compares words found in ancient Akkadian-Syrian "Mari" texts thought to refer to support structures in such large, temporary tents with words of similar form in Old Babylonian-Hebrew that are known to refer to analogous support structures mentioned in The Torah that were used for construction of The Israelite Tabernacle.

Focusing on for example a "possible [cognate] relationship of the Mari qersum to the Biblical Hebrew qeres," <sup>24</sup> Fleming states, "the qersu of the large tent in the short Mari text and the Tabernacle's qerasim evidently correspond in form and function." <sup>25</sup> The author concludes therefore, "...that the Tabernacle description in EXODUS was inspired by memory of the Jerusalem sanctuary... references to the wilderness 'tent of meeting' ...have been understood to suggest a true tent shrine tradition before the Jerusalem Temple, but on a small scale." <sup>26</sup> In other words, there may have been some form of primitive YAHWEH worship by the ancient Israelites in the wilderness in small portable tents, but the account of The Tabernacle in The Torah is a fabrication of priestly sources after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Babylonians.

Ralph Klein, in "Back to The Future: The Tabernacle in The Book of Exodus," though denying the historicity of The Torah account of The tabernacle, sums up well the

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<sup>23</sup> 6, Spitzer, article "And I Shall Dwell Among Them," p 19, paragraph 6.

<sup>24</sup> 7, Fleming, article "Mari's Large Public Tent and The Priestly Tent Sanctuary," p 489, paragraph 1 under A. The qersum, the tent of El, and the priestly tent sanctuary.

<sup>25</sup> 7, Ibid., p 490, paragraph 1.

<sup>26</sup> 7, Ibid., p 496, paragraph 1 under III. Final reflections.



deepest meanings of that structure and GOD's Shekinah Presence there: "YAHWEY's seven speeches to Moses in [EXODUS] chapters 25-31 recall the seven days of creation, suggesting that the ultimate goal of creation is GOD's full presence with GOD's people. Similarly, just as the Spirit of GOD swept over the face of the waters at creation, so Bezalel and Oholiab [skilled craftsmen who fashioned The Tabernacle's ornate items] are filled with The Spirit of GOD and supplied with GOD-given skills to construct The Tabernacle (31:1-11).

The Tabernacle is dedicated on New Year's day (40:2,17), which corresponds to the first day of creation. ...'The worship of GOD at The Tabernacle is a way for the community of faith to participate in the Divine creational work. GOD's continuing work in and through the worship of Israel is creative of a new world for Israel.'" <sup>27</sup> Thus is it common for rabbinical authorities to speak of The Tabernacle as a, if not the, center point of creation and the universe. The Tabernacle addresses some of man's deepest desires – to know and to dwell with The One Who is our Creator; to walk with Him daily as Adam and Eve walked with Him in The Garden before The Fall; to behold GOD as it were face to face and live in His loving Presence for all of life.

## V. THE IMMANENCY AND THE TRANSCENDENCY OF GOD

Yet GOD is beyond and outside time and space, not limited to one physical location, for the creation account of GENESIS makes it clear that - before GOD made the physical world and all that it contains - GOD Himself was. Many see a seeming contradiction between the incorporeality of GOD The Spirit versus GOD dwelling in one particular time and place, of which the following is an example: Benjamin Sommer, in "Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in The Priestly Tabernacle," subscribing to the classic Wellhousian division of The Torah into different source documents redacted together in the time of Priestly cultus late in Israelite history, has difficulty resolving different manifestations of The LORD associated with The Tabernacle.

So Sommer offers that "P [Priestly document] states quite clearly in EXODUS 29:36 that the goal of the liberation from slavery [in Egypt] was none other than GOD's

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<sup>27</sup> 8, Klein, article "Back To The Future – The Tabernacle in The Book of EXODUS," p 266, paragraph 1 after table on contents of Tabernacle.

arrival to dwell among Israel, which is to say, the completion of The Tabernacle... the priestly Tabernacle is a sacred center, the capstone of the universe, and there GOD is constantly and reliably manifest.”<sup>28</sup> And indeed, EXODUS 29:36 states, “And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.”<sup>29</sup> Here Sommer identifies that GOD’s Shekinah Presence is imminent and within the midst of the camp, assigning the dwelling of The LORD’s Presence here to the P document, being central to all of creation.

