

GOD'S HOLY GLORY

CORE PASSAGES: EXODUS 40:9-17,34-38

CONTEXT

In the last chapter of Exodus, the Israelites dedicated the tabernacle. Just as God commanded, Moses anointed all the beautiful furnishings the people made, emphasizing God's holiness. Then God fulfilled His promise to dwell among His chosen people (Exodus 29:44-46) when His glory filled the tent. Exodus 40 underscores God's unwavering faithfulness to His covenant and our response in worship.

KEY CONCEPT

Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.

As you examine Exodus 40:9-17,34-38:

- Contemplate that we cannot approach a holy God without being purified from our sins.
- Note ways that the purification required for the tabernacle underscores the necessity of holiness for approaching God and points to Jesus's redemptive work.



TIMELINE

The Israelites Worship a Golden Calf as Their God, Breaking the Covenant (Exodus 32)

The People Give an Offering to Begin Building the Tabernacle (Exodus 35)

SESSION STUDY: God's Glory Enters the Tabernacle (Exodus 40)

Moses Intercedes for the People and Receives New Stone Tablets (Exodus 33-34)

God Gifts Bezalel and Oholiab with His Spirit to Build the Tabernacle and Instruments (Exodus 35-39)

Daily Readings

- Day 1:** Exodus 35:1-36:7
- Day 2:** Exodus 36:8-38
- Day 3:** Exodus 37:1-38:31
- Day 4:** Exodus 39:1-43
- Day 5:** Exodus 40:1-38
- Day 6:** Psalm 99



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 40:9-17

GOD SET UP THE TABERNACLE TO BE SEPARATE FROM AND YET WITH HIS PEOPLE.

Highlight each item in this passage that was required to be anointed by oil.

9 “Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate it along with all its furnishings so that it will be holy. **10** Anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar so that it will be especially holy. **11** Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate it. **12** Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. **13** Clothe Aaron with the holy garments, anoint him, and consecrate him, so that he can serve me as a priest. **14** Have his sons come forward and clothe them in tunics. **15** Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so that they may also serve me as priests. Their anointing will serve to inaugurate a permanent priesthood for them throughout their generations.” **16** Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him. **17** The tabernacle was set up in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS HOLY: God’s holiness refers to His uniqueness in being separate from all He has created. The Hebrew word for “holy” means “separate” or “set apart.” God’s holiness also refers to His absolute purity. God is unstained by the evil of the world. His goodness is perfect, and the moral code we find in the Scriptures is a reflection of His holy nature. As people made in God’s image, we are called to holiness.

Key Concept: Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.



The dedication of the tabernacle, God's sacred dwelling place among His people, vividly highlights Israel's journey from slavery to freedom. Meticulous attention was given to preparing and sanctifying the tabernacle's elements, underlining the holiness required for God's presence to reside among them. This passage emphasizes God's inherent holiness, demanding that His dwelling place be purified and sanctified. Every detail, from the anointing oil to the consecration of the altar, symbolized the purity and reverence necessary in God's holy presence.

Through this process, the Israelites learned the significance of maintaining holiness in worship and in approaching God. Not only were the elements of worship anointed, but so too were those who led worship on behalf of the people. Moses meticulously followed God's commands, reminding the people—and us today—that God is holy and we should approach Him with reverence and obedience.

How might the detailed preparation and sanctification of the tabernacle influence our worship of God today?

This passage emphasizes the necessity of holiness to stand before God. This requirement points to the barrier between sinful humanity and God's holy presence. On our own, we can never be truly holy as God requires, so we need a mediator. Here, Aaron and his sons were consecrated as priestly mediators between God and His sinful people, though they were sinful themselves. After they made sacrifices for their own sin, they would serve God in the tabernacle and represent the people before God with sacrifices for sin.

