

Ex. 40:34-38 “Glory for the Journey”

For the Children: When people drive in unfamiliar territory – for example, when on holiday in a foreign country – they usually need help. Since they don't know their way around, they look at maps, ask the local people for help, or use a navigation system. Israel received help to travel from Mt. Sinai to the Promised Land, by God Himself, who sent a cloud to move onto and off the Tabernacle. We also need help to go through life in such a way that we end up with the Lord, rather than apart from Him. He gives that help because of the work of the Lord Jesus. He gives it in His Word, which His Spirit helps us believe and act upon. **Questions:** What is the *glory* of the Lord? How do we know God is present with us? Would you rather be guided by a cloud you can see, or by God's Word – and why?

Introduction:

First Point: The Glory of the Lord Consecrating the Tabernacle

- 1) Ending with Glory: Exodus begins with Israel enslaved and estranged from Yahweh. It ends with God's glory present in their midst, once they have a mediator (Moses) and a dwelling place for God (the Tabernacle). There is a strong emphasis on God's presence and glory throughout
- 2) Tabernacle Completion: God did not come down to show His glory and dwell in their midst until the Tabernacle was completed, according to His specifications. This was because Israel needed a barrier to prevent sinners from coming too close to the holy God; to test Israel's obedience in making the Tabernacle; and because the Tabernacle pointed to Christ, without Whom God would not draw near to sinners. Note the connection between v. 33 and 34
- 3) Covering and Filling: Then the cloud came down upon the Tabernacle and God's glory filled it. See 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24; 16:10; 19:9,16; 24:15,18; 34:5; 33:9-10 on this cloud. It symbolized God's glory and presence. Now that this presence was back in the middle of the camp, Israel knew the covenant they'd broken was restored. They needed this for the rest of the journey to Canaan

Second Point: The Glory of the Lord Restricting the Tabernacle

- 1) Unable to Enter: Yet now Moses was unable to enter the Tabernacle, because God's glory filled it. This is despite his earlier face-to-face contact with God, in which he had passed through the glory-cloud. But now God's glory was too greatly manifested for a sinful man to draw near. Moses and others would have to wait for God to confine the display of His glory to the Most Holy Place. Even then, Moses and others would have to wait for God to invite them to enter His House
- 2) A Danger of Presumptuousness: Sinners may never presume a right to enter God's presence without an invitation. Now, we not only have God *among* us - as He was then in Israel's camp - but also within us by His Spirit (Jer. 31, Ezk. 36). But we must not presume an inherent right to this closeness. It is by grace. If we forget that, we will no doubt feel that even ongoing sin should not affect our closeness to God. To enjoy the privilege of closeness to God, we need to remember how great a privilege it is!

Third Point: The Glory of the Lord Leading His People

- 1) Total Guidance: Israel enjoyed total, visible guidance from God, day and night – by the pillar of cloud and fire over the Tabernacle. The cloud indicated God's guidance as to when they should move out, and in what direction; and when they should remain at camp. This continued “throughout their journeys” to Canaan
- 2) Guidance on Our Pilgrimage: Israel's journey to Canaan is a “type” of our journey to the heavenly country of which we are citizens. Paul tells us to press on to this goal, keeping in mind that we are not really citizens of this world. See Phlp. 3. We need as much guidance as Israel did on the way to Canaan, because we easily forget who we are and where we are going. We receive even greater guidance - though it is less “visible” – by God's completed Word, His Holy Spirit indwelling, on the ground of the finished work of Christ. If, however, we do not give attention to His Word, and instead grieve His Spirit, we will not head where we need to

Conclusion: