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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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## **The Quest for a Dwelling Place**

**John 1:14-18**

Motion in the Nativity:

The story of Christmas is a story of movement, of motion from one place to the other; in a time in which ordinarily people might be born in one locality and not move more than a hundred miles from that place their whole lives, there is an amazing amount of movement.

It begins with the edict of Caesar Augustus from the city of Rome that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world; this set in motion more people than we can possibly imagine. The Roman Empire was known for its top-down authority structure and its impeccable discipline... the Roman Centurion in Matthew 8 said it best:

***Matthew 8:9 I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."***

Caesar's command set in motion a vast chain of events; he had established an incredible courier system that took advantage of the remarkable network of Roman roads; the empire itself covered as much as 2 million square miles, and with this one command, "There shall be a census of the entire Roman world," couriers sped out of Rome to all points on the compass. Once the word reached Palestine, King Herod reluctantly enforced it, knowing that to disobey Caesar would mean his own downfall. So the command from Caesar Augustus set the whole population of Israel in motion as well. Everyone in the Holy Land had to migrate temporarily to their ancestral home and be registered at that location.

Amazingly, this vast movement of populations from Spain through Gaul through Greece and Asia Minor, Palestine and Egypt served some key purposes for the management of the Roman Empire: a better sense of what taxes could be expected from each province, and a better sense of what military strength would be needed in each province to maintain order.

But the real reason for the movement of these vast populations all came down to one Jewish couple living in a forgotten and despised backwater region of Palestine. Joseph and Mary were forced by the decree of Caesar and the sovereign hand of God to make their way to Bethlehem in fulfillment of the prophecy:

***Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."***

This roaming and migrating pattern was appropriate as a beginning place for Jesus... when the time came, Jesus was born of the virgin, and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for him in the Inn.

It was appropriate because later in life, Jesus said this about Himself:

***Matthew 8:20 "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."***

Jesus' birth also cause Magi to travel for perhaps months if not a year or more from a distant land in the east, following the portents of a celestial wonder, an inexplicable star whose movements were unlike anything these stargazers had ever seen in their lives. You've all heard the Christmas Carol that is rife with historical inaccuracies or at least wild speculations:

*We three kings of Orient are  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.*

Well, we don't know if there were three of them, and there's no indication that they were kings. But we certainly know that, allured by the star, they began their own migration, leaving their home countries to travel west and see where it led. It led to a baby, Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Soon after Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary had to run for their lives as refugees to a foreign country as the murderous and maniacal King Herod tried to kill one baby by killing them all:

***Matthew 2:13-15 an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." <sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod.***

Jesus lived in a turbulent time, with vast political forces at work moving vast populations from place to place.

To some degree it exemplifies the whole human race... the fact of the matter is that none of us has any permanent place here at all... because of sin, we are all nomads, aliens and strangers in a world in which we are just passing through

And to some degree, even God Himself hasn't finally come into His dwelling place either... for God has linked His dwelling place to His people on earth.

So all of human history—all of redemptive history—comes down to a quest for a dwelling place. All of us are living in tents temporarily, yearning for a final dwelling place where we can live forever. That is the purpose of the Christmas story, and no passage speaks of the architect of that dwelling place as powerfully as John 1:14-18.

## I. God's Yearning for a Dwelling Place from Eternity

### A. God Eternally Existing in Three Persons

1. Perfect fellowship... love, communication, relationship, intimacy
2. No lack... perfect fullness...
3. God yearned to pour out His love on created beings... to draw them into the joy of the perfect fellowship He had been experiencing from eternity past

### B. God Created Man in His Image... for Relationship

***Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.***

### C. God's Desire before the Foundation of the World: To Dwell with Man in Perfect Fellowship

***Romans 8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.***

## II. God's Quest for a Dwelling Place in History

### A. In Eden: A Perfect Dwelling Place on Probation

1. Created by hand of God
2. God directed Adam, instructed him
3. God brought Adam his wife
4. A picture of the intimacy they enjoyed comes in Genesis 3

***Genesis 3:8-10 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."***

## B. The Fall: Dwelling Place Cut Off

1. When Adam sinned, the intimate fellowship with God was cut off
2. An infinite gap between God and man was established because of man's sin
3. This was a gap that could only be crossed by God
4. The ultimate consummation of that gap was the death penalty

<sup>NAU</sup> ***Genesis 3:24 So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.***

## C. The Patriarchs: Walking with God by Faith... but not yet dwelling with Him

1. Enoch and Noah "Walked with God"... but walking also implies a journey... they were aliens and strangers in this world
2. God called Abraham and Made Him a Promise of a FUTURE Dwelling Place

***Genesis 17:8 The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."***

Note: God called Abraham an alien, meaning one with no lasting dwelling place in that land... in effect just passing through

