

Exodus 39:32-40:38

Introduction

This morning, we come to the conclusion of the book of Exodus – and what a conclusion it is. If we're to fully appreciate its power and magnificence, we'll have to take a ride in the airplane, as it were. We'll have to mount up high enough, so we can look down and see below us the broad sweep and scope of the entire book, from Exodus 1 all the way to today in Exodus 40.

I. We remember that it's helpful to think of the book of Exodus as having four major sections.

In Part I we saw that Yahweh is the God who *delivers* His people from *Egypt* (1:1-15:21) There was the birth of Moses, and his calling at the burning bush. There was Israel's suffering in Egypt followed by the Ten Plagues of judgment. Then, there were the instructions about the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread and the consecration of the firstborn. And, finally, there was the crossing of the Red Sea and the triumphant song of victory and praise safe on the other side.

In Part II, we saw that Yahweh is the God who *provides* for and *protects* His people in the *Wilderness* (15:22-18:27) We saw the bitter water made sweet; the bread from heaven; the water from the rock, and the defeat of Amalek. We also saw how the Midianite Jethro is a sign of God's saving plan for the nations, and also yet another means of God's provision for his people.

In Part III, we've learned that Yahweh is the God who enters into *covenant relationship* with His people at *Mount Sinai* (19-24) Remember the Book of the Covenant containing the **Ten Commandments** (cf. 20:1) and the **Righteous Judgments** (cf. 21:1). And then there was the Covenant Ceremony and the blood of the covenant which joined the two parties to the covenant together as family. Now family live together. And so we were prepared for the last part of Exodus:

In Part IV, Yahweh is the God who desires to *dwell* among His people – to live with them as “family” (25-40) This is what the tabernacle—with its rooms, and its furniture, and its priesthood—has been all about. And this is what the “interlude” of the golden calf has only emphasized all the more. **The dwelling of God with His people** has been the purpose and goal of all the other parts of Exodus – Part's I, II, and III. And so it's only in light of *this* grand scope and sweep of Exodus that we'll be able to fully appreciate its conclusion.

Now that we've flown over the book of Exodus once, we need to ask the pilot to circle around so we can fly over it once more, this time looking a little more closely. One of the most sweeping, most overarching, most beautiful themes in the Bible is the theme of a New Creation. So, as we begin our second flyover of Part I, what we see is:

II. The Parting of the Red Sea and a New Creation¹

The parting of the Red Sea in Part I can only be fully understood in connection with the creation of the world. It starts out looking like a reversal, or an undoing of creation itself as God tells His people to “go forward,” *into the watery depths of the Sea*. (cf. Gen. 1:2) But it ends up being instead a *second* mighty work of creation, a sort of “copy” of the first, as the people of God are told to go *through the waters of the Deep—on DRY GROUND* (cf. Day 3 of Creation).

We also remember that in the pagan creation myths there are battles and wars between the gods of creation and order and the gods of chaos and disorder that live in the sea. The prophet Isaiah borrows this imagery, and pictures the Red Sea as the sea monster from these *pagan myths* just ready and waiting to devour the people of God. So when God parts the Red Sea, He is—as it were—slaying the monster, in order to bring into being a *New Creation*. The sea is a picture of the real monster and enemy of God’s *New Creation*, which in Exodus 14 is the army of the Egyptians. But throughout the Bible, this sea monster takes on many different forms. It ultimately represents not only Satan and this world, but also sin, and death, and sorrow, and suffering, and everything that first came into the world when Eve believed the serpent’s lies. So, when God drowned the Egyptians in the sea, He was slaying *this monster* – in order to bring into being a *New Creation* where there will be no more death, “neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore.”

But now we move past Part I, and begin our second flyover of Part II.