In contrast, Sommer holds that “the conception of Divine Presence in the E [Eloheim document] is wholly different. E’s ‘tent of meeting’ (...never ‘Tabernacle’ and never ‘tent of the pact’) was located outside the Israelites’ camp, indeed at some distance from it, as EXODUS 33:7 makes clear. GOD did not dwell there but popped in on appropriate occasions to reveal Himself to Moses or other Israelites...”<sup>30</sup> And indeed, EXODUS 33:7 states, “And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.” Here Sommer correctly notes the absence of The Ark of The Covenant and any means of sacrifice. Here also the same author identifies that GOD’s Shekinah Presence is more distant and external to the camp, assigning this manifestation of The LORD to the E document and being peripheral to creation.

A more careful reading of EXODUS however reveals that there were in fact two separate tents associated with the ancient Israelite camp, each designed for separate purposes and existing simultaneously. Alan Cooper and Bernard Goldstein, in “At The Entrance to The Tent: More Cultic Resonances in Biblical Narrative,” observe that “the Mosaic tent (esp. EXODUS 33:7-11) is a venue of ‘occasional theophany’ ...this tent is ‘not a cultic institution housing The Diety as its focal centre [as was the Tabernacle to be

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<sup>28</sup> 9, Sommer, article “Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in The Priestly Tabernacle,” p 44.

<sup>29</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 29:36.

<sup>30</sup> 9, Sommer, article “Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in The Priestly Tabernacle,” p 44, paragraph 1.

commanded in EXODUS 35 onward], but a tent where the solitary worshipper might receive Divine inspiration from outside its empty interior – not The Diety’s permanent abode, but a place appoint for a fleeting prophetic vision.”<sup>31</sup> In EXODUS 32, we find Moses intervening on behalf of Israel before The LORD. Following this and the idolatry of the golden calf, Moses in EXODUS 33 sets up the “tent of occasional meeting” outside the camp. When Moses entered this tent, Klien comments that “YAHWEH’s presence there was signaled by the pillar of cloud that stood at the entrance of the tent... YAHWEH used to speak to Moses there, face to face, as one speaks to a friend.”<sup>32</sup>

So this “Tent of Meeting” outside the camp was where individuals and leaders might go to seek the guidance of JEHOVAH directly. Here The Shekinah of GOD appeared only periodically in response to petitioners. The pre-Tabernacle message to Israel was this: “The entrance to the Mosaic... [Tent of Occasional Theophany] is the one [and only] legitimate site of occasional theophany, and only YHWH, sole GOD of the Israelite nation, may be petitioned.”<sup>33</sup> This we may now compare to “The Priestly... Tabernacle, [which] in contrast, is integrated into the... [mishkan of wilderness Israel], and no prophetic manifestations are associated with it.”<sup>34</sup> The Tabernacle tent was the place where The LORD showed His constant reassuring Presence to all of Israel in the continual hovering of The Shekinah over the Holy of Holies of that structure. It was where The Law was presented to Israel. It was where atonement for the people’s sins were offered that made it possible for GOD’s holy Presence to dwell or tabernacle with His people from within the camp. “The Divine presence is perpetual within the sanctuary [of The Tabernacle], rather than occasional, and access to it is under priestly control.”<sup>35</sup>

Note also what escapes Sommer and other such authors - men who presume The Scriptures from the outset to be neither Divinely inspired nor historically accurate: First, that GOD is The ultimate Author of Scripture and thus Scripture is inerrant. Second, that GOD may be both immanent to man and at other times distant to man as He chooses,

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<sup>31</sup> 10, Cooper and Goldstein, article “At The Entrance To The Tent,” p 202, continuation of last paragraph from page 201.

<sup>32</sup> 8, Klein, article “Back To The Future – The Tabernacle in The Book of EXODUS,” p 267, paragraph 1.

<sup>33</sup> 10, Cooper and Goldstein, article “At The Entrance To The Tent,” p 212, IV. Tradition-history and the “Tent of Occasional theophany,” # 2.

<sup>34</sup> 10, Ibid., p 202, continuation of last paragraph from page 201.

