

The Glory of the Lord Fills the Tabernacle

The book of Exodus. It's a beautiful conclusion to a long journey. If you remember, the book began with the groans of a people in bondage, but it ends with the glory of God filling a sanctuary. This is the heart of God for you and for me: He wants to move us from the "iron furnace" of our sin and into a vibrant, living relationship where His presence is the center of our lives.

In Exodus chapter 40, we see the culmination of all the instructions God gave on the mountain. In the first several verses, the LORD speaks to Moses, saying, "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting."

The Pattern of Presence

Think about the precision here. God is a God of order. He tells Moses exactly where to place the Ark of the Testimony, the table for the showbread, the gold lampstand, and the altar of incense. He instructs him to set up the outer court with its hangings and the bronze altar for sacrifice.

As you would approach this tabernacle from the east, the first thing you would encounter was that bronze altar. It's a powerful picture, isn't it? Before you could ever get to the presence of God, there had to be a sacrifice. You couldn't just wander into the Holy of Holies on your own terms. There had to be the shedding of blood. This pointed directly forward to Jesus, the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

Beyond the altar stood the bronze laver. Before the priests could enter the tent to minister, they had to wash. It speaks to us of the "washing of water by the word." Even as believers, as we walk through this dusty, sinful world, we need that daily cleansing of the Word of God to keep our fellowship sweet.

The Beauty Within

Inside that tent, the scene was breathtaking. To your left, the gold lampstand with its seven lamps burning brightly—the only light in the room. To your right, the table of showbread with twelve loaves, representing God's provision for the twelve tribes. Directly in front of the veil was the golden altar of incense, where the sweet fragrance would rise up, a beautiful type of the prayers of the saints ascending to the Father.

Then, behind that second veil, was the Holy of Holies. It contained the Ark of the Covenant, overlaid with gold, and the Mercy Seat with the cherubim. Inside the ark were the tablets of the Law. It's a striking image: the Law is inside the box, but the Mercy Seat is on top of it. Praise God that His mercy triumphs over judgment!

The Work Finished and the Glory Revealed

In verse 33, we see a significant phrase: *"So Moses finished the work."* When the work was finished according to the pattern God had given, something miraculous happened. *"Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."* The presence of God was

so heavy, so thick, and so holy that even Moses—the man who spoke to God face to face—was not able to enter. Can you imagine the scene? For the next forty years, the children of Israel lived with the visible manifest presence of God in their midst. A cloud by day to provide shade in the desert heat, and a pillar of fire by night to give light and warmth. When the cloud moved, they moved. When it stayed, they stayed. They were a people led by the Spirit of God.

Practical Application & Challenge

We serve the same God today. While we don't have a physical tent made of badger skins and gold-overlaid boards, the New Testament tells us that we are now the temple of the Holy Spirit.

The challenge for us this week is simple but profound: Are you moving with the Cloud? Are you sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in your daily life? We often get so busy "doing" for God that we forget to "wait" on God. I want to challenge you to carve out time each day to simply sit in His presence. Open your Bible, not just for information, but for communion. Let the *"glory of the Lord"* fill the tabernacle of your heart. Let Him be the one who directs your steps—when to move, when to stay, and how to represent Him to a world that is wandering in the dark.

An Invitation to Life

Perhaps you feel like you're still in that "iron furnace" of Egypt. You feel the weight of your sin, the emptiness of the world, and you're looking at this "tabernacle" from the outside.

I have wonderful news for you. The sacrifice has already been made. Jesus Christ went to the cross and shed His precious blood to pay the price for every wrong thing you've ever done. He died in your place, taking the judgment we deserved. But the story didn't end at the grave. His resurrection declares with absolute authority that He is God, He is Savior, and He is Lord!

The veil has been torn in two. You don't have to stay on the outside anymore. He is inviting you to come in—to be forgiven, to be washed, and to have His Spirit live within you. If you want to move from darkness into His marvelous light, I invite you to give your life to Jesus right now. Simply acknowledge your need for Him, believe that He died and rose again for you, and ask Him to be the Lord of your life.