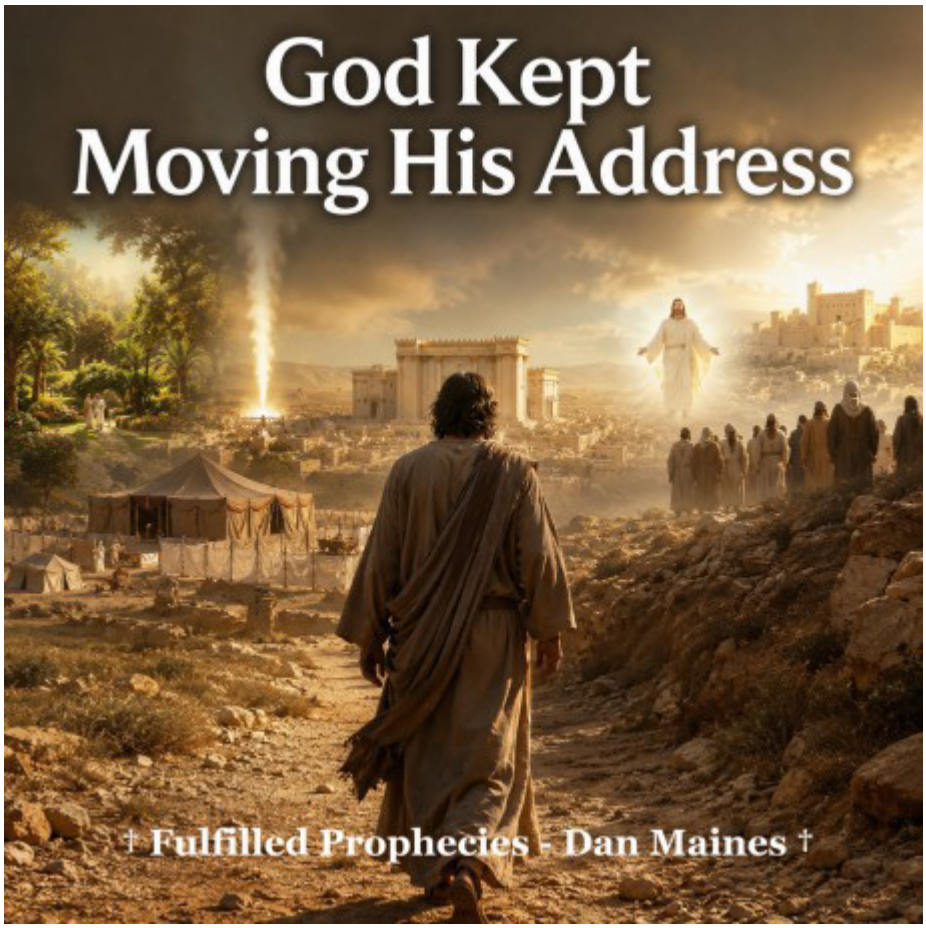
Fulfilled Prophecies

God Kept Moving His Address



By Dan Maines

God Kept Moving His Address

Introduction

† From Genesis to Revelation, one of the greatest themes in the Bible is the dwelling place of God. The story begins with God dwelling with humanity in Eden, moves to the tabernacle in the wilderness, then to the Temple in Jerusalem, then to Jesus Christ, then to His people as the living temple, and finally to the New Jerusalem.

† God's presence wasn't permanently tied to geography, stone, curtains, altars, or buildings. Each dwelling place pointed

forward to something greater.
† The movement is unmistakable. Eden, tabernacle, Temple, Christ, Church, New Jerusalem. God kept moving His address until His dwelling with His redeemed people was fully established.
† This is why the Bible ends very differently from the way it begins. Humanity was driven from God's presence in Eden, but Revelation ends with God's people dwelling permanently in His presence.
† The entire biblical story can be followed by asking one simple question: Where does God dwell with His people?

Genesis 3:8
Now they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.
† Eden presents the earliest picture of humanity living in the presence of God. Sin shattered that fellowship, and humanity was driven from the garden and barred from the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24).
† The problem introduced in Genesis wasn't merely that humanity lost beautiful surroundings. Humanity lost unhindered access to God's presence.
† From that point forward, Scripture develops the story of God restoring His dwelling among His people. Revelation deliberately returns to Eden imagery when the tree of life appears again in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 22:1-3).

