

## What was the tent of meeting?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/tent-of-meeting.html>

The phrase tent of meeting is used in the Old Testament, specifically in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, as the name of a place where God would meet with His people, Israel. Usually, the “tent of meeting” was used as another name for the Tabernacle of Moses. However, before the tabernacle was constructed, God met with Moses in a temporary tent of meeting: “Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the ‘tent of meeting.’ Anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. . . . As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the Lord spoke with Moses” (Exodus 33:7, 9). The fact that Moses set up the tent of meeting outside of the camp underscored that the people had broken fellowship with God at Sinai when they had made the golden calf (see Exodus 33:3). After the tabernacle was built, Moses no longer needed his temporary tent, and the term tent of meeting began to be applied to the tabernacle.

In the Law that God gave Moses, God provided specific instructions to build a place of worship (Exodus 25–27). This “tent of meeting” or tabernacle could be taken up and moved each time they changed locations while wandering in the wilderness. The word tabernacle is an English rendition of the Hebrew word *miskan*, or “dwelling place.” The tabernacle was a temporary dwelling place for the Ark of the Covenant and the other holy items that the Israelites were instructed to use in the worship of and sacrifice to Yahweh.

Interestingly, the word tent or tabernacle is also used in the New Testament to draw profound spiritual conclusions about salvation. Both Paul and the writer of Hebrews make a distinction between a heavenly tent and an earthly tent, between what was “built by

human hands” and what is “not part of this creation” (2 Corinthians 5:1; Hebrews 9:11). Hebrews 9:1-10 describes the earthly tabernacle, or “tent of meeting,” as a place into which the priests would go to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people. Then, in verse 11, Christ is shown to be a better “high priest” who entered once through the “greater and more perfect tent,” referring to His body, to offer a sacrifice that would satisfy the wrath of God completely, for all time. This refers to His blood shed on the cross. The point of the passage is to show how, if the blood of animals could temporarily cleanse worshipers of the guilt of sin, the perfect blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, would cleanse His followers perfectly—that is, eternally—of their sins.

In Hebrews 10:14, the writer says that Jesus has “perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” This verse expresses a spiritual paradox. By entering the “tent of meeting,” which was His own body, and offering up His own blood, Christ “perfected forever” those who have faith in Him. And the result of belief in Christ is sanctification, a continual upward spiral of holiness and closeness to God, as the Holy Spirit performs His work within Christ’s followers. In this way, we are eternally “perfect” because of the preciousness of Christ’s blood applied to our lives, yet at the same time we are “being sanctified” by the Holy Spirit who indwells us and changes us into the image of Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 8:29).

Paul also mentions the “tent of meeting” or the tabernacle, comparing it to the earthly human body: “For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that

what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee" (2 Corinthians 5:1-5).

When Paul says, "The tent that is our earthly home," he is referring to our earthly body, our temporary dwelling place. Just as the Israelites moved the tent of meeting from place to place waiting for entrance to the Promised Land, believers in Christ are wanderers on the earth—people who are not "at home" in the world and who "seek a city that is to come" (Hebrews 13:14). Paul says that those who belong to God will be "further clothed" with immortality upon their deaths and that their earthly tent (their body) will be replaced with a "heavenly dwelling." God does the work of preparing us for that day of glorification by the process of sanctification by the Spirit, and that work happening within us is a "guarantee" that our inheritance and our heavenly dwelling are real. "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13-15).