III. The Covenant at Mount Sinai and a New Creation²

The Sabbath Commandment is the sign of the *entire* covenant, and we read in Exodus 20:

- Exodus 20:8, 11 — Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy... **For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.**

We know that the purpose of God’s rest isn’t His recovery and recuperation. God’s rest is His unceasing enjoyment and celebration of all His creative work. (cf. **Gen. 1:31**; Ps. 104:31; Prov. 8:31) It’s His unending celebration of all His own infinite goodness. But what does *God’s* rest have to do with us? The grand finale of the creation week isn’t so much the creation of man as it is the “creation” of an **everlasting day** of divine rest and celebration in which *we* were meant to *participate*. **Before the fall** God blessed the seventh day as a sign of His purposes for Adam and Eve – that they should one day share with Him in His rest. **After the fall**, God gave His people the Sabbath as a sign that this same gracious purpose (revealed in creation) is now also His saving purpose for them – **only now, because of sin, it can only be fulfilled in a new creation.**

But now, Part II is already moving behind us. We’ll come back to Part III later, but for right now... here comes Part IV.

¹ See messages on Exodus 14:15-15:21 (Parts I, III, IV, and V)

² See message on Exodus 20:1-17 (Part II)

IV. The Building of the Tabernacle and a New Creation

The lampstand in the Holy Place is patterned after the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, pointing us forward to unrestricted access to the tree of life in a new creation.³ The cherubim standing above the place for atonement in the Most Holy Place and skillfully worked into the veil and the curtains of the tabernacle point us back to the cherubim that God placed at the entrance of the Garden of Eden to guard the way to the Tree of Life. (cf. Gen. 3:24) The precious metals and precious stones associated with the tabernacle remind us of the gold and precious stones that were associated with the Garden of Eden. (cf. Gen. 2:10-12) The orientation of the tabernacle, facing east, is a clear reminder of the Garden of Eden which also faced east.⁴ (cf. Gen. 3:24) The dimensions of the tabernacle as a series of perfect squares and cubes point us to a day when sacred space will actually encompass the whole world in a whole new creation.⁵

Just like Israel's deliverance from Egypt in Part I and God's covenant with Israel in Part III, so also the Tabernacle in Part IV can only be fully understood in connection with the first creation, and therefore, also, as the sign of a new creation. So, now let's ask our pilot to take us even higher, so we can look down and see everything all together. And what we see now is:

V. The People of Israel and a New Creation⁶

In Part I, the Red Sea is parted so that a **people** can go *through* the waters of the Deep—*on DRY GROUND*. The dragon is slayed so that a **people** might be delivered and rescued from their slavery in Egypt. In Part III, God gives the Sabbath in order to provide a time when **people** can rest and rejoice in the hope that they will one day share in *God's own* everlasting day of rest. In Part IV, the Tabernacle is built in order to provide a place where a **people** can come to worship God, and enjoy the satisfying, lasting pleasures and delights of His presence. And so, running throughout these pictures and shadows of the new creation, we have the picture and shadow of **Israel itself**. Let's remember how Exodus started:

- Exodus 1:6-7 — Then Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. But the people of Israel were **fruitful** and **swarmed**; they **multiplied** and grew **exceedingly numerous**, so that the **land** was **filled** with them.

These words have been carefully chosen to point us back to God's promises to Abraham, and then beyond that to creation itself where we read that God blessed Adam and Eve, and God said to them:

- Genesis 1:28 — Be **fruitful** and **multiply** and fill the **earth [land]** and subdue it.

So, even in Israel itself we see the beginnings—the picture and the shadow—of a new creation.

³ See message on Exodus 25:31-40

⁴ See message on Exodus 27:9-19

⁵ See message on Exodus 27:9-19

⁶ See message on Exodus 1:1-22

Exodus, as the sequel to Genesis, is all about the beauty and glory of a new creation, pointing us to the infinite wisdom and goodness of God. *Only*, when we left off last, the tabernacle was not yet completed – it had not yet been assembled. So, now that we’ve completed our second flyover of the book of Exodus, we’ll ask the pilot to just make a small circle back and then land in Exodus 39. Having disembarked, we’ll begin in verse 32 – remembering that all the book of Exodus, and even all of Scripture to this point, has been preparatory for this moment.

VI. Exodus 39:32–43 — Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished [*kalah*], and the people of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did.

Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; the covering of tanned rams’ skins and goatskins, and the veil of the screen; the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; the lampstand of pure gold and its lamps with the lamps set and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance of the tent; the bronze altar, and its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords, and its pegs; and all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; the finely worked garments for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for their service as priests.

According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done [*asah*] all the work.

