



## ***Before Life Group***

*Read Exodus 35-40*

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Stop for a moment and consider where we are and where we've been.

At the beginning of Exodus, the situation appeared fairly bleak for the Israelites. Enslaved and held captive by the power-hungry Pharaoh, the Israelites were facing their death and oppression. And God heard their prayers. He sent Moses and gave him specific instructions on how to handle the release of His people. In faith, Moses and the Israelites followed God and were saved. During their plight in the desert as the people feared for their safety the Lord provided for them in miraculous ways. Again, in faith, Moses and the people of God followed instructions for their own salvation.

Now, the presence of God had presented Himself before Moses and shook the very foundations of the mountain on which He stood. He gave them the law for how the world was intended to work and it was a blessing to the people. In faith, Moses and the Israelites followed God and were saved. While God had descended to earth to meet His people, He wanted more. So, He commissioned the building of the tabernacle, where He would live in the midst of them. Simply arriving on a mountain top would not be good enough. God's desire was to save and be with His people. The motivation of God has always been love and the response to a loving God has always been obedience.

The details of the tabernacle and all of its pieces were highly detailed. There would be the actual building of the tabernacle and the tent as a whole made out of the finest materials. The Ark of the Covenant would house the law of God and would be highly important throughout the history of Israel. The table, the lamp stand, and the altar of incense carried out important priestly functions for the intercession of the priests on behalf of the people. Furthermore, even the priestly garments were to be carried out to exact specifications. The Lord empowered His people to accomplish the task by the power of the Spirit. In faith, Moses and the Israelites followed God. "So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded." ([Exodus 36:1, NIV](#)).

As we arrive at the end of the book of Exodus, it doesn't end with the fanfare and conclusion that you would expect. The people do not take hold of the Promised Land but are still wandering the desert. Nor is there a sense that the story is complete but is rather just becoming. Exodus does not resolve the story God's people because the story is not about God's people. The story is about God and the divine rescue mission for His people. At the end of Exodus is God saving His people and coming to live with them and tabernacle with them. In the case of the Israelites, they obeyed the Lord with all of His commands to build His tabernacle.

Even in their obedience, God provided a way for His people, empowering them by His Spirit. All of this was a display of the glory of the Lord that would be made clear throughout the world.

## The Spirit of The Lord

With all the details that were needed for the tabernacle and its corresponding component, the Israelites would require the work of a skilled craftsman. Being tasked with building the place where God would reside requires holiness and perfection. There would need to be the utmost of care of dedication in crafting every piece. The details required were highly ornate and stylized, each one telling the story of God's intervention with the people He loves. For the story to be told in perfection, it would require the perfect hand of God.

The works of the tabernacle would be done by human humans but with divine intervention. "Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 'and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills." ([Exodus 35:30-31, NIV](#)) The Lord gifted and empowered Bazalel and Oholiab with the ability to not only craft the masterpieces required, but the ability to teach others how to do so in the process. The Spirit of the Lord fell upon the two servants and the result was a generational impact that paved the way for the coming Lord. For the task set before the Israelites, it would take the Spirit of God to complete the mission of God.

Every Christian who is following God is on the same mission for their lives. The world needs to see the Glory of the Lord expressed through our lives. Yet with every task given, God comes in our midst to provide us with a solution. The tasks and mission of God can only be achieved by a God. The goal of success is righteousness and holiness. We, as members of mankind, simply put cannot do this on our own. An unholy thing cannot make something else holy. Only a Holy thing can make another thing Holy. Apart from God, an unholy mankind cannot make ourselves Holy. Only God can.

Thus, in our efforts to pursue the plan of God in our daily lives, we have been given the Spirit of God to equip and empower us. The Holy Spirit crafts life in its perfected and intended form. For a God given mission to rescue the world from the clutches of sin and death, our role can only be completed through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is by His guidance and His empowerment, we can see lives redeemed and eternities founded in the grace of God when we submit to the Spirit of the Lord. All of this for His Glory!

## The Glory of The Lord

After everything had been completed, the Glory of God that inhabited the tabernacle. All the hard work from the bigger design to the finer details were completed. Every detail of ornately crafted designs had been etched to their fullest extent, through the empowerment of the people. When the Israelites had done everything that had been commanded of them, the glory of the Lord fell on the tabernacle, inhabiting it completely. The presence of God was palpable. Even Moses would be unable to enter the Holy tabernacle of God without the proper protocol having been met. "Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle." ([Exodus 40:34-35, NIV](#)) For whatever special relationship that Moses had with God, even he would be unable to approach the Holiness of God. The fullness of the glory of the Lord was simply too much for any mere person to withstand.

Yet, this is precisely what made the actions of the Lord so special. God had come to man to guide them and safeguard their journey through the desert. "In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out—until the day it



lifted. So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.” ([Exodus 40:36-38, NIV](#)) The people were given the presence of the Lord to follow and His glory would go before them and lead them through whatever trials that would face.

You and I no longer have a tabernacle or even a temple building where God resides. This, however, does not mean that the glory of the Lord has departed. Like Bezalel and Oholiab, God gives us His Spirit. Yet rather than a physical building or tabernacle, God has claimed us as His home. 'Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?' ([1 Corinthians 3:16, NIV](#)). God resides within us in this New Covenant. Our very lives bear the Glory of the Lord who desires to know us more and have us know Him. What we do and where we go proclaim and give witness to the magnificence of a God who rescues and redeems His people.

We too have the option of following God's Glory. Like the Israelites, His Glory will guide us through the deserts we face. He will be a constant presence as God desires to know us more and more. He will lead us out of slavery, defeat, and death while creating the true life that we were intended to have. Our souls and our bodies were intended to be inhabited by the Lord. The glory of God will guide us, sometimes through what appears to be difficult situations, but the glory of God will always guide us in the right direction. Our choice is whether or not we follow the glory of the Lord. The world will do everything in its power to make God seem less appealing, but as the Israelites learned, there is safety and protection in the Glory of the Lord. We all have the distinguished honor of bearing the glory of the Lord as he tabernacles with us and in us and the world, will see His glory as God's hand extends through ours.

## Discussion Questions

Read [Exodus 35:30-35](#) and [Exodus 40:34-38](#)

1. Where do you see the Spirit of God in the display of the holiness and perfection of the tabernacle? How is this holiness achieved? What role does mankind play? What role does God play?
2. How does obedience serve as a response to the love of God? Why does this reaction make sense in the scope of the story of God?
3. What are God's intentions for His people? What is God craving from those whom He loves?
4. When have you had to rely on the Spirit to accomplish the task that God has set before you?
5. How do our bodies serve as tabernacles and temples of the Lord? What does it mean that we are the temple of the Lord?
6. Why can it be difficult to follow the guiding of the Lord? What are the common temptations and distractions we face?
7. What benefit is there in following the presence of God? How does the story of Exodus show us that the glory of God is one worth following?

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### **About the Author.**

*Pastor Daniel Burton lives in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. In May 2015, Daniel graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with his Master of Divinity. It was here that he began to explore his passion for Theology and deeper exploration of the word of God. Daniel believes that, at its core, Theology should be fun. Check out more of his work at <http://thegospeloutpost.com/>*

