

Genesis 28:10-19a
Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43

THE HOUSE OF GOD

Where does God live?

It's a common question and a very good one.

The most common response is "heaven",
where he waits to greet his faithful and from where
he can see and reign over the entire universe.

The ancient people of Israel believed God lived with the ark of the covenant.

A pledge by God to his people when he told them how to build it
was that he would dwell among his people and give them guidance
from the mercy seat on the top of the Ark.

And later, when David was distressed that he had a mansion
but God had no house, God stopped him from trying to build one,
announcing that his son Solomon "is the one who will build
a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever."

So the Temple in Jerusalem became God's house on earth.

Most importantly, scripture tells us that God's house is *our body*;
he dwells in each of us,
and through us all God dwells in his church

Our reading from Genesis recounts how Jacob discovered, in a dream,
that the place he had chosen to spend the night was blessed by God
and his angels as they were very busy climbing and descending
a ladder between earth and heaven,
and the Lord God himself specifically blessed Jacob

and all of his descendants, reminding Jacob of the promised land. It's a little hard to imagine Jacob sleeping so soundly with a rock under his head, but Jacob awakens with great awe for God especially at that location.

He sees it as the gate to heaven and the house of God, which is *Bethel* in Hebrew.

He uses the pillow stone for a pillar of blessing to commemorate God's house and God's promises of blessing.

Jesus in our reading from Matthew is still talking about sowing and harvesting.

This is another parable about good seed growing with bad plants interspersed, sowed by the evil one, and impossible to pluck while they are growing together because they look just like wheat plants.

The instruction to gather them up when the harvest is ripe and to bundle the bad plants for burning shows a great concern for the owner's home and land.

When the disciples beg Jesus for a better explanation, he clearly explains that the one who sowed the good seeds is the Son of Man, Messiah; the field is the world, and the good plants are God's children while the bad plants are the offspring of the evil one.

He explains that what will happen to both kinds of plants is an image of the events at the end of the world, with the full coming of God's Kingdom.

God's house includes his faithful children,

as God oversees our lives and the choices we make.
We are blessed every day because God lives with us;
his Holy Spirit dwells inside us; and Jesus walks beside us
as our teacher and savior.

Many people refer to the church as God's house,
and may suggest to friends or family:

“let's be sure to go to God's house when it opens again.”

Compared to today's times,
it's nice to know God doesn't set up police or security guards
with weapons to watch over his various houses of worship.
God himself watches over each house of worship,
providing leadership and blessings.

We are grateful!

Let us pray:

Wherever we are, Lord,

We know we are together, united in faithful prayer.

We are very grateful for our family of faith.

We thank you Father God, Lord Jesus and Holy Spirit,

we glorify you, we worship you,

and we count on you, especially during these devastating times,
to bless us with continuing faith and health.

Equip us always with strong faith and the right words
to adequately tell your story of salvation,
that more souls may be harvested.

You are our Rock and our Redeemer.

You sustain us with your never-ending love.

You encourage us to express with joy our love for you.
In your precious name we pray,
Amen.