



GOD'S PRESENT GLORY

EXODUS 40:34-38



Written by

ANDREW KEASLING

Executive Pastor

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle.” Exodus 40: 34

If I tell you to think about God, what do you picture? Is it just very bright light coming from behind the clouds? Is it someone who looks like a man with white hair and beard? Is it something else? For Israel during this time in their history, they had a common picture, one of cloud and fire.

Our passage for this morning finds us at the end of the book of Exodus. Here we find God's people in the wilderness still longing for the Promised Land having received His commands and putting them into practice. God has informed them how to have relationship with Him through the Law and the Tabernacle, so Israel has gotten to work. At the end of the book, we have this amazing picture of God's Presence with them as His Glory fills the Tabernacle in the form of a cloud by day and fire by night. The question of whether God is with His people is no longer in doubt and He appears to them in a familiar way. If anyone asked, one only needed to open their tent and point to the Tabernacle to see God.

At the beginning of Exodus, we found God's people in slavery and oppression in Egypt. God hears their cries and provides a man, Moses, to be their liberator. God calls Moses and sends him to Pharaoh to free His people but Pharaoh refuses to listen. God responds with the 10 plagues culminating in the Passover where all the firstborn sons of Egypt are killed but God spares all His people.

Pharaoh then releases God's people to leave. They had heard of God through Moses and seen His power through the plagues, but now they would experience Him in a whole new way. As they depart, God doesn't just tell them where to go He leads them and takes a form that they might "see" Him, He becomes a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

God doesn't do this simply for the show of it (although He could) but it serves a few purposes. First, they have lived in slavery in the midst of an idolatrous people, and they are used to "gods" they can see and feel. Second, God is there to help them as they travel. On the hot days in the desert, He appears as a cloud to protect His people from the sun as they walk. At night when the temperatures drop and there is no light to see, God provides both light and warmth for His people. He is among them for their good.

So, when they open the Tabernacle and God reappears in this form, it is a joy and relief to His people. The same God that brought them out of Egypt would be with them every day.

God has also done amazing things for us. We too have been delivered and cared for and God appeared to us not as a cloud or fire but as a baby. One who set us free from our greatest enemy, sin. One who fulfilled all the sacrificial system that we couldn't keep. One that reminds us that we have a God who loves us simply because we are His people. As we see images of and think about Jesus, let us be reminded of God's presence with us.

Heavenly Father, we come to You today
thankful for Your Promises and
Faithfulness. Cultivate in us hearts in line
with Yours as we rest in the finished work
of Christ, anticipating the hour of our
reunion with You. In the Name of King
Jesus, we pray. Amen.