

We've come to the grand finale of Exodus. It is what the story has been pointing to all along. The big picture is that God is fulfilling His promise to Abraham by bringing Israel out of Egypt and to the Promised Land. The even bigger picture is that God is providing a solution to the fall of man that occurred way back in the Garden. Exodus focuses us on a more intimate picture, that of the tabernacle. We should not lose the context, however, that this is all a part of healing the breach caused by sin. It is about God walking among man again as He did in the Garden. (Genesis 3:24) This step of the tabernacle is a necessary intermediate stage of instruction that helps us comprehend the final and complete reality of Jesus.

Commented [Paul1]: Genesis 3:24 (ESV)

²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Most weeks I read the text for the sermon and write it out before referring to commentators. This week, I had in mind what I wanted to share, but I started reading a commentary and got so engrossed in it that I couldn't stop reading it. The writer ended his comments the same way I had planned to end mine, but the buildup was something that I hadn't foreseen. So I owe a debt of gratitude to Philip Ryken's commentary on Exodus. His work helped tweak many of our sermons in Exodus.

In the last chapter of Exodus, all the work of the artisans is being assembled and put into place. It is very significant that this is taking place on the anniversary of the exodus from Egypt. God brought them out so that He could dwell among them. In chapter 52 of Isaiah, the prophet sees that God brings His people out of from the oppression of the world to be purified from the evil that is so prevalent. (Isaiah 52:11) The Apostle Paul quotes the passage when writing to the Corinthians (2Corinthians 6:17) and the voice of Revelation cites them both. Revelation 18:4 (ESV) *⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;"*

Commented [Paul2]: Isaiah 52:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.

Commented [Paul3]: 2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you.

The deliverance from Egypt was a picture of our being taken out of the corruption of the world and made the people of God among whom He dwells. (Ezra 6:21) But God did not yet dwell among them. They just had the agreement that He would. They already failed to keep their part, but then the agreement was renewed with the understanding that it would be by grace alone that God dwelt with them. (Exodus 34:9) There are some who teach that Old Testament folks were saved through the Law. That is not possible! No one could keep it. It was by grace and mercy that God would dwell in their midst. The Law was teaching them that they needed the mercy of God. (Psalm 14:2-3)

Commented [Paul4]: Ezra 6:21 (ESV)

²¹ It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel.

Commented [Paul5]: Exodus 34:9 (ESV)

⁹ And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

Commented [Paul6]: Psalm 14:2-3 (ESV)

² The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.
³ They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

The tabernacle construction was completed on the anniversary of their departure. That means it took around nine months to complete the details of all the instructions God had given. Finally, they were ready to assemble all the parts. Finally, God would "come down" and dwell among them. Ryken describes the anticipation they must have felt as

they assembled each portion. Those nine months must have seemed to drag on forever. They had seen the cloud that led them, and heard the voice that came from it when it came down Sinai, and the elders had seen a bit of the glory on the mountain. Moses had seen the “back” of the glory which caused his face to shine. (Exodus 34:35) What will happen when God comes down in their midst?

They first erected the tabernacle and the coverings went over it, but the glory did not come down. The Ark of the Covenant where God would dwell was placed inside the Most Holy Place. The Law was placed inside and the Atonement Cover on top. They shielded it with the curtain that divided the tabernacle into two rooms. God’s special room, the Holy of Holies, was complete. Still the glory did not come down.

The rest of the furniture in the tabernacle, the table of showbread, the lampstand, and the altar of incense, were all put in place, and the curtain of the outer tabernacle was hung. The tabernacle was complete. Still the glory did not come down.

The furniture of the outer court was set up. The great brazen altar and the brass washing basin were placed, but the glory was still not seen. The outer perimeter curtains were hung from the posts, and the main gate curtain was put in place. Now everything was done. **All that God had directed was complete.**

Moses and Aaron stood back and two incredible things happened. The cloud came over the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. The curtains and covering must have been radiant with light. Some believe it was a brilliant, pulsating light of the Shekinah. John Currid comments that the form of the Hebrew verb for “filling” reflects a dynamic, ongoing situation.¹

“The glory that filled the tabernacle was a spectacular display of the radiance of God’s being. The God of the exodus—the God of power, who made the heavens and the earth; the God of justice, who plagued the Egyptians; the God of love, who kept his covenant with Israel; the God of providence, who led his people through the wilderness; the God of truth, who gave them his law; the God of mercy, who atoned for their sins; the God of holiness, who set them apart for service—this great God was present in glory. When the people looked at the tabernacle, they could see that God was in the house.”²

From that point on, wherever the cloud stopped, the tabernacle would be erected and the cloud would then come over the tabernacle. Glory came down and they saw it fill the tabernacle, but the people have only seen the effects.

