

Christ in the Tabernacle  
A New Beginning  
Exodus 40

The purpose of this series has been to introduce us to Christ in the Tabernacle and to demonstrate his fulfilment of it in redemptive work on our behalf.

Hebrews 8:1-4 - *Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, <sup>2</sup> a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. <sup>3</sup> For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. <sup>4</sup> Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. <sup>5</sup> They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things.*

Everything about the Tabernacle with its priests and sacrifices, points to Jesus.

- a) Brazen altar – He is the ultimate sacrifice
  - Propitiation – covering
  - Expiation – taking away
- b) Brazen laver – He cleanses us from all sin
- c) Candlestick – He is the light of the world
- d) Shewbread – He is the bread of life
- e) Altar of Incense – He is our intercessor
- f) Ark of the covenant
  - He is the bread of life
  - He is the lawgiver and law-keeper
  - He is the resurrection
- g) Mercy Seat – He is the person in whom we meet God and receive mercy

The Tabernacle was a new beginning for Israel. The book of Exodus begins in Egypt, moves Israel through the wilderness and ends at Sinai. Israel has been introduced to their God and they have learned how to relate to him.

We have seen Israel cry to God and God answer. We have witnessed Pharaoh's persecution and God's liberation. We've read the law and seen how it all points to Jesus.

The end of the book of Exodus really points to a new beginning for Israel. God has taken 70 people, transformed them into a nation of millions and sent them on a global mission endeavor; to be a witness to the 7 nations in the Promised Land. The Tabernacle represents this new beginning, as Israel is a new creation.

*God created the world in six days, but he used forty to instruct Moses about the tabernacle.  
Little over one chapter was needed to describe the structure of the world,  
but six were used for the tabernacle.*

- Herman Witsius

This new creation and new beginning is of such importance that it required the space and time.

How does this new beginning in the creation of Israel point to the ultimate new beginning and the new creation of all things?

### **First: The Commands. 1-15**

There are eighteen commands in verses 1-15.

How did Moses respond?

Verse 16 - *This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did*

Where Adam and Eve failed to keep one command, Moses has kept eighteen. He has wholly obeyed God.

God is the architect of the tabernacle but Moses is the construction engineer.

- a) Egypt gave Israel their wealth to build the tabernacle

Exodus 12:35-36 - *The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. <sup>36</sup> And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.*

- b) God skilled workers to build the tabernacle (35-36)
- c) Many men helped erect the tabernacle for the first time

But time and again, it is Moses who is named – v 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, etc.

Verse 33 - *So Moses finished the work.*

Of course, just as Moses has given Israel a new beginning, a new creation of their relationship to God, Jesus does the same.

Moses is a forerunner of Jesus and Jesus is the ultimate Moses.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 - *The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen— <sup>16</sup> just as you desired of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, ‘Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire any more, lest I die.’ <sup>17</sup> And the LORD said to me, ‘They are right in what they have spoken. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. <sup>19</sup> And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.*

For instance: the Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as

- a) Messiah from the line of David,
- b) Immanuel – God with us
- c) A new teacher like Moses

Matthew never calls Jesus the new Moses. He doesn't do so by directly defining Jesus as Moses but by the indirect presentation of Jesus as Moses.

- a) Jesus went from Palestine into Egypt
- b) Jesus comes up out of Egypt to the Promised Land
- c) He is baptized to begin his PL ministry
- d) He immediately went into the wilderness for 40 days
- e) He presents a new law – the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew also arranges his book based on 5 of Jesus's teaching moments

- 1-3 - Introduction
- 4-7 – Sermon on the Mount (5-7)

Matthew puts the sermon in the larger context of the coming of a new prophet. Just prior to the sermon in Matt 4:12-17, Jesus hears John the Baptist has been thrown into prison. The significance of John's imprisonment can hardly be overestimated. Matthew 3 portrays John as an Old Testament prophet, yet John himself prophecies one greater than he is about to come (Matt 3:11-12). Matthew immediately identifies Jesus, through the account of his baptism, as the one who is greater than John (Matt 3:13-17).

When John the Baptist is arrested (Matt 4) and his ministry ends, Jesus begins his own ministry (Matt 5). Something important has occurred. The last Old Testament prophet (Matt 11:13-14) has passed from the scene and a new era has begun with the new prophet.

Second, the first words of Matthew's prologue to the sermon also recall Mosaic imagery. The words "he went up on the mountain" are a verbatim quotation of Exodus 19:3, the description is of Moses ascending Sinai to receive the law. As others have noted, this particular phrase occurs only three times in the Greek Old Testament. Each of the three times it is in reference to Moses' ascent to Sinai (Exodus 19:3; 24:18; 34:4). As such, Jesus is the new Moses come to teach God's people, God's law.