And Moses saw [*ra’ah*] all [*kol*] the work [*malakah*], and behold [*hinneh*], they had done [*asah*] it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done [*asah*] it. And Moses blessed [*barak*] them.

In these words we hear, loud and clear, echo’s from Genesis – Genesis chapters 1 and 2. In Genesis two, Moses writes:

➤ Genesis 2:1 (cf. Gen. 2:2) — **Thus** the heavens and the earth were **finished** [*kalah*], and **all** the host of them.

Here, in Exodus 39, Moses writes: “**Thus all** the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was **finished** [*kalah*].”

Then, again, in Genesis chapter one:

➤ Genesis 1:31 — And God **saw** [*ra’ah*] **all** that he had made, and **behold** [*hinneh*], **it was very good**.

And here, again, in Exodus 39: “And Moses **saw** [*ra’ah*] **all** the work, and **behold** [*hinneh*], they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it.

Then, again, in Genesis chapter one, we hear language like this:

- Genesis 1:27–28 (cf. Gen. 1:21–22; 2:3) — God created man in his own image... male and female he created them. **And God blessed [*barak*] them.**

And here, in Exodus 39: “Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it... **And Moses blessed [*barak*] them.**”

Finally, in Genesis chapter two, we have this:

- Genesis 2:2–3 — On the seventh day God finished [*kalah*] his **work [*malakah*]** that he had **done [*asah*]**, and he rested on the seventh day from **all his work [*malakah*]** that he had done [*asah*]. So God blessed [*barak*] the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from **all his work [*malakah*]** that he had **done [*asah*]** in creation.

And here, in Exodus 39, we hear the echo’s loud and clear: “According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had **done [*asah*] all the work**. And Moses saw **all the work [*malakah*]**⁷, and behold, they had **done [*asah*]** it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they **done [*asah*]** it.”

⁷ The Hebrew verb *malakah* is used 20 times in Exodus in connection with the “work” of the tabernacle. In Genesis, apart from the three places where it’s used in connection with God’s “work” in creation, it appears only two other times.

Exodus 31:2–5 — I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship [*malakah*], to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft [*malakah*].

Exodus 35:21 — And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD’s contribution to be used [*malakah*] for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.

Exodus 35:24 — Every one who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work [*malakah*] brought it.

Exodus 35:29 — All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work [*malakah*] that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.

Exodus 35:30–36:1 — See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship [*malakah*], to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft [*malakah*]. And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work [*malakah*] done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman [*malakah*] or skilled designer. “Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whom the LORD has put skill and intelligence to know how to do any work [*malakah*] in the construction of the sanctuary shall work in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.

Exodus 36:2–8 — Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and every craftsman in whose mind the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him up to come to do the work [*malakah*]. And they received from Moses all the contribution that the people of Israel had brought for doing the work [*malakah*] on the sanctuary. They still kept bringing him freewill offerings every morning, so that all the craftsmen who were doing every sort of task [*malakah*] on the sanctuary came, each from the task [*malakah*] that he was doing, and said to Moses, “The people bring much more than enough for doing the work [*malakah*] that the LORD has commanded us to do.” So Moses gave command, and word was proclaimed throughout the camp, “Let no man or woman do anything [*malakah*] more for the contribution for the sanctuary.” So the people were restrained from bringing, for the material they had was sufficient to do all the work [*malakah*], and more. And all the craftsmen among the workmen [*malakah*] made the tabernacle...

Exodus 38:24 — All the gold that was used for the work [*malakah*], in all the construction [*malakah*] of the sanctuary...

What we have in these verses is no boring repetition of a boring list of boring items. We *feel*, now, just *how far* from the *truth* that must be. Every single item completed by the craftsmen, even down to the cords and the pegs of the tabernacle, is brought to Moses for his careful inspection. Moses is the only one who's seen the heavenly pattern and model, and so he's the only one qualified to inspect the finished work. And here's the verdict, repeated three times over: "The people of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did... According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work... behold, they had done [the work]; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it." What Moses finds in his inspection is a testimony to the work of God's Spirit in equipping and guiding the craftsmen so that the result of their labors is now a *flawless copy* of *exactly* what Moses had seen on the mountain. (cf. 31:1-11; 28:3; Durham; Stuart) In other words, Moses *saw* all that the craftsmen had made, and *behold, it was indeed, very good*. And so we come to the last chapter – chapter 40.

