

Exodus 40 The Glory of God Revealed

Read Exodus 40:16-38

Comment

Chs. 35-40 recount the building of the Tabernacle and the Lord filling it with his glory. It is significant Exodus ends, not with the promised land, but with the Lord dwelling among his people. They did not move apart from the Lord's initiative, they moved when he did. They stayed put when he did not.

The immense detail given to the construction of the Tabernacle is striking to us who are not acquainted with such elaborate aspects of worship. It is notable that God would care about such details and speaks to the importance of aesthetics in worship. One of the first mentions of the Spirit of God coming upon someone is the artists Belezai and Oholiab deployed for the Tabernacle (Ex. 31:1-3; 36:30-35).

More important is the repeated statement they did it all "as the Lord had commanded" (25 times). In particular it is said seven times in 40:17-33 again an echo of the seven days of creation. Despite all of Israel's previous disobedience, at least here is their repeated obedience.

The end result is that the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The base sense of the Hebrew word for glory (כְּבוֹד, *kavod*) is weight or magnificence. While our culture is not as heavily honor/shame based as others, there are still aspects of it in our society. The higher up in a company the more weight that person has. Many working class people have a strong sense of honor with respect to working hard for their family. Social media has almost reignited a sense of shame in negative reactions people may have to a single post online. Any famous or powerful person carries a sense of honor, of weight, by their sheer presence.

In the Bible, God is more glorious than anything in all the universe, nothing compares to him. He *weighs* so much, his full glory would crush us. Hence, it is contained within a pillar of cloud and atonement is provided for the people beforehand. Yet, the greatest revelation of God's glory was in Christ coming to dwell (lit. tabernacle) among us (John 1:14). Inverting all human expectations of divine glory as well.

Questions

1. How would you define worship? What are its essential elements?
2. How would you distinguish between corporate and private worship? What is the importance of each?
3. Given the repeated emphasis on their obedience to what the Lord commanded, how is obedience related to God's glory? Do you think God feels more or less pleasure for us depending on how obedient we are? Why and what biblical support would you give (cf. Rom. 8:1; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 12:14)?

4. What does glory mean? What examples can you think of where you saw something “glorious”?

5. Famously, the Westminster Catechism begins like this:

Q: What is the chief and highest end of man?

A: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever. (Rom. 11:36, Cor. 10:31, Ps. 73:24–28, John 17:21–23)¹

Do you seek glory? How? What does seeking God's glory look like in your own life, how does it change the kinds of glory we seek?

6. When God revealed himself in Exodus it was in powerful acts and in miraculous ways. When God revealed himself in Christ, it was in the humblest of ways. Can both be true of God? Why the difference and what significance does it have for Christians, that Christ's glory was upside down and crucified on a cross (Jn. 17:5)?

7. What does it look like in your own life to seek the glory of Christ, rather than the glory of men (cf. John 12:43; 1 Cor. 1:18-31)?

¹ The Westminster Larger Catechism: With Scripture Proofs. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996).