<sup>35</sup> 10, Ibid., p 212, IV. Tradition-history and the “Tent of Occasional theophany,” # 3.

while retaining His transcendence. There is no reason why the Shekinah should not manifest itself in different places relative to the Israelite camp at different times in accordance to GOD's sovereign will and the state of sin of the people. Nor is there any reason to presume The Shekinah could not move to dwell over tent structures other than The Tabernacle for the same reasons at different times. The Shekinah, after all, is well documented throughout The Old Testament to have been at times fully mobile - leading the Israelites out of Egypt, through 40 years of periodic wanderings in the wilderness of Sinai and later into The Promised Land. At other times, The Shekinah is documented to have been stationary, as when It blocked the Egyptians from pursuing the Israelites for a time to slay them, or when It remained over The Tabernacle – directing the Israelites to remain at that location until It again moved, and later over The Holy of Holies in Solomon's Jerusalem temple. The Creator of the universe may be immanent where and when He chooses within the physical world of man, and yet is still transcendent over all of creation according to His nature.

Sommer himself notes a common rabbinical view which, though he finds insufficient, solves the seeming tension between GOD's immanence to men and His transcendence over the world of men: "The lack of permanence implied by the Divine Presence' tabernacling is said to result from the destruction of The Temple in 586... [BC]. This event forced priestly circles to admit that GOD was not always resident in Zion, and that Divine immanence... was always subject to Divine transcendence and GOD's permanent dwelling in Heaven."<sup>36</sup> GENESIS 1:1 records The Divine transcendence Which exists outside of the physical world had not yet become imminent, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."<sup>37</sup> Yet The Creator desired to give a manifestation of His Presence to dwell with the ancient Israelites via The earthly Tabernacle. JOHN 1:1 records The Divine imminence Who came to dwell in the world of men as fully GOD and yet also fully man, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."<sup>38</sup> It is at The heavenly Tabernacle that the transcendence and the imminence of The Almighty meet in The risen, ascended and

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<sup>36</sup> 9, Sommer, article "Conflicting Constructions of Divine Presence in The Priestly Tabernacle," p 57, paragraph 1.

<sup>37</sup> 1, KJV Bible, GENESIS 1:1.

<sup>38</sup> 1, KJV Bible, JOHN 1:1.

glorified CHRIST JESUS. And it is through His saving grace that men may come to know both His imminence and His transcendence.

## VI. THE TABERNACLE A MODEL BIBLICAL SOCIETY

What does it mean to build a society with GOD and Biblical holiness at its center? The Tabernacle of the ancient Israelites offers a model for both. Although Spitzer questions the historicity of The Torah account of The Tabernacle, or as he calls it the “mishkan,” he nonetheless sees in this Israelite structure a pattern for building a just Biblical society: “We can then interpret this verse as talking not [only] about a literal ‘dwelling place’ for The Divine Spirit, but rather a holy structure in which or through which that power... can be felt among us. If GOD, as he Power that Makes for Salvation, is the ultimate Source of tzedek (justice) and hesed (covenantal love), then... we can understand the mishkan as a social structure (or structures) that allows those Godly qualities of love and justice to become manifest.”<sup>39</sup>

Spitzer sees the redemptive work of the Israelite community in building The Tabernacle itself as part of building such a godly society. We see the communal sacrifice of the people who brought their sacrifices of materials and contributions of labor before Moses for the building and ministering of The Tabernacle in EXODUS 35:20-21, “And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments.”<sup>40</sup> And Moses declared to the people that GOD was filling them with His Presence to equip them to do the work commanded of them. For in EXODUS 35:31 Moses discerns of Bezaleel, “And He hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> 6, Spitzer, article “And I Shall Dwell Among Them,” p 13, paragraph 4.

<sup>40</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 35:20-21.

<sup>41</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 35:31.

