

For GC Discussion

- What should be our response to the truth that we now live under the New Covenant not the Old?
- What part do we have to play in allowing the gifting of every single member of the church flourish?
- What is the biggest lesson you have learnt in studying the book of Exodus?

Notes and Questions



Week 13: Conclusion

Exodus Chapters 35-40

This Weeks Summary

This week we conclude our studies in Exodus as the people complete the construction of the tabernacle following their fall into idolatry last week. The glory of God descends putting the seal of His presence as He continues to lead His people forward.

For Study:

Here is a reminder of some of the main events of the book of Exodus to help remind ourselves of all we've learnt.

God Prepares His Deliverer	Chapter 2:1-15
God Hears His People's Cry	Chapter 2:23-25
God Calls Moses	Chapter 3:1-14
Pharaoh's Heart is Hard	Chapter 5:1-9
The Final Plague	Chapter 12:1-13
The Red Sea	Chapter 14:1-31
The Lord Provides	Chapter 16:1-8
The Law is Given	Chapter 20:1-21
The Covenant Confirmed	Chapter 24:1-8
The Tabernacle	Chapter 25:1-9
The Golden Calf	Chapter 32:1-14

For Worship: Listen to **'No Longer a Slave'** by Bethel Music. You can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.

This week our text sees the people complete the construction of the tabernacle - putting it together just as God had commanded. He has clearly forgiven His people as His glory descends over the tent created as the representation of His presence among His people. Here are a few things we can learn from this week's text:

An Inconsistent Response

Last week we left God's people still reeling from their biggest failure yet after having been rescued from Egypt. Their idolatry caused judgment to fall on them, but thankfully, in response to Moses' intercession, God promised His continued presence with them as they went on their onward journey. The next thing that takes place is that Moses calls for an offering from the people for the construction of the tabernacle God has given the instructions for. Not so long ago the people were worshiping a golden idol, and their hearts seemed far from God, but now their response to Moses' request is overwhelming. The people aren't reluctant givers, far from it - the offerings for the tabernacle pour in until there is more than enough for the construction, and the people have to be told to stop bringing their contributions.

I feel like these events summarise well the reality of the Old Covenant and the position of the people living under the law. Were these people God-haters, or even those who were indifferent to God like many we see around us - no, many of them were not - they worshipped, loved and honoured the God who brought them out of Egypt. Did they have the power though to back up their stated desire to do everything that God wanted them to do - no, they clearly did not, and they stumble and fall many times during their time in the desert. It reminds me of the statement Jesus makes to His disciples - the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. This is a huge part of what it means to live under the New Covenant where God says He will deliver us from our heart of stone that brings so much inconsistency, and He will put in a new heart of flesh, indwelling us by His Spirit (Ezekiel 36). He promises to give us the power to now be different - not perfect, but delivered from the endless inconsistencies of those living in the Old Testament - we are free from sin (Romans 6), and though we may take time to fully learn to walk in that freedom, it doesn't make it any less real. As we've thought about already, the presence of God is with us in a far greater way than it was ever with the people in the Old Testament, but the old truth then begins to apply - to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48) - may the Lord help us to truly walk in the reality of His presence that He has given us, and display the ministry of righteousness to the world.

Gifted to Encourage Worship

Once the people have brought their offerings for the tabernacle, the construction can begin, and Moses calls two people in particular - Bezalel and Oholiab to be involved in the work. Why these two men - because the Bible says they had been gifted by God to do this kind of work, and to construct the tabernacle exactly according to God's instructions. They also have a team of people drawn around them - again, those who have been given the skill to carry out the work, and also the desire to be involved as well. It's an early glimpse into the way God was going to cause His church to function in our own time. Moses has already been told off for trying to do too much himself in earlier chapters, and this task too has nothing to do with Moses - God had given the gifts, skills, and abilities needed to exactly the right people to get the job done exactly as He wanted it. Moses had to take his hands off this task and leave it to those who God has prepared to take care of it.

It's exactly the same in the church - the Bible makes it clear God has given all of His children gifts - all of us have a role to play in the life and mission of the church. Sometimes we have to be like Moses and resist the urge to become too controlling - allowing others to step up into the work and ministry that God has called them to. Our church will only be the church God wants it to be if we allow everyone to play their part, and move as far away as we can from the traditional model of a handful of people doing most of the work. Sometimes it's a case of us needing to step up and serve, not allowing others to carry the weight of things that we have been gifted for by God. Let's not hide away the gifts and skills the Lord has given us, but rather take the risk of stepping out in faith, trusting that where He has gifted us, He will use us for the good of His church, and the salvation of those outside.

The Glory of God

As the tabernacle is completed, the glory of God comes down as setting His seal on the work that had been done - the people had created a tabernacle for worship, and where God is worshipped His glory inhabits. It doesn't happen for us in the same way, but look at this promise from Isaiah 58 - this is what God says will happen when we truly worship Him - not just in word and tradition but in Spirit and in truth, then He says:

'your light (shall) break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.'

May the Lord enable us to worship as He requires so His glory will be seen in us.