



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N46 Nov. 13, 2022

WAY OUT

"The Law of Final Stress"

Exodus 40:34-38

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Personal God

I believe God is involved
in and cares about my
daily life.

*"I lift up my eyes to the
hills – where does my help
come from? My help comes
from the LORD, the Maker
of heaven and earth."*

Psalms 121:1-2



What leads
you daily?

Clouds often get a bad rap in our lingo. Clouds are frequently described as dark and foreboding. Gathering clouds usually mean high winds, heavy rains and floods. Swirling clouds form tornados or hurricanes. Cloudy days are less desirable than sunny days. A cloud hanging over you is a bad sign. Many bad influences can cloud your judgment. Someone with their head in the clouds is not going to be of much help in a pinch. Even the claim that your cloud has a silver lining is an admission that most of your cloud is dark and unpleasant. Being on "cloud 9" may be positive, but most of our modern expressions related to clouds are negative.

Clouds in a dry, arid desert take on an entirely new and welcome presence. If you are melting from the direct rays of the sun and the desert wind is roasting you without relief, a cloud could be exactly what is needed to save the day. In sand dunes with no discernible trails, a cloud and its shade may be the best navigation tool available. At night, a pillar of fire could fend off predators, letting intruders know that light was alive in the middle of the camp. A cloud in the desert is a friend and not a foe.

Israel was led by God's cloud out of dryness of Egypt to rocky foothills of Mount Sinai. On the mountain, the cloud served as a sign of God's presence and as a barrier to his holiness. When it was time for God's people to leave Sinai, God's cloud descended from the mountain and settled upon the tabernacle that God had ordered to be built. The cloud that frightened the people was now coming to dwell with the people. This cloud was also identified with God's glory (Ex. 40:35). The word for "glory" can be translated "heaviness,"

"weightiness," or "magnificence." The cloud of God was not a light mist or a whimsical puff of smoke. God's cloud filled the tabernacle so much that no one, not even Moses could enter. God's cloud in the tabernacle was a sign of his presence residing with his people. His presence would bring joy to the hearts of those who feared his departure (Ex. 33:4). This cloud would lead them in the day and provide light for them at night (Ex. 40:38). The Exodus cloud was a visible and constant reminder of God's presence with his people.

Clouds in the New Testament revealed the transcendent Son of God at his Transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-8; Mk. 9:7). Clouds received Christ in his ascension (Acts 1:9) and clouds will envelop the glorious return of Christ in his second coming (Mt. 26:24; Mk. 13:26; Rev. 1:7). New Testament clouds serve as the imagery of a clearly visible and indisputable return of Christ. As confident as the Israelites were of God's presence with them because of the tabernacle cloud, we as Christians can be confident that Jesus' return will be visible, indisputable, and impossible to conceal or counterfeit.

Until Christ returns upon the clouds, we can be confident as Christians that God is dwelling with us through his Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God, though unseen, indwells us as believers (Gal. 4:6), helping us (John 14:16), teaching us (John 14:26), empowering us (Acts 1:8), interceding with us (Rom. 8:26), gifting us (1 Cor. 12:4) and maturing us with his virtues (Gal. 5:22-23). As the Israelites were personally led by the cloud, God is ever with believers leading us as we "keep in step" with the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:26). Are we following his lead?

Read Exodus 40:34-38

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses could not enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

36 In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they would set out; 37 but if the cloud did not lift, they did not set out – until the day it lifted. 38 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.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle each use of the word “cloud” in Ex. 40:34-38.
- Underline the word “glory” in Ex. 40:34-35.
- Draw a line connecting the two names of the same structure found in Ex. 40:34-35.
- Double underline the phrase that explains why Moses could not enter in Ex. 40:35.
- Place a box around the word “travels” in Ex. 40:36-38.
- Underline each use of the word “lifted” in Ex. 40:36-38.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What happened before the covering of the cloud and the glory filling the tabernacle (see Ex. 40:1-33)?
2. What had been the experience of Israel with “the cloud” before (Ex. 13:21-22; 14:19-24; 24:15-18; 33:9-10)?
3. Why was the place where the cloud settled given a double name?
4. Why could Moses no longer enter the tent of meeting?
5. What is the significance of the cloud “settling on” and “filling” the tabernacle?
6. Where was the tabernacle when the cloud was at rest upon it (Numbers 2:2ff)? What does this location suggest about God’s relationship with Israel?
7. What determined when the Israelites would travel? What does this indicate about God’s part in the movement of the people?
8. How do you reconcile Ex. 40:34-38 with God’s pronouncements in Ex. 33:1-6?
9. How is the original tabernacle like or unlike the incarnation of Jesus (John 1:14)?
10. How does this account (Ex. 40:34-38) influence our understanding of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:18-20)?