VII. Exodus 40:1–15 — The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "**On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting**. And you shall put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil. And you shall bring in the table and arrange it, and you shall bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. 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. You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. And you shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court. 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. 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. You shall also anoint the basin and its stand, and consecrate it. Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest. You shall bring his sons also and put coats on them, 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."

Now that all the various parts of the tabernacle have been completed and inspected, *it's time*: The Lord says to Moses, "On the **first day** of the **first month** you shall **erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting**."⁸ For the Israelites, the first day of the first month wasn't January 1st; it was around the time of March and April – the time when they first celebrated the Passover and came out from the land of Egypt.

➤ **Exodus 12:1–2** — The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month [the month of the Passover and the Exodus] shall be for you the **beginning** of months. It shall be the **first** month of the year for you."

And now, one year later, it's to be on this very "beginning of months," on the **first day** of this **first month** of the year (New Year's Day, as it were) that the tabernacle is erected. And so we

⁸ Genesis 8:13; 2 Chronicles 29:17; Ezra 7:9; 10:16–17; Ezekiel 45:18; 29:17

see the tabernacle being tied back together with the Exodus, and we see again that *both* are the signs of a brand new beginning; more than that – a brand new creation.⁹ (cf. Enns; Currid) We go on to read in verses 16-19:

VIII. Exodus 40:16–19 — This Moses did; **according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did.** In the **first month** in the second year, on the **first day** of the month, **the tabernacle was erected.** Moses erected the tabernacle.

He laid its bases [*ethen*], and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars [*ammuth*]. And he spread the tent [*ohel*] over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent [*ohel*] over it, **as the LORD had commanded Moses...**

As I read these verses, I can't help but think of how God "built" the heavens and the earth. We read that Moses "**laid its bases,**" "**raised up its pillars,**" and "**spread the tent** over the tabernacle." In Job 38, the Lord asks Job:

- Job 38:4–6 — Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? ... Who determined its measurements ... Or who stretched the line upon it? **On what were its bases [*ethen*]¹⁰ sunk,** or who laid its cornerstone?

In Psalm 75, the Lord proclaims:

- Psalm 75:3 (cf. Job 9:4-6; 26:10-11) — When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, **it is I who keep steady its pillars [*ammuth*].**¹¹

And finally, the prophet Isaiah says:

- Isaiah 40:22 (cf. Ps. 19:4-6) — It is [the Lord] who sits above the circle of the earth... who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and **spreads them like a tent [*ohel*] to dwell in.**

So, just as Moses lays the **bases**, and raises up the **pillars**, and spreads the **tent** for the tabernacle, so also God laid the **bases** and raised up the **pillars** of the world, and spread out the heavens like a **tent** to dwell in. And so the Psalmist writes of God's temple-building work in Psalm 78:

- Psalm 78:69 — He built his sanctuary like the high heavens, like the earth, which he has founded forever.¹²

⁹ Hamilton also draws attention to another possible verbal link with the Genesis account. Four times in Exodus 40:9-15, we have the Hebrew word *qathash* (consecrate). In Genesis 2:3, we read: "So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy [*qathash*]." I am less inclined to see any purposeful significance in this verbal parallel, though I certainly cannot rule it out!

¹⁰ Of 57 occurrences of this word (*ethen*), 55 are references to the bases of the tabernacle. Aside from the occurrence in this passage, there is only one other occurrence of this word in the entire Old Testament.

¹¹ Of 111 occurrences of this word (*ammuth*), 76 are references to the "pillars" of the tabernacle, Solomon's temple, or Ezekiel's temple, and 18 are references to the pillar of cloud and/or fire that led the people of Israel through the wilderness. Aside from the three references to creation, there are only 14 other occurrences of this word in the entire Old Testament.

But now we pick up again where we left off:

IX. Exodus 40:18b–33a — [Moses] laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**. He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**. He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**. He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, and set up the lamps before the LORD, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**. He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, and burned fragrant incense on it, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**. He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**. He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, **as the LORD commanded Moses**. And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court.

