

Friday, July 7, 2023 ▫ Read Exodus 40:34–38

Questions from the Scripture text: When the tabernacle was set up, what covered it (v34)? And what filled it? Who couldn't do what (v35)? Why? What would happen sometimes (v36)? What would the children of Israel do at that point? And what would they do if the cloud wasn't taken up (v37)? What happened, day and night (v38)? In whose sight? For how long?

What does the Lord do when the tabernacle is finally set up? Exodus 40:34–38 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **without compromising His glory, the Lord dwells with His people, leads His people, and protects His people.**

The Lord dwells with His people, v34–35. This passage reminds us of Israel's initial experience of the Lord at Sinai. The cloud covers the tabernacle with glory, as it had covered the top of the mountain before (cf. 24:15–16). And when God's glory comes in great effulgence, Moses is unable to enter or endure it (cf. 34:18–23). But the Lord has made a proper way for Him to display His dwelling among His people without compromising His glory.

The Lord leads His people, v36–37. The great question after the incident of the calf was not only whether God would dwell among His people, but especially whether God would go with them (cf. 33:12–17). Now, we see that it's not that God would go with them, but rather they will go with God. When He stays, they stay. When He goes, they go. They have not just His presence but His leadership, His guidance. His wisdom, and His plan, leading them is literally visible.

The Lord protects His people, v38. The cloud protects by day, and the fire by night. The Lord's dwelling with His people and leading them is continual, day and night. Num 9:15–23 expands upon this passage, and Isa 4:5–6 looks forward to its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. There, the cloud by day and fire by night identify the tabernacle as a shade and a refuge.

Because Israel end up in the land, which was promised to their fathers, we often think of Exodus as the story of Israel coming out of Egypt to go to Canaan. But from its beginning, Exodus has been a story of Israel coming out of Egypt to come to Yahweh. The nation is about to depart upon its journey, but as Exodus ends they have reached their true destination.

Even so, believers have a glorious new heavens and new earth promised to us, but we have already come to know the Lord Jesus as God tabernacling with us, and His Spirit with us and in us as Spirit and fire from the Lord. He is already our primary destination, and wherever further we go, He will lead us.

And He has given us the pouring of water to communicate to us the pouring of His Spirit, and the sharing (fellowship/communion) of His life at the table to communicate to us our union with Him. He intends for us to live in constant awareness of His presence, guidance, and protection.

How/when/where does the Lord most communicate to you His presence with you? His leading/taking you to Your reward? His protecting you from all harm and overruling all things for your good?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for becoming flesh and tabernacling among us in the Person of the Word. Grant unto us to behold Him not with fleshly mind but by faith, so that we may behold His glory as the only-begotten of the Father, full of covenant love and faithfulness. Make us to know You as the One who is continually with us, who takes us by the hand, who guides us by Your counsel, and who afterward will receive us unto glory. Make us to know You in Christ, in whose Name we ask it, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP73C "Yet Constantly I Am with You" or TPH73C "In Sweet Communion, Lord, with Thee"

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Exodus 40 versus 34 through 38. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting and the glory of yahweh filled the tabernacle And moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting. Because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of yahweh filled, The tabernacle.

Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of israel would go onward. And all their journeys, but if the cloud was not taken up Then they did not journey until the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of yahweh was above the tabernacle by day.

And fire was over it by night. And the sight of all the house of israel, Throughout all their. Journeys. So far the reading of gods inspired and In there and twerk. The children of israel have arrived at their destination. Think there is a mistake that we often make when we think of them coming out of egypt, Now, we think that they were coming out of egypt to go to canadian to Canaan.

Because that was the land. That was promised to abraham. But we know that abraham. Was seeking a better country, even that Even than that, the book of hebrews teaches us that and we could even see that and Abram's life and abraham's life, and how Um, How he lived by faith and how his hope.

Uh, was not merely in the future generations. Of his earthly family. Occupying, this tract of land, and In the nearest. Uh, but his hope was in the resurrection. We had wonderful indication of that when And his wife, Sarah died. Uh, he looked forward to her being resurrected, from that land.

And also in, Um,

Well, that's escaping me.

So, And his hope was a resurrection, hope. And there is resurrection, hope here. Many people of Israel were being brought out of Egypt, especially to be brought

to the lord. The lord said, let my people go, that they may serve me. Now, the point was to Bring the people to the lord at sinai.

Uh, so that they could be wedded to him there. That they would be his, his people, he would be. Their god. And this presented, of course, the problem. Of how can the holy god, dwell among Sinful people. The tabernacle is not an ultimate solution. The ultimate solution comes after.