Acknowledging this, we can see that the purification required in this passage not only emphasizes the holiness needed for approaching God but also points to the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus offering Himself as the sacrifice in our place to atone for our sins, we are forgiven, and then we receive the Holy Spirit as an anointing. God purifies His people by the blood of His Son and the gift of His Spirit so we may enter into His holy presence.

How does the coming of Jesus Christ as the ultimate expression of holiness enable us to approach God in worship despite our imperfections?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

EXODUS 40:34-38

GOD DISPLAYS HIS HOLY GLORY THROUGH HIS PRESENCE AND HIS WORK IN HIS PEOPLE.

Highlight each reference to “cloud” and “glory” in the passage.

34 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. **36** The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle throughout all the stages of their journey. **37** If the cloud was not taken up, they did not set out until the day it was taken up. **38** For the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire inside the cloud by night, visible to the entire house of Israel throughout all the stages of their journey.

WORD STUDY

GLORY: God’s glory encapsulates the totality of His divine attributes—His majesty, holiness, and splendor. It manifests in the radiant display of His presence and power, evoking awe and reverence. His glory is also veiled because mortals cannot behold God’s full glory (Exodus 33:20). Hebrews 1:3 teaches that Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory, reflecting the Father’s nature perfectly and redeeming humanity through His sacrificial death.

Key Concept: Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.



This final passage of Exodus marks a fulfillment of God's divine plan to dwell among His people. Under Moses's guidance, the construction and consecration of the tabernacle had been completed, paving the way for God's presence among the Israelites. The cloud of glory, once settled atop Mount Sinai, now descended upon the tabernacle, symbolizing the Lord's divine approval of His people's obedience and His special presence among them.

This presence wasn't merely symbolic; it was a tangible reality that sanctified the tabernacle, transforming it into a sacred space where God resided among His chosen people in spite of their sins. Even Moses was unable to enter the tabernacle for a time. The cloud served as a visible reminder of God's presence, revealing His closeness while simultaneously veiling His full glory. It represented both God's nearness and His holiness among His people.

How does recognizing God's presence and glory in our lives transform the ordinary into the extraordinary?

The glory of the Lord descended upon, filled, and inhabited the tabernacle with the form of a cloud so that God could be near His people, with them, and lead them.

God is always faithful to His people. And to the degree the people obeyed God's leading—going where the cloud went and staying where the cloud stayed—they demonstrated to themselves and the world what they believed about the God who led them out of Egypt—that He is holy, He is worthy of obedience, and He was present with them to work through them.

What are some ways God guides His people to do His work today?

Unfortunately, the Israelites often would fail to obey God's leading, even after the tabernacle tent was replaced by a temple. Yet ever faithful, God sent His Son into the world so that He would be the perfect tabernacle (John 1:14) and temple (2:19-22) in whom sinful humanity may encounter the holy glory of God. And those who come to the Son—Jesus—in repentance and faith become part of His holy temple in the church.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

God's desire to dwell with His people came to true fruition in the person of Jesus Christ, called Immanuel, God with us. God the Son humbled Himself and took on flesh to be with and to save His people.

GROUP EXPERIENCE



GOD'S TABERNACLE: THEN AND NOW

Read Exodus 40:9-38 and write down how the elements found during tabernacle worship point to God and Jesus.

POINTS TO GOD	POINTS TO JESUS
ANOINTING WITH OIL	
PRIESTHOOD	
PRESENCE IN THE CLOUD/FIRE	

What in today's passage helps you recognize the holiness of God and how we should approach Him today?



Key Concept: Though God is holy, He desires to dwell with His people for His glory.



HEAD

How does considering the glory of God influence your mind-set and approach to gathering to worship Him?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 99, reflecting on the marvelous ways God has revealed His glory, not only to His people Israel but also to you. Pray through the psalm praising and thanking God for His holiness and His faithful justice and forgiveness.



HEART

How does experiencing God's glory at work in your life make you feel, and what are some ways you could share that experience so others would recognize and experience the Lord's greatness?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

What steps will you take to be careful to honor and obey the Lord of glory?