- a. Abraham was called God's friend
- b. Abraham entertained the Angel of the Lord and shared a meal with him and two other angels
- c. But Abraham died before entering into his promised inheritance... this was symbolized by the fact that he lived in a tent... moving around constantly from place to place

***Genesis 18:1 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.***

3. Isaac and Jacob also lived in tents... Jacob eventually left the Promised Land under the pressure of the severe famine and went down into the Egypt to come under the protection of his son Joseph
  - a. At the end of Jacob's life, he characterized his life this way:

***Genesis 47:9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers."***

- b. A pilgrimage is a journey taken for a spiritual purpose... a powerful word; it gives the strong sense that Jacob had that he had never found a safe, permanent resting place in this world
- 4. Hebrews 11 summarizes their temporary existence on earth and their yearning for a final dwelling place with God

***Hebrews 11:13-16 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> Instead, they were longing for a better country-- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.***

#### D. The Jews: God's Chosen People... and God's Desire to Dwell with Them

- 1. God chose the Jews to be His people from all the nations on earth

***Exodus 29:45-46 I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. <sup>46</sup> 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***

- 2. God moved them out from Egypt... in Egypt they had no dwelling place and had to move out

***Leviticus 26:11-12 I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you. <sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.***

- 3. The Exodus was a picture of the desire God had to give them a home... an eternal home, not in this present earthly age so ravaged by sin... the EXODUS literally means "departure"... it began forty years of movement by the Jews in quest of a dwelling place
- 4. God moved from place to place with them, leading them by the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire

***Exodus 13:21-22 By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. <sup>22</sup> Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people***

- 5. Moses felt most acutely this rootless wandering...

- a. Moses himself had had a good home as an adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter
- b. He gave it up to be identified with the Jews... after murdering an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating one of his fellow Israelites, Moses fled for his life from his home in Egypt... he thus began a life as a homeless wanderer on earth
- c. He was taken in to the home of his future father-in-law Jethro, and spent the next forty years of his life tending Jethro's sheep
- d. God called Moses to a life of homeless wandering leading the people of God to the BRINK of the Promised Land without being allowed to enter it himself
- e. For all of these reasons, Moses' yearning for a permanent dwelling place was acute when he penned Psalm 90

***Psalm 90:1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.***

#### E. The Tabernacle: The Symbolic Dwelling Place of God with His People

##### 1. Moses' vision of the heavenly reality

God showed Moses a picture of heaven, of God's throne and all the angels surrounding it in perfect worship; and He showed him a pattern of the earthly Tabernacle that would represent God's dwelling place on earth

***Acts 7:44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.***

##### 2. The purpose of the Tabernacle

***Exodus 25:8-9 have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. <sup>9</sup> Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.***

***Exodus 29:42-46 There [at the Tent of Meeting] I will meet you and speak to you; <sup>43</sup> there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory. <sup>44</sup> "So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. <sup>45</sup> Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. <sup>46</sup> 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.***

##### 3. God's command for the construction of the Tabernacle

- a. Very earthy... rooted in the materials of this world... plants that grew up, finely twisted linen threads to make the curtains; animal skins: ram's skins, the waterproof skins of the sea cow for the covering
  - b. The Tabernacle was plainly intended to be moveable... the standards, the poles, the sockets, the curtain rings... all of it was easily disassembled and was to be carried by the Levites wherever God commanded them to move
4. God's Shekinah glory... a symbol of God's dwelling with His people
- a. Shekinah = literally "dwelling" glory... the glory of God's visible presence dwelling with His people

In Biblical Hebrew the word means literally *to settle, inhabit, or dwell*

- b. God's glory cloud visibly entered the Tabernacle and abided on it as a constant reminder of God's desire to DWELL WITH His people

***Exodus 40:34-38 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup> Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.***

BUT in the same passage, the glory cloud gave a sense that the JOURNEY was not yet finished, and that God still had to travel with His people to reach their dwelling place

***<sup>36</sup> In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; <sup>37</sup> but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out-- until the day it lifted. <sup>38</sup> So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.***

5. The Tabernacle: equally accessible... and inaccessible
- a. During the time in the desert, the Tabernacle was centrally located for all the tribes... everyone had equal access

***Numbers 2:1-2 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: <sup>2</sup> "The Israelites are to camp around the Tent of Meeting some distance from it, each man under his standard with the banners of his family."***

- b. BUT no one truly had access... for the Tabernacle itself was a series of BARRIERS keeping people out because of their sins

***Leviticus 16:2 The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover."***

- c. The book of Hebrews makes it plain that these restrictions show that the Lord had not yet made the way into His presence known... and in that way the Jews had not yet arrived to their final dwelling place

