

GEMS FROM GREEK
THE KING IN A TENT – John 1:14

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

And the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (HCSB)

In the Book of Acts, at 18:3, it is stated by Dr. Luke: *“Because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.”* The account is that of the Apostle Paul staying for a while in Corinth in the home of Aquila and his wife Priscilla. It was common for Jewish boys to learn a manual trade in addition to his chosen profession; Saul of Tarsus being a scholar and a Pharisee. Saul the erudite Jewish scholar who sat at the feet of the illustrious rabbi Gamaliel in the University of Hillel, is the same Apostle Paul who went about preaching Christ as perhaps no other has ever done. But he made tents for a living! Making tents is not terribly important as such, but the word *“tent”* takes on significant importance in the Bible.

1. The Prelude to Tent Living. In Hebrews 11:9-10 the Bible tells of Abraham who *“by faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.”* Pilgrims on the journey, but at the same time introducing to us the prelude to the Biblical concept of tent living. The pilgrim journey, living in tents, communicates the idea of transitory dwellings. We are strangers, pilgrims, sojourners in this world, and like Abraham we are looking beyond our temporary tents, with a view to the city whose foundation and builder is God. Today, our tent life is but a prelude to the permanent dwelling being prepared in heaven for us.
2. The Provision for Tent Living. In the text, John 1:14, John states that the eternal, uncreated, uniquely-born, one-of-a-kind Son of God took upon Himself the flesh of our humanity, and *“tented”* or *“tabernacled”* among us. In some translations or versions of the Bible the words *“dwelt”* or *“lived”* are used. The word is ἐσκήνωσεν built on the Greek noun σκηνή meaning *“a temporary dwelling”* or *“tent”* and refers to tent-living in the culture of the Scriptures. The King of glory, glory of the uniquely-born of the Father, full of grace and truth, took up residence in a temporary dwelling ... His earthly body. Out of the ivory palaces the King of Glory came to live in a tent among people who also live in temporary dwellings! He is the provision for our being enabled to live this earthly life in anticipation of our eternal life.
3. The Promise of Tent Living. In recording the Revelation, John wrote at Chapter 21, verse 3: *“And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, ‘Behold the tabernacle of God is with people, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His people.’”* God has announced for all to hear that in this present world, He lives in the tent with His people. The King of kings has condescended to live in our tents with us! But all of this is in anticipation of that moment when time will be no more, and all the former things will pass away. Luke wrote, recording the angelic announcement: *“This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go to heaven.”* (Acts 1:11) The Apostle wrote to the Philippians, and for us: *“Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”* (Philippians 3:21) No longer a tent! A permanent home in God’s eternal presence because the King came to live in a tent!