They come to Canaan, the ultimate solution. Comes in him. Who is god and became flesh and tabernacle among us? And even then christ. And his active obedience. It's In his. And obeying the commandments of god and his life. And And here's Passive obedience. Giving himself to suffer the wrath of god for our sin.

And he had tabernacled among us for a season in his flesh. But the ultimate solution. Is God's tabernacled with man. So there's bookends here that that are Really from Genesis 2. To Exodus 40. Where a man had fellowship with god. And sinned and transgressed. That covenant. And so, That man lost.

His fellowship with god. And, Man should how depraved and how sinful he is that he couldn't dwell with God, even as god produced this line of the godly Uh, that was hoping in the savior to come. It was demonstrated that man did not have hope of maintaining fellowship with god without that savior who was to come.

So, you have the godly line from Um, From seth. And what happens? The indwelling sin is so great. The line gets mixed with the line with cane, god is ready to destroy the whole earth. He shows, no a grace. He redeems. Noah to be the one in whom the covenant is preserved.

So that christ and noah's loins would be Uh, would be preserved on the ark. Uh, but we see. That man cannot have fellowship with god. So long as man is in his sin. And so there's this tabernacle that makes display. Of the putting away of sin, the atonement for sin, the cleansing of sin.

And now, especially the mediator. Uh, who With blood that puts away our sin. Becomes the focal point. The one in whom. God and demand can be reconciled. And man can be in the presence of god have god as it were tabernacle among them and have instead of A strangement, fellowship.

And instead of wrath blessing. And instead of, Instead of Um, Rejection. Favor and welcome. Well, you so you have all of these Uh, in Indications. Of. The possibility. Of god, tabernacled among this people. And so, Uh, this really is the conclusion, the cloud covers, the tabernacle of the meeting, the glory of yahweh fills the tabernacle And yet.

Uh, what happens? Moses is unable. To enter the tabernacle of meeting. So, the tabernacle was not able, Uh, Uh, to make, man. Um, The tabernacle was fit. Not fit to enable man. To dwell in the great display. Of God's glory not even mooses. And mooses was not fit. Uh, yet.

And so it's communicating that there is this temporary way. In which the lord is dwelling with his people. But it's also communicating that there must be a better way. A fuller way. An effective way that is to come. All right, so the Lord dwells with his people and he will dwell his people Uh, the The fall was not the last word.

The rejection or the ejection rather have manned from eden? That was not the last word. God is taking to himself a people and he's going to dwell with them. And he's also, Now going to lead israel? As history moves forward to christ's coming. And christ being the one who tabernacles among us and in whom we become fit, We we become not just forgiven, but fit to Indoor, god's glorious, presence.

As the lord moves forward in history to complete that work that he is doing. Uh, the nation of israel. Is going to be used by god and they become not just those from whom christ comes. But an example to us, kind of like, Um, the lord made ahab. Not made elijah run in front of ahab's, chariot and offered him.

You remember all the way down though? The mountain when the rain was coming and And elijah was Out out running the, the chariot. Um, And god made that great display of how he offers not just to be with his people, but to lead them. Uh, by himself by way especially of his word in that case.

But here, israel is an example to us. Uh, that The lord's offers us in christ not just to have him present with us that we may have fellowship with him and a merely enjoy his favor but to lead us To lead us and guide us. Which asap? Realizes, when he goes to worship in psalm 73.

Uh, you remember it's not just that He is continually with god. And that god will receive him into glory. But also that god takes him by the hand. That god guides him by his counsel. We see this in psalm 32. That not only. Uh, in the moment that we confess our sins, Does god, forgive us our sins but then he also gives us instruction.

He says, don't be like horse and mule which are so stubborn that they Have to be forced by pain and external control. That we would receive. The instruction of the lord. And so the lord here doesn't just show his presence with his people. And versus 34 and 35, you shows.

Uh, that he leads his people. Whenever the cloud is taken up from above the tabernacle, the children go onward in their journeys. If the cloud is to not taken up, they did not journey until the day. That has taken up. God doesn't just go with them. Which was the big question.

The big prayer request you remember. He said, If you, if you're not going to go with us, don't let us go. But he was going to lead them. Just going to take them. That the lord doesn't just go with you. He leads you. You follow his instruction. You do what he says in his word.

