

Pastor Jim Jackson, 8/28/16

Exodus: Finding Freedom, pt. 28—The Tabernacle is Erected

Exodus 40:1-38

Moses puts the TABERNACLE up

Exactly one year to the day since Israel was rescued by God from Egypt, Moses and his assistants assemble the tabernacle (Ex. 13:3, 4). Though His presence fills the universe, God chose to give his people a location of corporate worship where He would dwell (Ex. 29:44, 45). Individual worship should never take the place of corporate worship. *Christianity is fraternity—while we are saved individually, we are connected corporately* (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 12:27; Heb. 10:25)! The tabernacle (Heb. *mish-kawn*, ‘residence/dwelling’) was a tent structure and all its elements had functional as well as symbolic meanings to the life of Jesus (John 1:14). The outer fabric wall dictated the separation between a holy God and all of sinful humanity with one gate (75x150 ft.; John 10:9; Rom. 3:23). Upon entry, first was the bronze altar to accept an animal whose blood was shed to forgive sin (Lev. 1:4; 17:11; Heb. 10:3-10). Next, the bronze basin held water where the priest would wash his hands and feet to cleanse himself before approaching God (Ex. 30:20; Heb. 10:22). Entering the tabernacle or ‘tent of meeting’ (15x45 ft.), in the front room (Holy Place), to the left, was a menorah or 7-candle lampstand to give light, shaped like budding almond branches symbolizing the Tree of Life (Ex. 25:31; John 8:12). On the right, a table held 12 flat loaves of bread eaten by the priests, showing God’s willingness to commune with forgiven sinners (Ex. 25:23, 30; Matt. 26:26). At the back was an altar to burn incense, representing the prayers of God’s people (Ex. 30:1; Rev. 8:3, 4). Next, a thick curtain separated the Holy of Holies which contained the Ark of the Covenant where God’s presence dwelt and was only accessed by the High Priest once a year on the Day of Atonement (Ex. 25:10; Heb. 10:19-22). *The closer you get to God the more holy you must become* (2 Cor. 5:21)!

The GLORY of God comes down

At the moment Moses completed the tabernacle, God descended and His shining glory filled it (Heb. *maw-lay*, verb form describes a dynamic, ongoing reality like radiation) so heavily that Moses couldn’t enter! Religion without God is empty ritual, and gathering without God is a social club (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 3:17). *God’s presence cannot be fabricated or manipulated—there is no real Christianity without the real Christ present!*