The same spirit of willing hearts to do GOD's work as a community is evident in the giving of the atonement money offering for the building of The Tabernacle in EXODUS 30:13-15: "This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary... Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls." <sup>42</sup> Every adult male in the camp was to contribute the same fixed amount, which was small enough for even the poor to give, while preventing the richer people from giving more. Spitzer observes that this required set offering from the numbered adult males "makes clear that each member of the community is equally counted, regardless of economic status." <sup>43</sup> And further, "as each person contributed his half-shekel to the holy project of building the mishkan (and was thus 'counted' as a full member of the community), he also participated in effecting atonement for himself and the entire people." <sup>44</sup>

Spitzer observes of these Biblical scenes that "the entire Israelite community, men and women, bringing together in a spirit of *nediv lev* (... "generous heart" and "whose heart was moved") of all the materials needed for the construction of the sanctuary. While this building project is commanded by GOD, it is not forced labor. The Torah emphasizes over and over again the aspect of willingness – of heart, mind and spirit." <sup>45</sup> Indeed, these were labors, not of the oppressive slavery of Egypt to false gods and cruel human masters, but of liberated joy in worshipping the One True GOD Who is Israel's loving Divine Master. Here we may see in action the faith of a people who, as JESUS CHRIST summarized The Great Commandment in MATTHEW 22:38, were living out, "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." <sup>46</sup> And in serving GOD as a community, the Israelites were also serving one

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<sup>42</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 30:13-15.

<sup>43</sup> 6, Spitzer, article "And I Shall Dwell Among Them," p 18, continuation of paragraph from page 17.

<sup>44</sup> 6, Ibid., p 17, paragraph 3.

<sup>45</sup> 6, Ibid., p 13, paragraph 2.

<sup>46</sup> 1, KJV Bible, MATTHEW 22:38.

another in love. For here is the living out in a godly society what The Lord summarized in MATTHEW 22:39 as “And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”<sup>47</sup>

## VII. CAN MAN MANIPULATE THE PRESENCE OF GOD’S SHEKINAH?

Kravitz provides an interesting summary of rabbinical theories on the location of The Shekinah of GOD. One such theory offers that The Shekinah, after coming up from Egypt with the ancient Israelites, “...rests in the land of Israel, even in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.”<sup>48</sup> Another that “The Shekinah followed the Israelites out of the Land when they were exiled [to Babylon] and returned with them when they were redeemed [back to The Holy Land].”<sup>49</sup> Others that “The Shekinah rested only on the People Israel... and then only when a very large number of them are assembled [presumably independent of where they are].”<sup>50</sup> Others, that The Shekinah of GOD descends when the Torah is studied. One rabbinical authority “reduced the number required to 10... [while] another sage reduced the requisite number of Torah students to two.”<sup>51</sup> Yet another rabbi offers that The Shekinah descends upon one person “should that individual study Torah at night.”<sup>52</sup> Kravitz cites other Jewish commentators who have offered that The Shekinah of GOD descends to earth as a result of human acts of “kindness such as hospitality..., benevolence..., faithfulness within marriage... and chastity outside of it.”<sup>53</sup> It is clear that many Jewish authorities have long held that The Shekinah Presence of GOD can be induced to descend from Heaven by human action.

Conversely, Kravitz observes that “just as virtue causes The Shekinah to descend, so sin causes it to ascend.”<sup>54</sup> So in Ezekiel’s visions of the Temple in Jerusalem, The

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<sup>47</sup> 1, KJV Bible, MATTHEW 22:39.

<sup>48</sup> 5, Kravitz, article “Shekinah as GOD’s Shivit and Presence,” p 22, paragraph 4, T.B. Sotah 31a and T.B. Zeb 54b.

<sup>49</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 4, T.B. Meg 29a.

<sup>50</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 5, T.B. Shab. 22b and T.B. Ber 7a.

<sup>51</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 5, Abot III:7 and Abot III:3.

<sup>52</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 5, B.T. Tamid 32b.

<sup>53</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 6, T.B. Shab. 127a; T.B. Baba Batra 10a; T.B. Sotah 17a; Derech Eretz i.

<sup>54</sup> 5, Ibid., p 22, paragraph 7, Targum to ISAIAH 57:7 and to JEREMIAH 33:5.

Shekinah of GOD progressively departed from Israel because of the people's great sins. In EZEKIEL 10:4 we read, "Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's glory."<sup>55</sup> Here The Shekinah has departed from The Holy of Holies of The Temple. Then we find in EZEKIEL 10:18, "Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims."<sup>56</sup> And further we find in EZEKIEL 11:23, "And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city."<sup>57</sup> Thus the bitter lament heard in Israel through this prophet, "Woe unto us, for The Glory of The LORD has departed from us!"