The irony of the story is that Moses could not enter. This was all about God dwelling with man, and setting up a system of intercession, but Moses and Aaron could not enter the tabernacle. The glory was too brilliant. There is a message here that we have lost in

Commented [Paul7]: Exodus 34:35 (ESV)
³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Commented [Paul8]: John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus*, 2 vols. (Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press USA, 2000), 2:369.

Commented [Paul9]: Philip Ryken - *Preaching the Word – Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory*.

our day. God is awesome in holiness and power. Just as Moses could not see God's face and live (Exodus 33:20), so he could not just walk into that tent and survive. It is mortally dangerous to stand in God's holy presence! (1 Timothy 6:16) Is God a God who is near (immanent) and compassionate or a God who is so great and awesome that we dare not come near Him (transcendent). He is both!

Something else was needed to make it possible for the holy, righteous and perfect God to be in the midst of men. God had already given the instructions as to what was needed at the beginning of the book of the covenant. (Exodus 20:24) Leviticus follows Exodus, without missing a beat, expounding on the details. What was needed was atonement. Leviticus is all about the sacrifices and the requirement of blood. The blood of sacrifice had to be shed so that all would know it was only by grace of another taking their sins that they could ever have God in their midst. The justice of God had to be met. (Exodus 34:7)

Leviticus gives us the details of their obedience to follow the Lord's instructions in regards to the various sacrifices. We have seen how they all point to Jesus. (Luke 24:44) He is our sin offering, our fellowship offering, and the burnt offering. When the sacrifices were completed Moses and Aaron could enter. It was the blood that made it possible. (Leviticus 17:11) The blood pointed to the blood of the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice that could take the penalty that we all deserve. (Romans 5:9) That is the only way we can enter into His holy presence. (Hebrews 9:22)

Let's read of the second amazing event from the details we find in Leviticus 9:22-24 (NIV) *²² Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down. ²³ Moses and Aaron then went into the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. ²⁴ Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.*

Now they have seen the consuming fire of the Lord's presence. (Deuteronomy 4:24) They shouted for joy for several reasons. The year of anticipation had reached its climax. The tent of God was complete. God had accepted their labor. But most importantly, God accepted the sacrifice. The evidence was the fire that came out from the Holy Place consuming the sacrifice. Every detail of the picture God was painting was completed as God had instructed. God would live among them and go before them. Could we ask for anything more? Actually, yes, we can. We can ask for the reality of the shadow. We can ask for the substance of which this was just a painting. (Hebrews 10:1)

Commented [Paul10]: Exodus 33:20 (ESV)

²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

Commented [Paul11]: 1 Timothy 6:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

Commented [Paul12]: Exodus 20:24 (ESV)

²⁴ An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you.

Commented [Paul13]: Exodus 34:7 (ESV)

⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Commented [Paul14]: Luke 24:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Commented [Paul15]: Leviticus 17:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.

Commented [Paul16]: Romans 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

Commented [Paul17]: Hebrews 9:22 (ESV)

²² Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Commented [Paul18]: Deuteronomy 4:24 (ESV)

²⁴ For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Commented [Paul19]: Hebrews 10:1 (ESV)

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near.

Let me explain. The people that came out of Egypt were not just Hebrews, but all that accepted the God that proved Himself through the plagues to be the only true God. (Exodus 12:38) They were saved from death by the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorposts, a picture of Jesus' blood on the doorposts of our hearts. (1Corinthians 5:7) They were separated from Egypt which is a picture of worldliness, and passed through the waters of the Red Sea, a picture of baptism. (1Corinthians 10:2) The enemy of our soul can try to pursue us, but he will be destroyed. (Romans 16:20) Jesus is our daily bread, our great provider. (John 6:32-33)

His voice gives us the moral boundaries of life. We enter into a new covenant with God by grace alone. It is based on the blood of a substitute, blood that should be our own, the punishment for our sins. We have the wonderful invitation to have God dwell not just in our midst but in our very heart. (John 14:23) We have the opportunity to be the tabernacle of God. So we give the freewill offering of our very self. (Romans 12:1) This is a one-time act, but it is also a process. We make the decision but then we learn a little more of the cost day by day. Yet, God stirs our hearts and helps us be generous toward Him and others as He is with us.

Exodus began under the cloud of brutal slavery. It ends under a cloud of glory. The people do not need to search for guidance, rather they wait upon the moving of the cloud that guides them. That is the life of the believer in Jesus, waiting on His move. (Psalm 27:14)

In Christ Jesus, we have done all that was commanded of us. We probably erected a golden calf or two on the way to this point in our life, but we repent and realize it can only be by grace that He would live in us. Finally, we accept that He is the sacrifice and His glory fills our heart. There is no room for us. (John 3:30) We face the same irony Moses faced. We now desire to go in and fellowship with God and intercede at the altar of incense but we can't get in for the glory.