Exodus 25:8
Have them construct a sanctuary for Me, so that I may dwell among them.
† God brought Israel out of Egypt and commanded them to construct a sanctuary. The purpose is stated plainly, God intended to dwell among them.
† The tabernacle was portable because Israel was traveling toward the promised land. God's dwelling was represented in

the middle of His covenant people as they moved through the wilderness.
† Yet the tabernacle wasn't the final goal. It was a copy and shadow of heavenly realities and pointed beyond itself to something greater (Hebrews 8:5; 9:8-11).

Exodus 40:34
Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.
† When the tabernacle was completed, God's glory filled it. The dwelling promised in Exodus 25 became visibly associated with the sanctuary.
† Notice the pattern. God wasn't asking Israel merely to construct a religious building. The central issue was His presence among His covenant people.
† The cloud and glory demonstrated that the tabernacle had become the recognized dwelling place of God's covenant presence, but Scripture would soon move that address again.

1 Kings 8:10-13
And it happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.
† The imagery deliberately resembles the dedication of the tabernacle. Once again the cloud appeared and God's glory filled the sanctuary.
† The portable tabernacle had given way to Solomon's Temple. Jerusalem became the center of Israel's covenant worship, sacrifices, priesthood, and national life.
† Yet Solomon himself understood that the Creator couldn't literally be contained inside a building. He immediately acknowledged that even heaven and the highest heaven couldn't contain God (1 Kings 8:27).
† The Temple was therefore never God's final destination. It belonged to a covenant system that was preparing the way for

Christ.

John 1:14
And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; and we saw His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
† This is one of the greatest movements of God's dwelling place in the entire Bible. God's presence was no longer centered in a tent or stone building. The Word became flesh and dwelt among humanity.
† Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). What the tabernacle and Temple represented through symbols, Jesus embodied personally.
† God's glory wasn't ultimately found behind a Temple curtain. God's glory was revealed in His Son.
† This is why Jesus could speak about Himself using Temple language. The true meeting place between God and humanity had arrived.

John 2:19-21
Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and yet You will raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking about the temple of His body.
† Jesus couldn't have made the transition much clearer. His opponents were thinking about Herod's physical Temple, but Jesus was speaking about His own body.
† The old Temple was standing when Jesus said this, yet the greater Temple was standing directly in front of them.
† The Temple building was approaching judgment, while Christ was establishing the reality toward which the old sanctuary had always pointed (Matthew 24:1-2).
† Jesus didn't come to preserve Jerusalem's Temple forever. He became the true Temple and opened access to the Father through Himself (John 14:6).

1 Corinthians 3:16
Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?
† After Christ's resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the dwelling language moves again. God's people themselves are called His temple.
† Paul wasn't telling believers that they needed another physical sanctuary where God could dwell. He told them that they were God's temple because God's Spirit dwelled among them.
† This was revolutionary in a world where the Jerusalem Temple was still standing. The apostles were already identifying the New Covenant community as God's dwelling place.
† The Church isn't merely a group that visits God's house. In Christ, God's people are His house (1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6).

Ephesians 2:21-22
in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.
† Paul describes Jews and Gentiles being joined together in Christ as one growing holy temple.
† Notice the language, habitation of God in the Spirit. God's address wasn't returning to a rebuilt stone Temple in Jerusalem. His dwelling was His redeemed covenant people.
† The stones of this Temple are living people joined together in Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5).
† This explains why the destruction of Jerusalem's Temple in AD 70 didn't leave God homeless. The old covenant house had completed its purpose, while the greater spiritual house had already been established.

Revelation 21:2-3
And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying,

Behold, the tabernacle of God is among the people, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,
† Revelation brings the entire biblical dwelling theme to its climax. The language that began in Eden and continued through the tabernacle and Temple now reaches its covenant fulfillment in the New Jerusalem.
† The city is also the bride. This immediately tells us that John isn't describing ordinary architecture. The imagery represents God's redeemed covenant people (Revelation 21:9-10).
† The declaration is the answer to the problem introduced in Genesis, the tabernacle of God is with humanity. God's dwelling and His people have become inseparable.
† From the fulfilled perspective, this is the New Covenant reality established through Christ and fully revealed with the passing of the old covenant age.

