



**In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
One God, Amen.**

**Sunday – October 5th, 2008.**

## **God is With Us (contemplations on the Tabernacle of Meeting)**

From the beginning, God has always sought mankind's salvation. From the day God created mankind He planned out his salvation and sought him out without waiting for man to ask of Him. In one of the most beautiful and profound examples of this, God gave the children of Israel the Tabernacle of Meeting. God cared about mankind, and especially His children, so much that He wanted to always dwell with them. God loved His people so much that he devoted about twenty chapters in the Old Testament to the details of this tabernacle. He wanted to share with those who were living in darkness the elements of light and grace even if it were through symbolism. He wanted to be with them any way He can and guide them through their lives. He wanted to be with them even though there was an enmity between heaven and earth. Truly God seeks out mankind and loves them deeply.

So if God cared so much about the details of this Tabernacle it behooves us therefore to spend some time contemplating the details that God laid out for us. Even though the symbolism has been removed and the grace of God has been revealed in our days we should not cease to contemplate on God's care for humanity from the very beginning. It is through this contemplation that we can appreciate God's grace even more and have a deeper understanding of God Himself.

## **Meeting and Witnessing**

In some places in the bible the Tabernacle was referred to as the Tabernacle of Meeting while in other places it was referred to as the Tabernacle of Witness. We notice that whenever Moses entered the tabernacle to meet with God it was the Tabernacle of Meeting but coming out it was the Tabernacle of Witness from which he emerged to witness of the glory of God. Likewise we too when entering our holy church do we go to it intending to meet with God or is it just a habit we have gotten accustomed to? Do we enter the Tabernacle of Meeting and feel that God is present and we are meeting Him in person? What about when we leave the church, do we witness of Him to others or do we act as if we don't know Him? I fear we might sometimes act like we're not even related to Him. As we say in the holy liturgy: "Amen, Amen, Amen, Your death O Lord we proclaim..." do we really proclaim the death of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ?

## **Being Sojourners**

God never asked anyone to build Him a temple. He never asked David or Solomon. In fact, when David purposed in his heart to build God a temple God responded to him saying "*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 Sam 7:7). God wanted the people to remember that their home is not on earth but it is in heaven. If the church is supposed to resemble heaven then can it dwell on earth? Obviously not! If God is supposed to live in this house then is earth God's throne? Behold what David says in the psalms "*The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD is on his heavenly throne.*" (Ps 11:4) and in

Isaiah He says *“Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?”* (Is 66:1). If even the body that our spirit lives in will be destroyed as St. Paul says *“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.”* then how much more does God’s house belong in heaven as we say *“Our Father who art in Heavens”*. We ought to remember, therefore, that our citizenship is not of this world but is of heaven. We are sojourners spending a little while then leaving. What will the benefit be of storing treasures on earth therefore if we cannot stay on earth? It would be more justified to build our house in heaven where we will spend our eternity.

### **Light is sown for the righteous**

God guided His people through the wilderness using the Tabernacle of Meeting. Whenever the cloud descended on the Tabernacle, the people would rest and when it ascended the people would travel. We know that this wilderness was supposed to symbolize our lives in this harsh world. It is the temporary state between earth and heaven after the baptism where we await the heavenly Jerusalem.

Contemplate how the people of Israel left their lives in God’s hands. How wonderful it would be if we could also follow God and let Him lead our lives until we get to our destination. Notice that the cloud wasn’t always moving. Sometimes God wants us to stay in a certain place or a certain situation for a while according to His divine understanding and wisdom. Had the people of Israel not trusted God or went back to Egypt as they desired to do many times, they would have never reached the promised land and instead might have been slaves or worse. Truly this is an example of how being close to God and His church helps us navigate this wilderness. How God’s light shines before us to show us the path.

May God allow us to always be in His holy presence, guided by His light through His holy church forever. Glory be to our God, Amen.