***Hebrews 9:8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.***

- 6. The one location chosen from among the tribes for a “dwelling place”
  - a. The Lord spoke of the way the pagan nations in Palestine worshiped wherever they wanted, on every high place, and under every spreading tree
  - b. The Lord was clear that they were not to do this

***Deuteronomy 12:4-5 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way. <sup>5</sup> But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go***

- c. Three times a year, the Jews had to leave their homes and travel as pilgrims to the place God had chosen out of all the tribes as a dwelling place, and there only could they present their offerings to the Lord

F. The Temple: The Picture of Permanence... But Not Yet Achieved

- 1. David desired to build a permanent home for God

***2 Samuel 7:1-2 After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup> he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."***

- 2. God openly states that He has been “in motion” with His people up to that point

***2 Samuel 7:4-7 That night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: <sup>5</sup> "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup> I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"'"***

- 3. The clear indication is that God is not building any lasting dwelling place in this present sin-cursed age
- 4. God permitted the Temple to be built as a symbol of a future permanent dwelling place... but the temple itself (its impermanence) was liable to be misunderstood



5. The Jews thought that because the Temple had huge stones and awesome appearances it was permanent... nothing here is permanent

***Mark 13:1-2 As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"<sup>2</sup> "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."***

***2 Corinthians 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal***

### III. God's Commitment to a Dwelling Place in Christ

As we come to our Christmas celebration, we can look at it from so many different angles; this morning, I am focusing on God's decision to send His Son as the dwelling place for all eternity... in Jesus alone is there a permanent place for a holy God and sinful humanity to dwell together forever

- A. The Eternal Deity of Christ as the "Word" of God: verse 1

***John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

- B. The Shocking Statement of the Incarnation: the word became "flesh"

***John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

1. The expression is shocking, and John intended it to be so
2. In the Greek mind, the heavenly existence was ethereal, purely spirit, lofty and free from bodily drives and passions; the fleshly life was the lower life from which we were trying to make our escape
3. But God became FLESH... sharing similarities with the animals: muscles, sinews, blood vessels, tendons, ligaments, nerves, bodily organs
4. The Apostle John was clearly fighting against the view of some that Jesus merely APPEARED to be human... John doesn't say "The word became human" (though that was certainly true), but the word became FLESH
5. Jesus' physical body entered the world, knit together in his mother's womb like any other human baby; He was born in the usual way and began life as any other baby

***Luke 2:7 she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.***

6. Jesus' human body was prepared for Him by God so that He could die on the cross as an atonement for our sins... His flesh was wrapped in cloths at the beginning of life as a symbol of His frailty... and so also it was wrapped in cloths at the end of His life, His frailty consummated in death

***John 19:40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.***

### C. Jesus "Made His Dwelling Among Us"

1. This language clearly connects with the Tabernacle of the Old Covenant era
2. The Greek word literally means that Jesus "pitched His tent" among us
3. The Greek word for "tent" is related to the word for dwelling glory, *shekinah*
4. Jesus' body is presented as the new Tabernacle, where the glory of God is clearly visible and where the people of God can meet Him and dwell with Him
5. Jesus' disciples could behold His glory, a glory apparent only to those with eyes for faith
6. Glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN of His Father... the utterly unique Son of God, no one else like Him
7. Full of grace and truth
  - a. Jesus did not merely present grace or truth, or discuss them, or believe in them or point the way to them
  - b. Jesus IS grace and truth... some people minister grace and truth, as pipes from a reservoir; Jesus IS the reservoir... He is the source of grace and truth for the human race
  - c. Grace: God's sovereign determination to lavish eternal blessings on those who deserve His wrath for violating His laws... in fact John directly contrasts the grace and truth that comes through Jesus to the law that came by Moses

***John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.***

- d. Truth: Satan's lies lead us into sin; then, having violated the laws of God, the truth is against us; Jesus comes and by His blood shed on the cross completely atones for our sins and makes the truth SING in our favor
- e. The truth is now that God is at peace with us through Jesus Christ

#### D. John's Witness: Eternity Steps into Time

***John 1:15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"***

1. John the Baptist, the glowing light, the consummation of Old Testament prophecy paving the way for Jesus, the greatest man that had ever lived up to that time
2. All of Judea came out to hear him preach... he was the central topic of conversation... he was the most famous religious leader of his day
3. Jesus came along completely unknown, younger than him by at least six months, and much later than John at beginning his ministry... and John declared that he was 1) greater than he was; 2) existed before Him
4. When Jesus was born, He was born older than the years, older than his parents, older than Simeon or Anna... he existed before the world began
5. Later, Jesus would make this astonishingly plain; Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation, born 2000 years before Jesus; Jesus made this amazing statement