Revelation 21:22
I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
† This may be the most powerful ending possible to the Temple story. The Bible ends with no physical Temple in the New Jerusalem.
† Why isn't there a Temple? Because the symbols have given way to the reality. God and the Lamb are its Temple.
† Eden pointed toward restored fellowship. The tabernacle pictured God's dwelling. Solomon's Temple localized covenant worship. Christ became the true Temple. His people became the Spirit-filled Temple. New Jerusalem reveals the completed reality of God dwelling with His people.
† A future return to animal sacrifices and a physical Temple wouldn't advance this story, it would reverse it. The biblical movement is from shadow to substance, from physical copies to spiritual reality, and from restricted access to permanent access through Christ (Hebrews 10:19-22).
† God kept moving His address, not because His plan kept changing, but because every earlier dwelling place was moving

history toward the reality God intended from the beginning.

Historical References

† Josephus described the Jerusalem Temple as the center of Jewish worship and recorded its catastrophic destruction by the Romans in AD 70. His account preserves the historical end of the Temple that had dominated Jewish covenant life in the first century (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-6).

† Josephus records the burning and destruction of the Temple during the Roman siege, giving historical context to Jesus' prediction that the magnificent Temple buildings would be thrown down (Josephus, Wars of the Jews 6.4).

† Eusebius later connected Jerusalem's devastation with the judgments announced by Jesus and recorded that the believers in Jerusalem had departed before the city's destruction (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5-7).

† These historical witnesses don't establish the theology by themselves. Scripture establishes the theology, while history confirms that the first-century Temple system actually came to the catastrophic end Jesus had predicted.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't need to travel to Jerusalem to find the dwelling place of God. Through Christ, believers have access to the Father by one Spirit (Ephesians 2:18).

† We aren't waiting for another physical Temple to restore something God removed. We belong to the greater Temple that Christ established.

† God's presence isn't confined to a church building. The people of God are His dwelling through the Spirit.

† This changes the way we think about worship. Jesus moved worship away from dependence upon a sacred geographical location and declared that true worshipers worship the Father in spirit and truth (John 4:21-24).

† The Bible begins with humanity outside Eden and separated from the tree of life. It ends with God's servants in the New Jerusalem, the tree of life restored, God's presence established,

and the curse removed (Revelation 22:1-3).
† We aren't waiting for God to move back into a building. In the New Covenant, God has made His dwelling with His people.
† God kept moving His address until the address wasn't a garden, a tent, or a stone building. His dwelling is with His people in Christ.

Q & A Appendix
Q: Why did God command Israel to build the tabernacle?
A: God explicitly said that the sanctuary was constructed so He could dwell among them (Exodus 25:8).

Q: Was Solomon's Temple God's final dwelling place?
A: No. Even Solomon acknowledged that heaven itself couldn't contain God, much less the Temple he had built (1 Kings 8:27).

Q: Did Jesus identify Himself with the Temple?
A: Yes. When Jesus spoke about destroying the Temple and raising it in three days, John specifically explains that He was speaking about the Temple of His body (John 2:19-21).

Q: Where does God dwell under the New Covenant?
A: God's people are His temple, and they're being built together as His dwelling in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21-22).

Q: Does the New Jerusalem contain another physical Temple?
A: No. John explicitly says he saw no Temple in the city because God Almighty and the Lamb are its Temple (Revelation 21:22).

Q: Why is New Jerusalem called both a city and a bride?
A: Revelation identifies the bride, the wife of the Lamb, and then shows John the holy city, Jerusalem. The city represents God's covenant people rather than merely physical architecture (Revelation 21:9-10).

Q: Are Christians waiting for God to return to a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem?
A: No. The New Testament moves God's dwelling from the old Temple system to Christ and His people. Going back to a physical sanctuary as God's covenant dwelling would move backward from the reality to the shadow (John 2:19-21; Ephesians 2:21-22; Revelation 21:22).

Q: What is the great message connecting Eden to New Jerusalem?
A: God's presence with humanity. Genesis shows fellowship broken through sin, while Revelation shows God's dwelling with His people and the tree of life accessible again (Genesis 3:22-24; Revelation 21:3; 22:1-3).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †
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Source Index
† Genesis 3:8; Exodus 25:8; Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10-13; John 1:14; John 2:19-21; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21-22; Revelation 21:2-3; Revelation 21:22
† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5-7

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