

July 2, 2023

Exodus 40:34-38 NIV

34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; 37 but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it lifted. 38 So the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.



The Glory of the Lord

Exodus 40:34-38

BIG IDEA: A God this glorious is a God who commands our full worship, trust, and obedience.

OUTLINE

1. The Build Up
2. God Moves In
3. God's Glory
 - Holiness
 - Nearness
4. Jesus Christ is the Fulfillment
5. Application
 - Receive Him
 - Trust Him
 - Worship Him
 - Obey Him
 - Follow Him

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever. (ESV) Psalm 23:6

Once the tabernacle was complete, the glory of the Lord filled it. It was a sign that God accepted all that His people had done. God in His sovereign mercy was delighted to have His presence in the tabernacle and to fill it with his glory. The glory cloud was present by day and the pillar of fire by night to guide God's people. And God continued to be present with his people as they set out from Sinai toward the Promised Land, chasing them with goodness and mercy on their way home. -*ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible*

Praise to Jesus. Praise Jesus for setting you free from a greater tyrant than the Pharaoh of Egypt. Praise Jesus for breaking the bondage of sin in your life. Praise Jesus because now He is leading you through the earthly wilderness, with all its difficulties and dangers. Offer praise to the great God of the exodus who will never leave you or forsake you. Praise Jesus for the church He has set up a sanctuary where even now you may enter His presence for worship.

Repentance through Jesus. Confess and repent for the times when you have forgotten that Jesus is with you and for you by letting your circumstances and difficulties cause you to turn inward to yourself away from loved ones and the hope and help of Jesus. Confess and repent of the times when you have neglected or abused God's grace by returning to old sins from which He delivered you.

Consecration for Jesus. Today, be consecrated for Jesus to live with hope and confidence the life God has given you to live because you eagerly anticipate the greatest glory to be revealed: the glory of Jesus Christ at the end of the ages as promised in the Bible "the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30b; cf. Revelation 1:7). Embrace hardship with gospel, grit and gusto as you hold to the reality of a day to come when there will be no need for any tabernacle because Jesus will take you into the very presence of God, in all His glory (Revelation 21:3, 22): "When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

(Adapted from John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus*, 2 vols. (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press USA, 2000), 2:369.)

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These “Sermon Discussion Questions” are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Read Exodus 40:1-15. Singer and songwriter Carly Simon wrote a song called “Anticipation.” The song was inspired by the way she felt as she anticipated hosting another famous songwriter, Cat Stevens. Think about a time when eagerly anticipated meeting someone or hosting someone in your home. What preparations did you make? What preparations did Moses make?

2. Read Exodus 40:34. Have you ever been in a place where you really needed you tax refund? What did the wait between when you filed the return, and it came, look like? When the check finally arrived what did that feel like? How would you respond if your refund happened to be more than you expected (in this vision you don’t panic that you did something wrong)? Recall how the Israelites experienced God’s presence in the past.

3. Read Exodus 40:35. God’s presence was unlike anything the Israelites had ever experienced. God’s presence far exceeded Moses’ expectations as well. Do you think Moses was surprised when he couldn’t enter the Tabernacle? What can you learn about God’s glory from the reality that Moses no longer had access to God as he had in the past? In order for Moses or any other the priests to gain access to the presence of God moving forward (scan Leviticus) what would be required?

4. Read Colossians 1:19, John 1:14 and Hebrews 1:3. How is Jesus the ultimate manifestation of God’s glory? In what way can this reality serve to inspire and challenge you?

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

1. In Exodus 40, we read of the completion of the construction of the Tabernacle. How does God show His approval of the Tabernacle from Exodus 40:34-38? (*We read that “the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” in verse 34. The purpose of the Tabernacle was for God’s presence to be with His people. Therefore, these verses show that God approved by making His presence known to Moses and the Israelites.*)

2. How do we see the holiness of God in this passage? (*You may need to first ask your children if they know what it means for God to be holy. God is holy because He is perfect. In Exodus 34:35, we read that even Moses could not enter the Tabernacle. This reminds us of the holiness of God since sinful humanity cannot be in the presence of a holy God, unless God makes a way for our sins to be forgiven.*)

3. What is the other term used in this passage to describe the Tabernacle? (*It is also called “the tent of meeting” in verses 34 and 35.*)

a. Why is it also called this? (*This is because the Tabernacle is where the LORD ordained to meet with His people.*)

4. In verses 36-38, we read of the cloud over the Tabernacle in the day and the fire in it at night. When elsewhere in Exodus do we read of God guiding the Israelites with the cloud and fire? (*After the LORD split the Red Sea and defeated the Egyptians, He guided them with the cloud in the day and the fire at night. For example, read Exodus 13:20-22.*)

a. Talk with your children about the comfort God gives us when He promises to be with us.

5. Take time this week to pray with your family to praise God for the deliverance from our sin and deliverance to a life that brings God glory through our faith in Jesus.