***John 8:56-58 Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." <sup>57</sup> "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" <sup>58</sup> "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"***

6. John the Baptist knew through the Spirit that Jesus was the Son of God who came to take away the sins of the world... that He had entered the world by His own choice to die on the cross

***John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"***

#### E. The Gifts that Flowed from Jesus: Fullness of Grace

***<sup>ESV</sup> John 1:16 And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.***

1. Every year, billions of dollars are spent on Christmas gifts: one website estimated \$450 billion last year alone... although how can we really know
2. What would you think if you could see all the Christmas gifts you've ever received in your life in one place...
  - a. Think of the toy you were desperate to receive as a little boy or girl... there in pristine condition, but unappealing to you now because you've outgrown it

- b. Think of the music you wanted when you were a teenager... and now you don't like that singer or group at all... you've outgrown it
  - c. Every year, it's one Christmas gift after another... one gift takes the place of another
3. Friends: Jesus Christ IS God's perfect Christmas gift... the grace that flows from Him is our gift... and the Apostle John says from Christ we receive FULLNESS and GRACE UPON GRACE

#### 4. Fullness

- a. In our sin, we are EMPTY... we live EMPTY lives, our hearts are empty; the older you get, the more you realize how EMPTY are all our hopes and dreams that are rooted in this world alone
- b. Jesus comes to bring FULLNESS

***Colossians 2:9-10 in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and you have been given fullness in Christ***

***Ephesians 3:17-19 I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

#### 5. Grace upon grace

Literally "grace instead of grace"

as you travel as an alien and stranger in this present age, you will need different types of grace at different times

Or perhaps these various forms of grace are like surgical tools in the skillful hands of a Master Surgeon who is operating on your soul to save you and bring you to heaven

- a. Converting grace: if you're lost, without hope and without God in the world
- b. Justifying grace: to cover all your sins and make you righteous in God's sight
- c. Sanctifying grace: to move you from a daily life of sin to a daily life of Christlike holiness
- d. Instructing grace: to move you from ignorance to wisdom through the Scriptures

- e. Transforming grace: the change your heart little by little and make it love what Christ loves and hate what Christ hates
- f. Persevering grace: to carry you throughout the whole journey, until at last you are finished
- g. Sustaining grace: especially when you're weary, depressed, discouraged, persecuted, or going through a severe trial
- h. Dying grace: when it is time to leave this world
- i. Glorifying grace: that instantaneously changes you and makes you like Christ

***Grace upon grace... THROUGH CHRIST'S FULLNESS***

- F. The Mission of the Incarnation: Explaining the Invisible God to an Estranged Human Race

<sup>NAU</sup> ***John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.***

God is the mysterious, the infinite being whose ways and character are infinitely high above us, incomprehensible to us

Jesus came to "exegete" the Father to us and make Him plain and understandable

- G. The Final Goal: Perfect Intimacy with God through Christ

- 1. Jesus is in the bosom of the Father... perfect intimacy, deep love
- 2. The Apostle John laid on Jesus' bosom at the Last Supper
- 3. Foreshadowing of the future of our dwelling with God...

**IV. God's Consummation of a Dwelling Place in Heaven**

- A. Christians Here in this World: Aliens and Strangers

- 1. The Present world is temporary... our future home is yet to come
- 2. Christians should understand that our dwelling place cannot be seen yet... it is nowhere to be found
- 3. So, we are aliens and strangers in this world

***1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.***

## B. Our Life in the Body: A Life in a Temporary Tent

**2 Corinthians 5:1-4** *Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. <sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, <sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup> For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.*

**2 Peter 1:13-14** *I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, <sup>14</sup> because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.*

1. Paul says we are living in a temporary physical dwelling place... our own flesh is a temporary tent; because of its corru

## C. The Essence of Faith: Looking Ahead to a Future City

1. Hebrews 11: already quoted... said the faith-filled patriarchs were aliens and strangers here and looking ahead to a city with foundations

## D. The Consummation of Faith: The New Jerusalem

**Revelation 21:1-4** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

1. Amazing statement: verse 3 = now the TABERNACLE of God is with men
2. He will live with them
3. This is the consummation of Christmas... the yearning for an end to all the restless wandering and homelessness and journeying of this sinful age

## V. Application

- A. Aliens and Strangers: Understand the Impermanence of Life in this World
- B. Be Willing to Travel to See Jesus... and Worship Him
- C. Look Ahead to a City with Foundations

D. Meditate Often on Jesus' Willingness to Become Flesh and Make His Dwelling with Us

E. Christmas Time

1. Do things together as a family or with your friends that build your hope in the future dwelling place
2. As you open your Christmas gifts, think of the higher promise of GRACE  
UPON GRACE