His providence belongs to him. You must trust him with it. Don't be like the wicked spies. But, To know the one that the one who is ruling history. And overruling an overruling working, all things. According to the council, as well as the same one, who has given you the instruction in his word and that his spirit is the one who teaches you to understand his word and to obey his word.

So that as you live your life day by day, There's this. There's this wonderful awareness. That the one not just. In fellowship with whom you live. But who has given you the instructions by which you live is leading you And so there's the lord dwelling with his people and the lord leading his people.

And then there's the lord protecting. Those people, the cloud of yahweh was above the tabernacle by day fire was over it by night, and the sight of all the house of israel. Throughout all their journeys. This ought to protect them from themselves from their sin. Um, To literally in the shadow of the cloud.

And the shadow of the pillar of fire. Uh, sin against god and yet they did. And so that's a grave warning to us. Uh, but it's protection and the sight of the house of the all israel, and they also knew themselves. To be the lord's own people to know.

That only. Uh, what god has Um, What god has willed. For their good. Uh, can happen to them. And that. Their enemies have no power. Over against over against their god. The fact that the lord leads his people, you see in an expansion. Of this text and numbers 9 verse 15, to 23.

It talks about The cloud. Um, by day and it's appearance. Um, above the tabernacle at night looking Uh, like fire. And how the lord led them, by the cloud. And And the fire to encamp. Or to break camp, etc. Uh, but we have just been Um, In our isaiah readings.

In isaiah four, five. And six, you remember, The lord talking about using this. Image of the cloud and the fire. Uh, to talk about his presence with his people. And,

He says. Not just that, the The cloud of smoked by day in the shining and flaming fire by night.

Uh, there's a covering over all the glory. But then he says, and isaiah 46. And there will be a tabernacle For shade in the daytime, from the heat. For a place of refuge. And for a shelter from storm and rain. In other words, the lord's presence with his people is not just To guide them that the lord's presence with his people as they protection, that Is suited to every situation.

You're great help. No matter what the trouble is, no matter what the danger is, is the lord himself. So if the danger is heat, the knee is a shade to you. If it is. Um, Attack. It's he's a refuge to if it's a storm, he's a shelter to you.

And all of the other. Uh, things that threaten us. The lord himself. Is our help and He is always with us. So, The. Fellowship. And, The guidance. And The protection. All of which had been lost. By our first father, adam. Has been. Well now has been obtained by christ.

But the lord was graciously making great display of that here at the end of Exodus 40. This should have been to them. The. The grateful filament. Of their deliverance from egypt. That they had been brought into a dwelling with god. And if you take them to Canaan, Then hey, that's where he had promised.

Uh, the nation at that point, but they had him. And that should have been everything to them. That's why the wickedness of the spies and israel in following the ten. Uh, was so great. But the lord. Of course, has done these things. Most of all in christ and we are looking forward.

To a new heavens and a new earth. But there is a sense in which we've already arrived at our destination, isn't there? If you have god in the lord jesus christ. You have his presence. You have his guidance. You have his protection. And you know that at the last, you'll have him.

Which means you already have? The heavenlyness of heaven. It's this knowledge that Um, Nevertheless, i'm continually with you. You take me by the hand. You guide me by your council. You will receive me into glory. That's what leads him to say. Whom have i in heaven, but you And there's nothing else on earth.

I desire beside you. God making display of that to israel. Which they did not heed. The great majority of them. And god making that display to us. Oh, do not be like, israel. Do not go astray in your heart. Take his presence with you. To be. All of your pleasure.

Take his instruction to. To be your guidance. Take his presence as your instructor. To be your. Uh, your guard and protection from going the wrong way. And know that he protects you. From all that is ultimately into your ill. He who did not spare his own son. But gave him up for you will shortly together with them.

Give you all things.

Father, we thank you for the way that you Made this great display. Onto israel.

Of. Of your presence to them and with them. So great indeed, that The need. For christ to come and finish his work and apply it. Was made so obvious. And we pray, lord that your holy spirit would help us now because Oh, you're not there to see? The. Cloud.

And the fire and the glory and all of that. And oh, lord. Even the vast majority of those who are there to see it. Did not respond to these things. And so, we look to you now. Trembling. Knowing that we need you to help our hearts. So that we will respond to you.

So that we will. Rejoice in your presence and Follow your instruction. Be glad to be instructed and led. Guided by you. And we would, Trust you. To be. Protector or refuge to help. And that you would be everything to us. Once we see that, Your spirit must be the one who gives this and we ask.

And then that your spirit would give it to us. Let me ask all these things in, christ's name. Amen.