- 8-10 – Sending of the (10)
- 11-13 – Parables of the kingdom (13)
- 14-20 – The Upside-Down Nature of the kingdom (18)
- 21-25 – The Clash of kingdoms (23-25)

In all of these teachings, but specifically in Matthew 5:17-20 Jesus lays out his own relationship to the Law.

Matthew 5:17-20 - *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. <sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus had not come to abolish the Law or to set it aside. He said that not a jot or tittle should be removed from the Law. His life stood in continuity with it. He was, in fact, the fulfillment of the Law. Matthew is at pains throughout his Gospel to show that Jesus fulfills the Law. You can hardly read a chapter without seeing the fulfillment formula, “this happened to fulfill what was written by the prophet...” The motif of presenting Jesus as the new Moses is part of that program. Jesus is not setting Moses and his Law aside. Rather, Jesus is the new Moses and shows us what God had always intended with the Law. I

#### 26-28 – Climax

What do these five teaching moments remind us of? The first five books of the Bible written by Moses, the Torah.

Which brings us back to Exodus 40:33 - *So Moses finished the work.*

Just as Moses completed the work that gave Israel access to God, Jesus completes his work that gives Israel new, ultimate and eternal access to God.

But what about this new creation idea? In the same way, God spoke, “Let there be...” and it was, so God commanded the tabernacle be built to his specifications and it was.

#### **Second: The Calendar**

The night Israel enjoyed the Passover, God restarted their year

Exodus 12:2 - *This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you*

The calendar reminds Israel that they are a new creation, no longer bound by Egypt. They have a new beginning.

The tabernacle was erected on that same day, one year later

Exodus 40:2 - *On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.*

*Verse 17 - In the first month in the second year [since Passover], on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected.*

The tabernacle was initially erected on the first day of the first month of a new year. It had been exactly one year since God told Moses that he was restarting the Jewish calendar

The prophets looked at this new creation, new beginning and praised it, using it as a frame of reference for each day being new with God and praying for that same love for God as the first day of the first month of the first year when Israel was born out of Egypt

- a) Restoration Ps 23:3; 80:3; 7
- b) Revival Ps 85:6; Is 57:15; Ho 6:2
- c) Renewal Ps 51:10; 103:5; Is 40:31; La 5:21

Hebrews 9:9-10 - *According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,<sup>10</sup> but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.*

Compare this to the work of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17 - *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

### **Third: Consecration**

The consecration of the tabernacle and the priests demonstrates that Israel is a new creation, enjoying a new beginning with God.

Aaron and his sons are representatives of Israel. What happens to them is representative of what God is doing with all Israel.

Exodus 40:12-15 – *Aaron and his 4 sons are to wash and be robed to serve as high priest and priests.*

Exodus 29:35 - *Thus you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Through seven days shall you ordain them,*

It took seven years to build the tabernacle (1 Kings 6:38) and then its dedication took seven days (1 Kings 8:65; 2 Chron 7:8-9).

At the end of this seven-day consecration, Aaron and his sons started the sacrificial system and Israel had rest with their God.

The seven days of creation led to the Sabbath in which God rested, the consecration of the tabernacle led to Israel resting in God, safe from Egypt and safe with him.

#### **Fourth: The Cloud**

Genesis 1:2 - *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Exodus 40:34-35 - *Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup> 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.*

Just like the Spirit of God took up residence on the face of the earth and gave it form and fulness, so the Spirit's descent on the tabernacle demonstrated that God was once again, as in Eden, in the midst of his people.

Psalms 104:30 - *When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.*

That same life-giving Spirit Who fell on creation and gave it life, descended to the tabernacle and gave Israel a new beginning as his new creation, a people for himself.

The same is true of us as NT believers –

2 Corinthians 6:16b - *For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

Like OT Israel, we are called to

Galatians 5:25 - *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit*

Of course, the Spirit's descent looks forward to Christ's first descent

John 1:14 - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory*

#### **Conclusion:**

The commands, the calendar, the consecration and the cloud all point to the new creation of Israel as God's new people, a people he was preparing for a new home.

In the same way that we, God's church, are being made new, so God is creating a new home for us

Revelation 21:1-4 - *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place<sup>[a]</sup> of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people,<sup>[b]</sup> and God himself will be*

with them as their God.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

v 10 - And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,<sup>11</sup> having the glory of God

vs 22-26 - And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations.

Revelation 22:1-6 - Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life<sup>[b]</sup> with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. <sup>6</sup> And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true.”