Commentary On The Text

The final verses of Exodus (Ex. 40:34-38) serve as a loud crescendo to the masterful composition of the fulfillment of a number of God's promises to his people. From the loud cries of suffering slaves, through the frightful wails of life-threatening plagues, to the thundering percussion of Pharaoh's pursuing armies, to the tumult of a rebellious people at the base of Mount Sinai, God now finishes his score with the movement of the cloud from the ominous mountain down to the tent of meeting with his people. So glorious is this finale that many see Exodus 40:34-38 as a high form of Hebrew poetry. "These verses, which are phrased in an elevated, poetic style, depict the manifestation of the Divine Glory in expressions that parallel those used at the end of chapter 24 to portray God's presence on Mount Sinai. The Tabernacle is a kind of miniature Sinai, which can be transported from place to place, in order to accompany the children of Israel in their wanderings and to serve as a palpable token of the Divine Presence in their midst throughout their journeyings. Just as the Lord had revealed Himself to them on Mount Sinai in the awe-inspiring theophany of the third month, even so He manifests Himself to them now, and will reveal Himself in the future, in the sanctuary that they have made to Him" (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 484). The interchange of "tent of meeting" and "tabernacle" and the repetition of "cloud," "glory," and "fire" are artistic expressions of Hebraic poetic parallelism.

The "cloud" that had previously led the nation from Egypt to Sinai now dwelt or "settled" in the middle of the nation in the tabernacle. The cloud on the mountain that had once separated the people from God now moved into the middle of the camp (Num. 2:2). God "camped" with the people or "tabernacled" with them. His presence was constant and somewhat tangible in the cloud by day and the fire by night. His glory was still mysterious but it was no longer far away on a mountain top (Ex 24:13-18) or outside the camp in a distant tent of meeting (Ex. 33:7). This movement of God from the mountain to the center of the camp is a complete reversal of God's thoughts regarding the discipline of this people (Ex. 32-33). God did bring judgment upon his "stiff-necked" people, but through Moses' mediation, God agreed to be with his people and lead them personally into the promised land. God's glory was manifest in his mercy (Ex. 33:18-19; 34:5-7) by forgiving and dwelling with his fallen but forgiven people.

This move of God from the mountain to the tent signified other changes for Moses and his people. Moses could not enter the tabernacle that he had

helped manufacture and consecrate. "The presence of God which once abode on Mount Sinai, now dwells in the sanctuary and accompanies Israel on her way. The notice of Moses' inability to enter the tent of meeting would appear to point to the new state of affairs which now operates in the cult. Moses' older role before the tent of meeting (Ex. 33:7) has been replaced by a new priestly role which he shares with Aaron (Lev. 9:23)" (Brevard S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*, 638). For the people to meet with God, priests offering sacrifices would now be required. God's holiness could only be accessed through atonement. Moses could not atone for his people (Ex. 32:30-34). God required priestly service as outlined in Leviticus.

The profound imagery of God dwelling with his people in the tabernacle is beautifully replicated in the New Testament. The Old Testament gives us many illustrations of God's character and purpose (1 Cor 10:1-11). John, in the opening verses of his Gospel, borrows the vocabulary and imagery of the glory of God from Exodus when he described the Word who became flesh and "made his dwelling among us" (Jn. 1:14). This "dwelling" could be translated literally "he tabernacled among us." John continued to discuss the "glory" they saw in Christ and that no man saw God at any time except for Jesus as the one who revealed him. Jesus in his incarnation is the presence of God coming down from the glories of heaven to dwell or "tabernacle" with us. Jesus is the glory of God coming to dwell with man.

The tabernacle imagery continues in the New Testament with the image of the body of the believer becoming the habitation or the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the tabernacle became the temple once the kings of Israel erected a more permanent place of worship in Jerusalem. In the New Testament, Paul instructed believers that their physical bodies have become the "temple" of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:15). The presence of the Spirit of God indwelling the believer encourages personal holiness and worship of the one true God. As the cloud filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:35), so the believers should be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18-20) to overcome temptations and to be full of worship, praise and thanksgiving. We understand that the Spirit of God is living in the believer, giving life and victory over sin and the consequences of death (Rom. 8:10-17). Like the miracle of God dwelling with Israel in tabernacle, we as believers in Christ can experience God's presence personally through the Holy Spirit living in us and daily leading us to serve him and be his witnesses.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 34 *tent/tabernacle* “Verse 34 is clearly poetic in structure (2:2/ /2:2), its two parts corresponding to each other in conformity with the laws of poetic parallelism. ³⁴ *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle* — entirely like the theophany on Mount Sinai: ‘and the cloud covered the mountain; and the glory of the Lord dwelt upon Mount Sinai’ (24:15–16)” (Cassuto, 484).

v. 35 *not enter* “Moses was barred from the tabernacle — the one he had just inspected and set up, thus having been all around its component parts and surely inside it when the furniture was placed there. Why, then, could he not enter once God had entered? The answer is that the tabernacle was now Yahweh’s house and no one else’s. It was no more appropriate now for Moses to enter the tabernacle, even though he had been all through it as its building supervisor, than it would be for a house builder in modern times to retain a key and enter at will a house that he had built once it was sold to its occupying owner. When the new owner enters, the new house is exclusively his — not the builder’s. Later Moses and Aaron would be able to enter the tabernacle, and provision would be made for the high priest to enter it, even the holy of holies, periodically. This was possible because the glory cloud did not continue to stay inside the tabernacle but mainly hovered on top of it, as vv. 36–38 state overtly. But by the present act of occupying his house through his glory and temporarily keeping all others out, God showed Moses and all Israel that the house was now his and his alone and indeed his truly and entirely, the very thing they had built it to become” (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, Vol. 2, The New American Commentary, 792).