The sin offering has been offered. We have come to the place of the burnt offering. We see He completely gave Himself up for us, and in response as living sacrifices we offer our lives completely to Him. (1John 4:19) Then we can experience the fellowship offering. We find "it is no longer I that live but Christ that lives in me." (Galatians 2:20) Then we can enter in, for it is Christ that enters in. Then we can intercede, for it is Christ in us that intercedes. We can face the fire of His glory, for judgment for our sins was meted out upon Christ, our substitute.

Inside the tabernacle, His light is lamp to our path, directing our steps. We commune at His table eating the bread of His presence, the Word. Our intercession at the altar is sweet smelling incense.

Commented [Paul20]: Exodus 12:37-38 (ESV)
³⁷ And the people of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children.
³⁸ A mixed multitude also went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.

Commented [Paul21]: 1 Corinthians 5:7 (ESV)
⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Commented [Paul22]: 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 (ESV)
¹ For I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea,
² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

Commented [Paul23]: Romans 16:19-20 (ESV)
¹⁹ For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.
²⁰ The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Commented [Paul24]: John 6:32-33 (ESV)
³² Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.
³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Commented [Paul25]: John 14:23 (ESV)
²³ Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Commented [Paul26]: Romans 12:1 (ESV)
¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Commented [Paul27]: Psalm 27:14 (ESV)
¹⁴ Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Commented [Paul28]: John 3:30 (ESV)
³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease."

Commented [Paul29]: 1 John 4:19 (ESV)
¹⁹ We love because he first loved us.

Commented [Paul30]: Galatians 2:20 (ESV)
²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Then, the grace of God lets us see more of His glory. It fills the whole earth! (Isaiah 6:3) The glory is Jesus! We begin to see Him in all the Scriptures. We see Him in the providential details of life. We see Him in joy and in suffering. His fire consumes us as living sacrifices. (Matthew 3:11) We see Him at work through us, and we are humbled.

The reason that some people just can't see what God is doing is because they are still filled with themselves. Everything is still about them instead of being about Jesus. They haven't yet become a living sacrifice. They are still their own lord. They may have accepted Jesus as their sin offering, but they don't want their heart to be broken by Jesus' total dedication to saving us represented in the burnt offering of the cross.

Some people don't like the depiction of Christ on the cross. "He is risen," they say, "Take Him off of there!" True, He is risen, but perhaps we need to take a good, long, painful look at how He had to give it all up because of our sin.

We just celebrated Christmas, and you may be wondering why we are going so soon to the cross. The baby came to live a sinless life and go to the cross for you. He showed us how to become a whole burnt offering! **His resurrected life in us is what makes us able, but His example breaks our heart's resistance to His enabling power.**

The greatest glory the world has ever seen is the glory manifest in Jesus. Those who won't read the Word will only be able to see His glory when it's manifest in your transformed life. When you are a whole burnt offering, others will see the sacrifice of the cross in you.

One day, the world will see an even greater glory, for Jesus is coming again! Jesus promised He would come again with power and GREAT GLORY! (Matthew 24:30) Every eye will see Him! Every knee will bow, like the Israelites did when they saw the fire come out of the tabernacle. But when we who have believed see Him, we will be changed. We will stand in His presence. (Psalm 1:5) His work in us will be complete! *When Christ who is your life appears, then you will appear with Him in glory.* Colossians 3:4 (NIV)

And here is the grand conclusion: Revelation 21:3 (KJV) It is the same verse we ended the Christmas message with, but notice the fulfillment of the tabernacle type. *³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.* The tabernacle of God is Jesus. (Revelation 21:22) There will no longer be a need for Him to veil His glory. The separation sin caused will be ended. The promises will all be fulfilled. They enemy will be forever vanquished. And Jesus Christ shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 11:15) To Him be all glory, honor and praise, now and forevermore.

Questions

- 1 What is the BIG picture of Exodus?
- 2 Discuss 2Corinthians 6:17.

Commented [Paul31]: Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)

³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Commented [Paul32]: Matthew 3:11 (ESV)

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Commented [Paul33]: Psalm 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

Commented [Paul34]: Revelation 21:22 (ESV)

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

Commented [Paul35]: Revelation 11:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

- 3 When is the age of grace?
- 4 Why is the completion date of the tabernacle significant?
- 5 Discuss the suspense and arrival of glory.
- 6 What was the irony of the situation?
- 7 What had to happen before Moses could enter and why?
- 8 What amazing thing happened next?
- 9 Review the picture Exodus paints of our life in Christ.
- 10 What glory do you see?