Remember the “Plan of the Tabernacle Described in Detail,” (25-31) and then all the detailed repetition in the “Plan of the Tabernacle Followed Exactly” (35-39) Well, now, in the very last chapter of Exodus we have the same kind of thing all over again. [See chart on page 12] We have in verses 1-8 the detailed command to assemble and position all the various parts of the tabernacle, and then in verses 16-33, we have the even *more* detailed description of how each part of the tabernacle was actually assembled and positioned in the perfect fulfillment of God’s command.

What is the point of all this repetition? Is it to test us with tediousness and boredom? Or is to help us fully appreciate and anticipate the goal and the climax to which this has all been building – *even* since the very first chapter of Exodus. Even in these detailed verses of repetition, we hear yet *another* echo of Genesis chapter one. **Seven** times, the phrase is repeated: “as the Lord had

¹² Solomon’s temple has even more connections with creation than the tabernacle. Just to mention two of these connections, in the temple, the bronze basin becomes a great “sea” holding 11,500 gallons of water. (1 Kings 7:23-26; cf. Gen. 1:9-10); and in addition to cherubim, covering all the walls and doors of the Temple are palm trees and flowers reminding us of the Garden of Eden. (1 Kings 6:29-35; 7:36; Ezek. 40:16, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37; 41:18, 20, 25, 26) In Isaiah 61, the Lord describes heaven and earth as His temple and the place of His “rest.”

Isaiah 66:1 (cf. Acts 7:48-50; Gen. 2:1-3) — Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?”

But then we read in Psalm 132 of the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem:

Psalm 132:7–8, 13–14 (cf. 2 Chron. 6:40-41; Isa. 11:10) — Let us go to his **dwelling place**; let us worship at his footstool! Arise, O LORD, and go to your **resting place**, you and the ark of your might... For the LORD has chosen **Zion**; he has desired it for his **dwelling place**: “This is my **resting place** forever; here I will **dwell**, for I have desired it.”

The tabernacle is patterned after creation so that in the tabernacle we might see the promise of a temple that will one day fill and encompass the entire creation.

commanded Moses... as the Lord had commanded Moses... as the Lord had commanded Moses...”¹³ We’re reminded again that *here* is a **flawless reproduction** of **exactly** what Moses saw on the mountain. So flawless, in fact (by God’s grace!), that for all practical purposes, it might have been built and assembled by God Himself. To hear seven times that it was all done exactly “as the Lord commanded Moses” is to hear seven times that **it was, indeed, very good**. And so, in Genesis chapter one we hear **seven** times the repeated phrase: “And God saw that it was good... and God saw that it was good... and God saw that it was good...” [See chart on page 13]

And then, finally, in Genesis two:

- Genesis 2:2–3 (cf. Gen. 2:1) — Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, and on the seventh day **God finished [kalah] his work [malakah]**.

How, then, can we not hear loud and clear the ringing echo of these words when we read in Exodus forty, verse 33:

X. Exodus 40:33b — Thus Moses finished [kalah] the work [malakah].

THUS MOSES FINISHED THE WORK!!! And so, finally, we’re ready for the moment to which the whole of Exodus has been leading. Finally, we’re ready to see the whole goal of this new creation come to its fulfillment.

Ever since the people of Israel first stood poised on the border of Egypt, at the edge of the wilderness, we’ve seen the pillar of cloud going with them and before them – leading, and guiding, and protecting them along the way. (cf. Exod. 13:20-22; 14:19-24) We’ve seen the pillar of cloud descending and standing at the entrance to the temporary tent of meeting that Moses pitched “far off” from the camp, where the Lord would speak with Moses face to face. (cf. Exod. 33:7-11) And then, when the people came to Mount Sinai, we saw the Lord come down upon the mountain in a thick cloud. (cf. Exod. 19:9)

- Exodus 24:15–16 — Then Moses went up on the mountain, and **the cloud covered [kasah] THE MOUNTAIN. The glory of the LORD dwelt [shakan] on MOUNT SINAI, and the cloud covered [kasah] [THE MOUNTAIN].**

That was in Exodus 24. Now we read in chapter 40:

¹³ Hamilton observes that this phrase also appears seven times in Exodus 39 (vv. 1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31) and in Leviticus 8 (vv. 4, 9, 13, 17, 21, 29, 36). Enns writes: “The order of the tabernacle reflects God’s very nature, a nature that creation itself reflects.”