v. 35 *settled* “The cloud, first seen in Exodus 13 at the sea, and last seen by the people on top of Mount Sinai in Exodus 24, settled into the midst of the camp. The verb ‘settled’ (*shakan*) is from the same root as ‘tabernacle’ (*mishkan*) and means ‘dwell,’ ‘abide,’ or ‘settle down.’ God had come to live among them. These last five verses mention the cloud, a sign of the Lord’s abiding presence, six times. It was the primary visible sign of the Lord’s glory (13:21–22; 14:19–24; 16:7–10; 24:16–18; 33:9–10, 22; 34:5)” (James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 330).

v. 36 *travels* “The closing image of the presence of God in Exod 40:36–38 is not of the stationary Glory of Yahweh in the cult, but of the divine cloud

leading the Israelites in their wilderness march toward the promised land of Canaan. The cloud provides rhythm to the life journey of the Israelites. It determines when the people march and when they rest. It hovers over the tabernacle by day, while at night the divine fire within it appears. The theology of the cloud, its relationship to the tabernacle, and its role in leading the Israelites is developed further in Num 9:15–23, which provides a parallel to Exod 40:34–38. In both texts the author relates two aspects of divine presence, the presence of God as divine Glory in the tabernacle (40:34–35; Num 9:15–16) and the cloud as a guide in the Israelites’ journey (Exod 40:36–38; Num 9:17–23). The separation of the cloud and the Glory of Yahweh continues in the theophany within the tabernacle, allowing the cloud to take on the role of wilderness guide in 40:36–38. Numbers 9:15–23 provides further commentary on the relationship of the Glory of Yahweh and the cloud, greatly expanding the role of the cloud as wilderness guide. The text emphasizes the variation in the routine of travel. Rest periods may include one night (Num 9:21), days, a month, or even longer periods of time (Num 9:22). The imagery of travel with periods of unequal rest may refer to the Priestly cultic calendar (Leviticus 23; Numbers 28–29), where distinct feasts require different periods of rest” (Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary, 766).

v. 36 *set out* “God’s presence in Israel’s midst, however, does not give Israel control over God. Israel will not manipulate a God who has now become ‘available.’ Instead, God has come to take the initiative in leading the covenant people. At special and crucial times, Israel has already experienced God’s guidance through the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (13:21f.; 14:19f., 24). Now this guidance is promised to Israel as an ongoing form of divine initiative and care. God will initiate Israel’s setting out and resting (40:36–37)” (Waldemar Janzen, *Exodus*, Believers Church Bible Commentary, 424).

v. 38 *fire* “Fire in the tabernacle at night recalls also his protective presence in Egypt (14:19–20), his fiery presence at the bush (3:1–3), and the lights in the holy place. Israel had called out for gods to go before them to lead them in their darkest hour of rebellion (32:1). Now, in the sight of the entire house of Israel, he openly leads them” (Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, vol. 2, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary, 429).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Seek God daily as he dwells in your midst and follow him as he leads you.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

We did it! We've spent the past year studying the amazing story of God's rescue and redemption of the Israelites, and through it all we've seen hints and shadows of Christ our Redeemer. Your kids have learned important Bible narratives such as God appearing to Moses in a burning bush, the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, God providing manna, and the ten commandments, to name a few. Through it all we've marveled at God's holiness, provision, faithfulness, compassion and love. So, now what? How can we use what we've learned in our parenting? While we want to raise obedient and compliant children, what we've really got is a bunch of Israelites. I believe our kids want to do what's right and follow God's commands, but, like the Israelites, their sin nature takes over and they complain, disobey, or turn away from what they know to be right. Though the Israelites turned away time and time again, God proved Himself to be merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love and faithfulness. Is that how you describe your parenting? When your child makes mistakes (and they will) do you automatically yell at them or are you overflowing with compassion and love? Are you more concerned with behavior modification than your child's heart condition? As we close the book of Exodus, let's be mindful of the parenting lessons we've learned. Let's be slow to anger. Let's show great mercy and patience. Let's love our kids deeply as we teach them to run to the Lord, our compassionate and merciful Father. We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 40:34-38

1. Skim the titles for Exodus 34-40. What's been happening in our story?
2. How did the Israelites know when to travel?
3. What is different about this tent of meeting and the one in Exodus 33:7-11?

What Do You Think?

How was God's presence with the Israelites during this time and how is He with us today?

What Do You Do?

Tell the story of the Israelites! Write a short story about God's rescue and redemption. Share how God can rescue and redeem people today.

CORE COMPETENCY: Personal God

I believe God cares about everything in my life.

MEMORY VERSE: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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