Scriptures for further study:

Matthew 28:20

Hebrews 13:5

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

FOR STUDENTS

1. In verses 1-16, how many imperatives do you see in this passage? (An imperative is a verb that has the force of telling you to do something). As an example, the first one is in verse 2, “You shall set up the tabernacle...”
2. What progression(s) do you see in this first section of chapter 40? In other words, are the commands given by God in a random or arbitrary order, or are they in some sort of structured order?
3. In the new heavens and earth, it will be said, “*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God*” (Rev 21: 3). In what sense was this true in Israel under the old covenant? In what sense is this true now under the new covenant? In what sense with this be true in the new heavens and earth?
4. How does Exodus 40:34-38 foreshadow and point us to Jesus (John 1:14, 18, 17:5, and 24)? How does Jesus’ nearness lead you to repent and rejoice?
5. What we receive in Jesus is even greater than Israel and even Moses. What do we receive in Jesus based on John 1:10-13, Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18, 3:12, and Hebrews 10:19-20? In Exodus 40:34-38 we see the glory of God come down to dwell. But what does Paul say in Colossians 1:19 and 1 Corinthians 3:16? What does this mean for our strength, hope, confidence, prayers, and identity in the Christian life?

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

1. In his classic book, “The Knowledge of the Holy,” author A. W. Tozer writes that “what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”

Question: What comes into your own mind when you think about God? What attributes stand out the most?

Question: If God’s attributes could be boiled down to just two—His holiness and His nearness—which of these two do you most often envision? Why is it important to keep these in balance?

Question: In what ways does our view of God affect how we live our lives?

2. All the Bible, including the Book of Exodus, points to Jesus Christ. Exodus gives us a picture of all that Jesus is and all that He does for us as our Deliverer, Provider, Forgiver, and Lord.

Question: Given all that He is, and all that He has done, would you now believe in Him and follow Him with all that you are and all that you have?

3. If you are already a believer, in what areas does the Lord deserve more of your worship? More of your trust? And more of your obedience?



The Seventh Plague of Egypt, John Martin, 1823

About the artist and painting: The English Romantic painter John Martin was no stranger to death and despair. Out of the 13 children born to his mother and father, John was one of only 6 that survived childhood. He grew up in poverty, the son of a farm laborer. In 1813, John lost his grandmother, mother, father, and youngest son all in the same year. Despite his popular appeal to English society, he was never really celebrated much less even accepted by the art community. Yet he was somewhat of a revolutionary by choosing to paint very fantastic, biblical scenes and landscapes. One can't help but think John looked to the extraordinary aspects of the bible to deal with the harsh realities of life in a broken world.

His 1823 work, *The Seventh Plague of Egypt*, helps to capture the deliverance theme so prevalent in the Book of Exodus. In the painting you have these mighty structures of Pharaoh's palace, city, and pyramids all displayed in their grandeur. In Moses' day this represented to God's people Pharaoh's power and oppression towards them as he ruthlessly made their lives harsh. Yet God is breaking into these circumstances, "showing up" to bring about His deliverance. In this painting, over and above the Egyptian structures is something more magnificent, the storm of God: thunder, hail, and fire being poured down upon the oppressor and persecutor of His people. And your eye is drawn to the man standing on the left side of the painting, Moses, with outstretched arms looking to the LORD and His deliverance.

The purpose of Exodus:

“The original purpose of Exodus was theological, to teach God’s people about himself and their relationship to him.” - Peter Enns, NIVAC, 25.

“Exodus is about a man, Moses. He is central to the narrative in a way in which no single character, not even Abraham, dominates Genesis...Exodus is about a nation, Israel, moving from slavery in Egypt into freedom...but ultimately Exodus is about God, about the God of the covenant who has instituted a new relationship between himself and those whom he has called to be his people.”
- John Mackay, Exodus, 9.

“The whole story of Exodus is a covenant narrative. The God who pledged himself to Abraham and his descendants remained the faithful God. He had made promises and intended to honor them, and when his moment came, honor them he did...in a word, Exodus cannot be described simply as the book of the holiness of the Lord, nor simply as the book of the presence of the Lord, but as the book of the holy God present in all his holiness at the heart of his people’s life, their provident savior and friend, who makes provision whereby they, in all their unworthiness, may live safely with him.” - Alec Motyer, The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of Exodus, 20, 23.

The setting for Exodus 1:1-2:25 is Israel in Egypt. The opening section sets the stage for the rest of the book by describing: the connection to the narrative of Genesis (Ex. 1:1–7), the oppression that has arisen under a new pharaoh (1:8–22), the preservation of Moses at birth (2:1–10) and later in Midian (2:11–22), and the declaration of God’s intimate knowledge of Israel’s suffering and God’s faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham and his descendants (2:23–25).

Exodus is a journey in two parts.

Part One: Egypt Exodus 1-15 Aug. 7th – Oct. 30th

Part Two: Sinai Exodus 16-18 Nov. 6th – Nov. 20th

Pause for Advent: Nov. 27th – Dec. 18th

Part Two Cont. Sinai Exodus 19 - 39 Jan. 8th – June 25th

Pause for Capital Campaign Series: Jan. 22nd-Feb. 12th

Pause for DNOW: February 19th

Pause for Missions Sunday: March 26th

Resources for further study:

Exodus: A Mentors Commentary by John Mackay

Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture
(Volume 2) (The New American Commentary) by Douglas Stuart