#### VIII. THE SHEKINAH OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the New Testament faith of Christians, "The Holy Spirit is in some ways analogous to The Shekinah."<sup>58</sup> GOD The Father is The Creator; GOD The Son is The Redeemer; GOD The Holy Spirit is The Indweller Whose Shekinah tabernacles within the saved! For I CORINTHIANS 3:16 proclaims, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"<sup>59</sup> GOD The Father gives Christians the gift of The Holy Spirit, as is recorded in LUKE 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"<sup>60</sup> Christians are sealed unto GOD with The Holy Spirit after they believe The Gospel, as is stated in EPHESIANS 1:13, "...in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."<sup>61</sup>

The Shekinah of GOD then dwelling within us as Christians, we are not to grieve Him by sinning and defiling ourselves with iniquity, as noted in EPHESIANS 4:30, "And

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<sup>55</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EZEKIEL 10:4.

<sup>56</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EZEKIEL 10:18.

<sup>57</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EZEKIEL 11:23.

<sup>58</sup> 5, Kravitz, article "Shekinah as GOD's Shivit and Presence," p 23, paragraph 3.

<sup>59</sup> 1, KJV Bible, I CORINTHIANS 3:16.

<sup>60</sup> 1, KJV Bible, LUKE 11:13.

<sup>61</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EPHESIAHS 1:13.



grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”<sup>62</sup> On the first Day of Pentecost, the faithful were filled with The Holy Spirit, that The Gospel might be proclaimed to men of all tongues in their own language in Jerusalem, for we read in ACTS 2:3-4, “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”<sup>63</sup> Thus Believers are baptized in all three Names of The Trinity, as MATTHEW 28:19 proclaims: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”<sup>64</sup>

#### IX. THE TRUE TABERNACLE IN HEAVEN

In EXODUS 24 Moses had entered the mount of JEHOVAH and was there in His Presence for 40 days and nights. We have noted that GOD then commanded Moses in EXODUS 25:9 to build His earthly Tabernacle “According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”<sup>65</sup> Did Moses actually have a vision of GOD’s Heavenly Tabernacle, or was the pattern of it dictated to him, or both? And what is the form of the Heavenly Tabernacle? HEBREWS 8:1-2 reveals, “...We have such an High Priest [JESUS CHRIST], Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”<sup>66</sup> But when Moses received the pattern of the earthly Tabernacle from The LORD, CHRIST had not yet in human time fulfilled His work on The Cross, nor entered The heavenly Tabernacle. Thus David MacLeod, in “The Cleansing of The True Tabernacle,” rejects a Platonic interpretation of this revelation to Moses, which he summarizes thus: The Platonic view holds that “the phenomenal world of the senses is but a copy of the original in the world of ideas. ...[Thus] the earthly Tabernacle was a copy... and shadow of the eternal Tabernacle in the ideal world [of Heaven]. Moses built

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<sup>62</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EPHESIANS 4:30.

<sup>63</sup> 1, KJV Bible, ACTS 2:3-4.

<sup>64</sup> 1, KJV Bible, MATTHEW 28:19.

<sup>65</sup> 1, KJV Bible, EXODUS 25:9.

<sup>66</sup> 1, KJV Bible, HEBREWS 8:1-2.

the Tabernacle according to the Platonic archetype... he saw on the mountain (HEBREWS 8:5). The [earthly] Tabernacle with its sacrifices and furnishings were but copies... of the true Tabernacle CHRIST has entered [into in Heaven] (HEBREWS 9:23-24).”<sup>67</sup>

