

Backdrop: Bethel and Shiloh God's Presence

Opening Discussion:

1. What is the name of your hometown or community? Does the name have any significance?
2. Do you know of any other interesting town names?
3. Are there special places where you have felt the presence of God in a powerful way?
4. When you think of God's presence under the Old Covenant, what place comes to mind?
5. What is the danger of connecting God's presence and work with one place?
6. How does the presence of God function differently under the New Covenant than it did under the Old Covenant?

Holy places are only holy because God's _____ makes them holy.

Two Cities That Once Were Holy Places:

1. Bethel: the _____ of _____

- Bethel means the house of God.
- It is a place where Jacob saw into Heaven and God's presence was often manifested.
- Bethel was the first place where Abram "called on the name of the Lord."
- Abram returns to Bethel in 13:3 and once again, "called on the name of the Lord."
- In Genesis 28:10-22, Jacob had a dream in which God appeared to him at Bethel.
- In Genesis 35:1-15 God appeared to Jacob at Bethel a second time.
- In Judges 20 the people inquired of God at Bethel because the Ark was there.
- 1 Samuel 7:16 records Bethel as one of Samuel's three ministry centers.
- Bethel eventually came to be a place of idol worship: 1 Kings 12:29, 1 Kings 13:10-11, Amos 3:14.

2. Shiloh: _____ and _____

- Joshua 18 and 1 Samuel 1-4 record Shiloh as the location of the Tabernacle and Ark before the fall of the house of Eli and 1st Samuel 4 records the loss of the Ark during battle and the death of Eli and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.
- The rest of the Old Testament uses Shiloh as a warning of God's judgment on His people who reject Him: Psalm 78:60-61, Jeremiah 7:12-14.

I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.

Jeremiah 26:6

Neither Bethel nor Shiloh are mentioned in the _____, and God's presence with His people in the New Testament comes through _____.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. **John 1:14, 18**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." **John 1:51**

Fill in the Blank Answers:

Holy places are only holy because God's manifest presence makes them holy.

1. house, God
2. rest, peace

Neither Bethel nor Shiloh are mentioned in the New Testament, and God's presence with His people in the New Testament comes through Jesus.