XI. Exodus 40:34–35 — Then **the cloud covered [kasah] THE TENT OF MEETING**, and **the glory of the LORD** filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because **the cloud dwelt [shakan] on [THE TENT OF MEETING]**,¹⁴ and **the glory of the LORD** filled the tabernacle.

This was, after all, the whole *reason* for the tabernacle. At the very beginning of it all, the Lord said to Moses:

- **Exodus 25:8** — Let [the people] make me a sanctuary, **that I may dwell [shakan] in their midst.**

In fact, the tabernacle, and *this moment*, are the *whole reason* for everything we’ve read in the whole book of Exodus – from chapter 1, verse 1, all the way until now. The Lord said in chapter 29:

- **Exodus 29:45–46** — I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, **who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell [shakan] among them.** I am the LORD their God.

The book of Exodus is all about a new creation – a new creation that will equal, and in the end, even surpass the first work of creation in Genesis chapter one. And the new creation is all about God’s promise to dwell with us, and to be among us, as our God.

But, of course, Exodus isn’t the end. So, we’re reminded in the very last verses of the book:

XII. Exodus 40:36–38 — Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. 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.

And so, for all the climax and the grand finale, the book of Exodus actually ends by reminding us that we’re not yet there. The New Creation *is* here, “**already**”—we know that now—but we’ve still “**not yet**” entered into the land of promise – the land flowing with milk and honey. Nevertheless, we’re ready, now, to leave Mount Sinai, because now the Lord Himself goes within our very midst – and we are His people, and He is our God.

Conclusion

We said that the book of Exodus is all about a New Creation.¹⁵ More specifically, throughout the book of Exodus, God has been showing His people in pictures and shadows what the New Creation would one day be. Today, that New Creation is *here*, “**already**,” through Christ; though we still have “**not yet**” finally arrived. Nevertheless, we know, now, that one day we’ll arrive safely at our destination because it is the Lord Himself who has **redeemed** us, who has entered

¹⁴ Contrast this with Exodus 24, where we read that “Moses entered the cloud.” (24:18)

¹⁵ For the connection between the plagues and the Genesis creation account see message on Exodus 10:21-29

into **covenant** with us, and who now goes *with* us in our very **midst** – **We are His people, and He is our God.**

Exodus 40:1-8

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

“On the first day of the first month **you shall** erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.

And **you shall** put in it the ark of the testimony, and you shall screen the ark with the veil.

And **you shall** bring in the table and arrange it,

and **you shall** bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps.

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.

You shall set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting,

and place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it.

And **you shall** set up the court all around, and hang up the screen for the gate of the court.

Exodus 40:16-33

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

In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, and set up the lamps before the LORD, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, and burned fragrant incense on it, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle.

And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, **as the LORD commanded Moses.**

And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court.

Genesis 1:3-2:2

1.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
And God saw that the light was good. (1:3-4 / Day 1)

2.

God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas.
And God saw that it was good. (1:10 / Day 3)

3. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind.
And God saw that it was good. (1:12 / Day 3)

4. And God set [the sun, moon, and stars] in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.
And God saw that it was good. (1:17-18 / Day 4)

5. So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.
And God saw that it was good. (1:21 / Day 5)

6. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind.
And God saw that it was good. (1:25 / Day 6)

7.

And God saw everything that he had made,
and behold, it was very good. (1:31 / Day 6)

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day **God finished his work** that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. (2:1-2)

Exodus 40:16-33

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

1. In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

2. He took the testimony and put it into the ark, and put the poles on the ark and set the mercy seat above on the ark. And he brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the screen, and screened the ark of the testimony,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

3. He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, and arranged the bread on it before the LORD,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

4. He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, and set up the lamps before the LORD,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

5. He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, and burned fragrant incense on it,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6. He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. And he set the altar of burnt offering at the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering,
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

7. He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed,
as the LORD commanded Moses.

And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court.
Thus Moses finished the work.