

Introduction (7 min.)

- Last week, Jon led us through one of the most memorable stories in the entirety of the OT: the Golden Calf.
 - We saw a real-time scenario where God comes face to face with blatant sin.
 - We saw that the sin wasn't simply a misstep, but was fruit grown out of mistrust for God.
 - We saw that God is both just and merciful and ultimately wants to be with his people.
- But what does it mean for God to be with his people?
 - Is it as simple as he just needs to show up?
 - What will happen to his people if he did that?
- Today's brief story closes our time and the narrative of the book of Exodus. We'll be taking a look at the final verses in Exodus 40.
 - For this passage to hold the weight that I think it commands, we need to do a little bit of homework.
 - The Bible is written as a story, and it was originally communicated orally.
 - That means the people who retold this story over and over again needed ways to communicate what was important to the story.
 - When we write things down, we bold, underline, italicize, strikethrough, capitalize, indent, and more to draw attention to certain things.
 - In an oral culture, you do different things to communicate what's significant.
 - You repeat words and phrases to emphasize different points.
 - You structure stories in similar ways.
 - Hopefully, you've seen that as we've been traveling through the Exodus text we can pick up on different key passages:
 - Like the repeated structure of the plagues
 - Like the elements of a story being similar to an earlier key story.
 - Like characters' names or actions being described the same ways.
- In the narrative between Exodus 32 and where we pick up tonight, we have a huge amount of instructions about building stuff.
 - We leave the Golden calf episode and find that God is reiterating the same thing we started the Exodus story with: he is calling his people out of slavery and into the wilderness to worship him.
 - He has set them free and wants to establish a new people and culture out of them so that they would serve as his testimony of his faithfulness and love to the world.
 - This is why the idolatry of the calf story is such a big deal.
 - But now that they're in the wilderness, God commands Moses and Israel in chapters 34-39 to do a few things:
 - First, to observe the laws that would give shape to their society — the 10 commandments.
 - Second, to create a space for God to dwell in the midst of his people.
 - But what would this look like?
 - It would broadly include two things:
 - First, it would look like their obedience to the laws God commanded to them.
 - Second, there would be a physical place that would be God's home within Israel.
 - This second piece is what comes to be known as the Arc of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting.
- Before we talk about the end of the chapter, I want us to spend a little time considering the lead-up to it by looking at two things: the Ark of the Covenant and the Tent of Meeting.

Split into groups — Answer the following questions and then we'll come back together to do some reporting out. (10 minutes)

Group 1

What does the Tent look like?

- Read Exodus 36.8-19 quickly. What are the curtains made of? What is included in them?
 - Fine, twisted linen of blue, crimson, and purple yarn w/ Cherubim (36.8)
 - Five curtains joined together (36.10)
 - Hooks of blue and clasps of gold (36.11, 13)
 - Curtains of goat's hair (36.14) and clasps of bronze (36.18)
 - Covering of tanned rams' skin (36.19)
- Read Exodus 36.35-38 quickly. What does the outer curtain look like?
 - Blue, purple, and crimson yarns/linen with Cherubim skillfully worked into it (36.35)
 - Pillars of acacia, overlaid with gold and bases of silver (36.36)
- Does this description bring to mind any other stories we have encountered thus far in the Bible? If so, what is similar?
 - Cherubim stand guard outside of the Garden of Eden (Gen 3.24)
 - Reread Genesis 3.22-24 if necessary to make the connection
 - God covers Adam and Eve with animal skins to hide their nakedness (Gen. 3.20-21)

Group 2

What does the Ark look like?

- Read Exodus 37.1-9. What is the ark made out of? What engravings and images are included in the ark?
 - Made of acacia wood
 - Gold rings and inlays
 - "Mercy seat" (37.6, 9)
 - cherub/cherubim made of hammered gold
- Read 37.17-24. What is the lampstand made out of? What imagery is included on it?
 - Made of pure gold
 - Petals for calyxes (37.17)
 - Branches coming from the sides (37.18)
 - Almond blossoms for cups (37.19, 20)
 - Snuffers and utensils of pure gold (37.23-24)
- Does this description bring to mind any other stories we have encountered thus far in the Bible? If so, what is similar?
 - Cherubim stand guard outside of the Garden of Eden (Gen 3.24)
 - Reread Genesis 3.22-24 if necessary to make the connection
 - Tree imagery brings to mind the trees in the Garden (Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil)

Group Reporting — (10 minutes)

- Group 1 — Read your questions and answers
- Group 2 — Read your questions and answers
- Questions for everyone:
 - Based on what we've answered so far, what stories come to mind based on the construction of these various parts of the Ark/Tabernacle?
 - Garden of Eden + Cherubim guarding the entrance
 - Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

- What do you think God is trying to communicate to Israel based on these commands to build the ark/tabernacle in these ways?
 - The ark/tabernacles are supposed to function as reminders for Israel of the beginnings of their story.
 - They are to remind Israel about what was supposed to be: for God to dwell with his people as they walk and tend the Garden. This is the vision for what it means to “be God’s people.”

Back to groups || Final comprehension + interpretation questions — (15 minutes)

- Read Exodus 40.16-38 and take a look at the following questions:
 - In your own words, summarize what you see **Israel** doing.
 - Moses and Israel obey what God told them to do (40.16)
 - They set up the tabernacle (40.17) and erected the ark (40.20-21), along with the table (40.22), the lamp (40.24), and the altar (40.29).
 - They did the ritual washings (40.32)
 - Israel followed the cloud (40.35-36)
 - In your own words, summarize what you see **God** doing.
 - Cloud covers the tent (40.34) and prevents Moses from entering it (40.35)
 - God’s glory filled the tabernacle (40.35)
 - The cloud moved occasionally (40.36)
- Where is God during this encounter?
 - His presence *fills* the tabernacle and his glory was apparent to “all the house of Israel at each stage of their journey.” (40.38)

Interpretation questions

- God’s presence is with Israel! The last time this happened was when they were cast out of the garden because of sin. As the audience, what are we to make of this tension (*that God casts them out but also now promises to be among them in the tabernacle*)? What questions do you have?
- In what ways can you identify with Moses and Israel in this story? In what ways does this story feel foreign to you?
- How do you think the next chapter in this story (the book of Leviticus) is the logical next step? Or is it not? Why or why not?
- In what ways does this story point to Jesus? How does Jesus fulfill parts of this story?
 - Jesus is the reconciler between God and people
 - Jesus is called Emmanuel (God with Us)
 - The end of the story (Rev. 21.1-5) shows the ultimate fulfillment of God dwelling with his people *through the Lamb of God* (Jesus).