

SESSION 4

THE PLACE OF MEETING

MAIN POINT

God dwells with His people and empowers them to serve Him.



EXODUS 40:1-11 • WORSHIP CENTERS ON HOLINESS

1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **2** “On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. **3** And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. **4** And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. **5** And you shall put the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. **6** You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, **7** and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. **8** And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court. **9** Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it may become holy. **10** You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that the altar may become most holy. **11** You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it.

EXODUS 40:12-15 • WORSHIP CENTERS ON SERVICE

12 “Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water **13** and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. **14** You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, **15** and anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may serve me as priests. And their anointing shall admit them to a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations.”

EXODUS 40:34-38 • WORSHIP CENTERS ON GOD’S PRESENCE

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. **35** And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. **36** Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. **37** But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. **38** For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

God dwells with His people and empowers them to serve Him.

1. WORSHIP CENTERS ON HOLINESS

READ EXODUS 40:1-11

In Exodus 40, Israel set up the tabernacle according to God's instructions. Once it was all in place, God told Moses to anoint everything inside the tabernacle so that it might be holy. In the new covenant, believers have been made holy and set apart for God as temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22).

WHY SHOULD WE THINK OF OUR WHOLE LIVES AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP?

A temple is a place of worship, so being a temple of the Holy Spirit makes our lives an act of worship. Worship isn't just what we do when we sing or when we come to church; it is a life set apart for God. It isn't merely about a place, like a church building, but about people filled by the Spirit of God wherever we go.

HOW SHOULD SEEING OUR BODIES AS A HOUSE OF WORSHIP FOR GOD MOTIVATE OUR FIGHT FOR HOLINESS?

The apostle Paul wrote extensively about using our bodies as vessels for holiness and offering our bodies to God in worship. He warned the Corinthian church to flee immorality because our bodies are God's temple and belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). He told the Roman church not to let sin rule their bodies (Rom. 6:12-13), but instead to offer their bodies as a living sacrifice to God, holy and pleasing to Him, as an act of worship (Rom. 12:1).

2. WORSHIP CENTERS ON SERVICE

READ EXODUS 40:12-15

God instructed Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests to God. They were set apart to serve the Lord. In the new covenant, believers are set apart as a priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6). Priests served the Lord through caring for the house of God and going to God on behalf of the people. In the new covenant, we use our access to God to intercede for others and we use our gifts to care for God's new house—His people.

HOW CAN ARE WORSHIP AND SERVICE RELATED? WHAT IS ONE WAY YOU COULD SERVE SOMEONE THIS WEEK?



EXODUS 40:1-11

40:1-11. “These items of furniture had a sacred purpose; their proximity to Yahweh’s symbolized presence in the holy of holies reflected that sacredness and required recognition by the anointing ceremony that they were part of the holiest place in the nation.”^[1]

EXODUS 40:12-15

40:12-15. “Aaron himself was anointed, and his sons were clothed in their priestly vestments (8:12–13). The anointing oil placed on Aaron probably indicated the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for the service of the Lord.”^[3]

40:12-15. “The material for the garments of the priests corresponds to the material used for the curtain and veil of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1–6, 31–37), which indicated not only a close association between them but also that the priesthood, like the tabernacle, was holy unto God.”^[3]



BIG QUESTION

**WHY DO WE NEED
TO LEARN ABOUT
THINGS LIKE THE OLD
TESTAMENT TABERNACLE
IF WE ARE SAVED BY
THE GOSPEL?**

The Old Testament was a “shadow of the good things to come” (Heb. 10:1), meaning it points to the gospel. We can grow in our understanding of Jesus and the gospel by looking back at the Old Testament. When we see that the purpose of the tabernacle was for God to reveal Himself among His people, we can get a better understanding of the incarnation. When we understand that the Israelites could only be near to God if they were atoned for through sacrifices, then we can better understand and appreciate what Jesus’ sacrifice has accomplished for us. These are just a few reasons why studying the old covenant still has value for us today.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

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Being a priest was about serving the Lord and His people. Since believers are priests—yes, all believers and not just pastors (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; Eph. 4:11-13)—we all have a calling to serve God through the church. God gives us various gifts and abilities that we can use in service to Him (teaching, serving, giving, encouraging, etc.) (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). When we find ways to serve, it is a blessing to the whole church.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE YOUR ACCESS TO GOD TO PRAY FOR OTHERS?

The focus of our priesthood is not about our independence from others (i.e. “I don’t need a priest because I have direct access to God myself.”). Rather, it is about how we can use our access to God to be a blessing to others. Levitical priests would go to God on behalf of the people. That’s what we should do as well. Help your students identify ways to intentionally and strategically pray for others as a regular part of their spiritual life.

3. WORSHIP CENTERS ON GOD’S PRESENCE

READ EXODUS 40:34-38

God’s presence filled the tabernacle. The tabernacle (and later, the temple) was the center of Hebrew worship. Psalm 100 instructed God’s people to enter His presence with singing (Ps. 100:2). Psalm 22 says that God is enthroned upon the praises of His people (Ps. 22:3). The proper response to God’s presence is worship, and we sense God’s presence in a special way when believers—the new covenant temple—gather together to worship.

HOW DOES WORSHIPING GOD WITH OTHER BELIEVERS HELP YOU EXPERIENCE GOD’S PRESENCE?

When we gather to sing about God, our attention is drawn to God and His presence in our lives. God is always with us, but corporate worship raises our awareness and awakens our senses to God’s nearness.

HOW MIGHT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP AT CHURCH BE AFFECTED IF YOU CONSIDERED GOD’S PRESENCE AS YOU SANG?

Often, we go through the motions as we sing. Our lips move, but our hearts are numb. We look disengaged and our thoughts are wandering. But what if you took a moment to think about the fact that the gathered church is a gathered temple of God? What if you sang as if God Himself were in the room? Your body language and focus would likely change if you worshiped like God was in the room.



EXODUS 40:34-38

40:34-38. God's presence was manifested among His people through the tabernacle in the old covenant. In the New Testament, God came to dwell with us through Jesus (John 1:14; Matt. 1:23). And through the new covenant, God dwells in His people through the Holy Spirit—for we are His temple (1 Cor. 3:16). We look forward to the day when we will dwell with God forever (1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 21:3).

40:34-38. "We began our study and said that we were going to see the gospel and how the story of Exodus, in a sense, is our story. Once, we were in bondage to sin, enslaved, under the sentence of death, but by taking shelter under the blood of the Lamb, God has delivered us. Now God is with us, leading us to the promised land. We will face challenges, obstacles, and temptations, but we know that God is faithful to His redeemed people. While we journey, we live by grace and forgiveness found not in a tabernacle but in Christ. One day we will see Jesus Christ, and there we will behold the glory of God forever."^[2]



ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

God's intention for humanity is that we be a kingdom of priests, not just a kingdom with priests. Although God set up the priestly system in the Old Testament due to the sinfulness of humanity and people's need for a mediator, His ultimate purpose is that we come to God directly, through the mediating work of Jesus Christ, thus eliminating the need of another priest. Because of the work of Christ on the cross, exemplified in the tearing of the curtain that prevented access into the holy of holies, Christians are free to approach God with boldness (Rom. 5:1-5; Heb. 4:14-16).