HEBREWS 8:5 states, [The Israelite high priests] “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.”<sup>68</sup> The pattern of the earthly Tabernacle that Moses received from The Almighty was an imperfect shadow anticipating the future perfect image of the heavenly Tabernacle. Just so, the earthly Israelite high priests who sprinkled the blood of sacrificed animals continually were but imperfect shadows anticipating our future perfect heavenly High Priest – CHRIST JESUS - Who sprinkled His blood of sacrifice once. Thus MacLeod states, “In HEBREWS the contrast in sanctuaries is temporal. It is not a contrast between an earthly copy and a heavenly archetype, but ‘between an historical situation in the past (earthly tabernacle) and one which succeeded it in time’ (true Tabernacle in Heaven inaugurated at the death of CHRIST)... The outline and shadow appear first (Old Testament Tabernacle) and then the fulfillment (true Tabernacle in Heaven).”<sup>69</sup> MacLeod clarifies that the human author of HEBREWS did not write here with a Platonic view of the earthly and heavenly Tabernacles, as “Plato’s ideal world was not a place that could be entered as JESUS entered the heavenly Holy of Holies. Plato’s ideal world could be entered only by the intellect.”<sup>70</sup> But as HEBREWS 9:24 states, “For CHRIST is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us.”<sup>71</sup>

And like the earthly Tabernacle that was cleansed with the sacrificed blood of animals, the heavenly Tabernacle is cleansed with the sacrificed blood of The Lamb of GOD Himself. MacLeod explains, “Just as the Old Testament Tabernacle was the

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<sup>67</sup> 1, page 61-62, The Platonic Interpretation.

<sup>68</sup> 1, KJV Bible, HEBREWS 8:5.

<sup>69</sup> 11, MacLeod, article “The Cleansing of The True Tabernacle,” p 62, paragraph 2.

<sup>70</sup> 11, Ibid., p 63, paragraph 1.

<sup>71</sup> 1, KJV Bible, HEBREWS 9:24.

meeting place between GOD and man, so the true Tabernacle in Heaven is the meeting place between GOD and man. And just as the approach of sinful worshippers to the Old Testament Tabernacle defiled it (LEVITICUS 16:16), so the approach of sinful worshippers today defiles the true Tabernacle... The implication of [HEBREWS] 9:23 is that the 'heavenly things' are defiled by this constant process of forgiving [Christian] believers who sin [and repent]."<sup>72</sup> So MacLeod observes, "On the basis of the death of CHRIST 'the very Presence of GOD becomes the meeting place between Him and the Believer.' ...just as sacrifices were necessary to make atonement in the Old Testament, so CHRIST accomplished a 'definitive' sacrifice ('a final and complete atonement') to provide access into the Presence of GOD by His worshippers."<sup>73</sup>

MacLeod however clarifies that the defilement of the heavenly Sanctuary is not literal, but rather relational. To cleanse the earthly Tabernacle of the people's sins, which separated them from relationship with The LORD, Aaron as high priest was directed in LEVITICUS 16:15-16 "...kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins..."<sup>74</sup> So to cleanse the heavenly Tabernacle of the people's sins, which separates us from relationship with The LORD, HEBREWS 9:12-14 reveals the work of CHRIST thusly: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of CHRIST, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to GOD, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living GOD?"<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> 11, MacLeod, article "The Cleansing of The True Tabernacle," p 70, paragraph 1, View Nine: The Cleansing of the Sphere of Communion.

<sup>73</sup> 11, Ibid., p 70, paragraph 1.

<sup>74</sup> 1, KJV Bible, LEVITICUS 16:15-16a.

<sup>75</sup> 1, KJV Bible, HEBREWS 9:12-14.

## X. IN CONCLUSION

What Moses and The Israelites beheld as a type, we as Christians through our Lord JESUS CHRIST possess directly: The Almighty dwelt with His people Israel by His HOLY SPIRIT among them, His Presence hovering over The Holy of Holies of The Tabernacle. But now The Almighty dwells with His people The Church by His HOLY SPIRIT, not only among us, but within us! For what Aaron and the Israelite priests could only do symbolically with the sprinkled blood of sacrificed animals upon the earthly Tabernacle's Holy of Holies, so now CHRIST does for us His people directly! Our Lord JESUS CHRIST brings us His saints now into The Eternal Presence of His Heavenly Tabernacle, interceding for us by His perfect Blood shed to remove the sin-guilt from over our souls. Our Great High Priest Above does so now for the Christian man in part in this life, and does so completely in the next. Let us therefore be thankful, rejoice in humility for the great gifts of our Great High Priest, and let us His people not defile that which The LORD has made clean by His sacrifice for us and His Presence among and in us! In The Name of GOD The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, AMEN.

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