

Exodus: No Longer Slaves – Part 13

The Tabernacle: God's Tent of Meeting

Exodus 40

Exodus began with a people enslaved. Under the violent, tyrannical rule of the pharaohs, the Israelites were bound in chains and forced to build great cities along the Nile. They suffered and died in Egypt, a land that was not their home, but God had a plan for their redemption. According to His covenant promise, He would rescue them from Egypt and lead them to the Promised Land.

God did this for Israel's good and for His glory.

All through Exodus, we see Him working to save His people, and whenever He explains why He is saving them, He says it is for His own glory.

- 1) Why did God meet with Moses at the burning bush?
- 2) Why did God tell Pharaoh to let His people go?
- 3) Why did He drown the armies of Egypt into the depths of the Red Sea?

... the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. - Exodus 14:18

- 4) Why did God provide manna to a hungry nation?

Exodus 16:6, 7 NLT - ... By evening you will realize it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt. v.7 In the morning you will see the glory of the Lord...

- 5) When they came to Mount Sinai God showed them His glory as He was giving the law!

Exodus 24:15-17 NLT - Then Moses climbed up the mountain, and the cloud covered it. v.16 And the glory of the Lord settled down on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from inside the cloud. v.17 To the Israelites at the foot of the mountain, the glory of the Lord appeared at the summit like a consuming fire.

(1)The Glory was in His name. (2) The Glory was found in His deeds. (3)The Glory was seen from a distance on the mountain as a sign of His presence.

The Tabernacle

After the Law was given God gave Moses specific and detailed instructions on how to build a tabernacle.

Exodus 25:8, 9 - *And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. v.9 Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.*

God gave the plan and God gifted the workers:

Exodus 31:2-5 - *I have called by name Bezalel (Bat azh el) the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, v.3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, v.4 to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, v.5 in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft.*

Just as there was then, there is today a special touch or filling of the Holy Spirit that elevates the work of an artist or a musician or a craftsman from mere technical skill to divinely empowered actions that glorifies God and builds faith in His people!

Israel was created for His Glory!

You were created for His Glory! Created to experience His glory and to express His glory. 1 Corinthians 10:31 - *...whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

What then does it mean to say that God created us *for His glory*? Glory is a very hard thing to define. It is like the word "beauty." We all can use it and communicate with it, but to try to reduce it to words is very frustrating.

Glory is the essence and magnificence of a thing which is revealed in its purest and most excellent way.

Examples: The sun is glorified by the beauty of the sunset. A newborn is the glory of a marriage; a football player makes the most magnificent catch and it's glorious!

The Tabernacle was to be a house for God's "glorious presence."

Exodus 29:43-46 NLT - *I will meet the people of Israel there, in the place made holy by my glorious presence. v.44 Yes, I will consecrate the Tabernacle and the altar, and I will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. v.45 Then I will live among the people of Israel and be their God, v.46 and they will know that I am the Lord their God. I am the one who brought them out of the land of Egypt so that I could live among them. I am the Lord their God.*

God wants to be near His people. God wants to dwell with us!

This was all in keeping with God's plan. The exodus was all for the glory of God. The ultimate expression of God's glory was that this holy and awesome presence would dwell in the midst of His people.

The Tabernacle: God's Tent of Meeting

The title "tent of meeting" is given 141 times from chapters 27-40.

The people are waiting to see the fulfillment of the promise God made in chapter 29:43-45 ESV.

There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. v.44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar... v.45 I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God.

1) The Glory was in the timing.

Exodus 40:1, 2 NIV - Then the Lord said to Moses: v.2 "Set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, on the first day of the first month."

- a) The first day of the first month...in other words, God told Moses to set up the Tabernacle on the anniversary of Israel's exodus from Egypt—one year to the very day.
- b) The erection of the Tabernacle was the culmination of everything that God had been working for since He first brought His people out of Egypt.
- c) God's timing is glorious.

God's timing will usually appear strange to us because He often waits for the perfect time to show up with power.

Martha told Jesus, "if you would have been here three days ago my brother would still be alive." Jesus said in John 11:40, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

Learn how to wait on God. If you want God's glorious presence in your life then you have to wait on God's perfect timing.

2) The Glory was in the order.

- a) God told Moses how to put everything together and where to put it.
- b) He followed a deliberate order, working from the inside out.
 - i) First Moses was to erect the tabernacle. Then he was to set up the furniture that went inside. This was followed by the furniture that went outside, and finally by the fence that went around the perimeter.

God said...

Place the ark of the covenant with the law in it and shield the ark with the curtain. v.4 Bring in the table and set out what belongs on it. Then bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. v.5 Place the gold altar of incense in front of the ark of the covenant law and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle. v.6 "Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting; v.7 place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it. v.8 Set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard – Exodus 40:3-8 NIV

- ii) We must learn that God is a God of order.
 - (1) There is order in God's plan for marriage and family.
 - (a) Get married before you build a family.
 - (b) Follow God's roles for responsibility in that family.
 - (2) There is order in God's plan for your finances.
 - (a) Honor God first with your tithes and offerings.
 - (b) Then focus on your need for food, shelter, and clothing.
 - (3) God's glory is reflected in us as we follow His orderly plan! If you want God's glorious presence in your life, you have to follow God's order.

3) The Glory was in the anointing.

- a) The furniture and the furnishings were anointed for God's glory.

Once he had set up the tabernacle, Moses was to set it apart, anointing it for the sacred service of God. God said...

Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. v.10 Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar, and it will be most holy. v.11 Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate them – vv. 9–11 NIV

- b) The priest and their garments were anointed for God's glory.

v.12 Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. 13 Then dress Aaron in the sacred garments, anoint him and consecrate him so he may serve me as priest. 14 Bring his sons and dress them in tunics. 15 Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so they may serve me as priests. Their anointing will be to a priesthood that will continue throughout their generations. - vv. 12–15 NIV

Like the tabernacle itself, the men who served there had to be anointed for the holy service of God.

The holy priesthood was anointed to bring glory to God.

- c) We are anointed by the oil of God's Spirit to be priests unto God.

2 Corinthians 1:21, 22 - *And it is God who... has anointed us, v.22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

1 Peter 2:9 - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

You are anointed to be a priest of God in the tabernacle of your life. Take that anointing into the marketplace, into your family place, not just in the place of worship!

4) The Glory was His presence.

- a) The Bible summarizes it all by saying, “And so Moses finished the work” (v. 33). The prophet did everything right. He did it at the right time. He did it the right way. Everything was in place. Everything had been anointed with oil the way God instructed.

The only thing missing was the one thing that everyone was waiting to see: the glorious presence of God. This was not something that Moses could set in place. With the right instructions, he could put the Tabernacle together, but only God could fill it with glory.

- b) They did not have long to wait long. When the last curtain was tied to the last fence post, the prophet stepped away, and “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (v.34 NIV).
- c) This was the divine seal of approval on all the work that Moses and the Israelites had done: God came down in glory.
 - i) The people had seen glimpses of His glory before but nothing compared to this!
 - ii) The glory that filled the tabernacle was a spectacular display of the radiance of God’s being.
 - iii) This was the glorious climax of Exodus...God’s presence among them!

This is the purpose of the Exodus. God would get for Himself a people who are “no longer slaves” but a people for His own possession... a people for His glory!