

Exodus 38:21-40:38
Psalm 68
Matthew 17

“The Glory of the LORD”

September 24, 2017

Read Exodus 38:21-31,
39:1-7 (then first and last lines through v31)
39:32-43
40:1-38

I want you to think about what is happening here at the end of the book of Exodus.
The glory of the LORD fills the tabernacle.
Where had the glory of the LORD been?

At the top of Mt. Sinai.

In chapter 20-31, Moses had gone up the mountain to meet with God.
In chapters 32-34 the LORD had revealed his glory (at least his back) to Moses,
resulting in Moses’ face shining every time he went in to speak with God.

But God does not want to live on a *mountain*.

He wants to live with his people.

So he has Israel construct this portable tent – complete with a portable grill (the altar) –
so that he might wander in the wilderness with his people.

As many have pointed out,
the tabernacle is like a mountain tipped over on its side –
as you go in the tabernacle, it is like you are ascending Mt. Sinai,
getting closer and closer to the glory of the LORD at the top.

(Think back to how the 70 elders were allowed to go *part way* up the mountain in Ex 24
because of the burnt offerings and peace offerings.)

In the same way, the priests are allowed to go *part way* into the holy place –
but only the High Priest is allowed into the Holy of Holies!)

This is the same message that is taught in Psalm 68.

Psalm 68 has some really weird imagery:

you have the “hunch-backed mountain of Bashan”
looking with hatred (or jealousy) at Mt. Zion.

Why?

Because the LORD chose Jerusalem (Mt. Zion) as the place of his dwelling!

(Almost as though the mountains themselves were competing
for which of them would gain the privilege of God’s dwelling!)

And in the middle of this, you have the enigmatic statement,
“Sinai is now in the sanctuary.”

What does it mean that Sinai is in the sanctuary?

Well, when the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle,
the glory of the LORD *left* Mt. Sinai –
there is no longer any reference to the glory of God on Sinai.

The LORD no longer dwells on Sinai.

He now dwells with his people in the tabernacle –
and later in the temple (Solomon saw the glory of the LORD fill the temple).

Ezekiel will later see the glory of the LORD *leave* the temple!

And the great lament in Haggai's day, when the Jews *rebuilt* the temple,
was that there was no glory.

God *promises* Haggai that the glory of the later temple
will outshine the glory of the former temple –

but that will only happen 500 years later,
when the Word becomes flesh and *tabernacles* among us.

It is only when Simeon takes that baby in his arms and says,

“my eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for *glory* to your people Israel.” (Luke 2:30-32)

Only then does the glory of the latter temple outshine the glory of Solomon's temple –
because *Jesus* was brought to the temple.

Jesus – the one who became the place where earth and heaven meet.

The one in whom the glory of God is veiled in human form.

So let us sing of this:

Sing Psalm 68 – stanzas 1, 2, 5, 7, 9

Read Matthew 17

Many have pointed out the parallel between the Transfiguration and the shining face of Moses,
but it is equally important that we see the parallel between the Transfiguration
and the glory of the LORD filling the Tabernacle.

After all, the glory on *Moses'* face had to be veiled to keep the people from seeing that it was fading!

The glory in *Jesus'* face never fades

because his is *not* a reflected glory –

his glory is a glory that he had with the Father before the world existed (Jn 17:5).

It is important for us to see that Jesus is not merely a “lawgiver” like Moses.

He is the one *in whom* the glory of God takes human form.

There are two central points that come together in our passage:

First – and most important – the *glory of the LORD* fills the tabernacle.

God comes to dwell with his people.

Second – and absolutely essential, *but subordinate to the first point* –

how does God come to dwell with his people?

Only because the people of Israel constructed and assembled the tabernacle
as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Eighteen times in our passage today we hear the refrain,

“as the LORD commanded Moses.”

In case you hadn't noticed, *God really cares* about how his holy dwelling place is built.
He wants to dwell with his people –
but he will not accept worship that ignores him – or what he has said!

What would have happened if the Israelites had said,
Ooh, we love this plan, Moses –
but it would be *even better* if we had an image in the Holy of Holies!?
Well, they tried that with the golden calf back in Exodus 32 –
and God was not very happy with their innovation!

We saw a few weeks ago that the *problem* in Exodus 32
was that they tried to conduct worship without reference to God's *word* –
without reference to the Book of Covenant.

If you want the glory of the LORD to dwell in your midst,
then your tabernacle – your temple – (in the NT, the people of God – the church)
must be built according to the Word of God.

The Reformed tradition is known for the “regulative principle of worship” –
the idea that we should only do in worship those things that God commands.
As our Shorter Catechism puts it,
“the second commandment forbids the worshiping of God by images,
or in any other way not commanded in his word.”

Why do we say this?
Because the church is the new temple –
the holy dwelling place for God.
The church is the place where earth and heaven meet.

And if this is true, then we should pay attention to what *God says*
about how we should worship him!

And it's not *just* Sunday worship that we are discussing here.
The upbuilding of the church – discipling the nations –
should be done “as the LORD commanded Moses” and the prophets and apostles.

After all, think about the Great Commission that Jesus gave us:
“make disciples of all nations –
baptizing them in the name of F S and HS
and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”
See to it that you do everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.
Jesus has given us a pattern of life –
a way of living, worshiping, and loving.

What we do on Sunday sets the pattern – the tone –
here we are reminded of the gospel – the message of what Jesus has done –

because it is that message – that story – that shapes the way that we live.

1. The Records of the Tabernacle (38:21-31)

²¹ *These are the records of the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, as they were recorded at the commandment of Moses, the responsibility of the Levites under the direction of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.* ²² *Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moses;* ²³ *and with him was Oholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and designer and embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen.*

Verse 21 of chapter 38 provides us with a helpful reminder
that we don't actually know the names of the people who wrote most of the book of Exodus.
We refer to the first five books of the Bible as the "books of Moses"
but with the exception of Exodus 20-23, Numbers 33, and perhaps a couple other portions,
we don't really know *who* wrote it down.

Certainly verse 21 makes it clear that Moses *commanded* this to be written,
but it is equally clear that Moses himself did not write it down.

Ithamar, the son of Aaron the priest, was responsible for making sure that this happened.
And since we are reading it, we may be certain that Ithamar did what he was commanded!

Verses 24-31 then describe the materials that were used.

²⁴ *All the gold that was used for the work, in all the construction of the sanctuary, the gold from the offering, was twenty-nine talents and 730 shekels,^[b] by the shekel of the sanctuary.* ²⁵ *The silver from those of the congregation who were recorded was a hundred talents and 1,775 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary:* ²⁶ *a beka^[c] a head (that is, half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone who was listed in the records, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men.* ²⁷ *The hundred talents of silver were for casting the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil; a hundred bases for the hundred talents, a talent a base.* ²⁸ *And of the 1,775 shekels he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their capitals and made fillets for them.* ²⁹ *The bronze that was offered was seventy talents and 2,400 shekels;* ³⁰ *with it he made the bases for the entrance of the tent of meeting, the bronze altar and the bronze grating for it and all the utensils of the altar,* ³¹ *the bases around the court, and the bases of the gate of the court, all the pegs of the tabernacle, and all the pegs around the court.*

We saw last time that the people of God had provided more than was necessary for the work –
and here we see the accounting of it.

It is the responsibility of the leaders *to lead*.

But it is also the responsibility of the leaders to give an account of their leadership.

Since we are coming up on budget time,

I will simply say that the PCA follows this same basic principle:

the session – the elders – are responsible for setting the budget.

The congregation never votes on the budget,

because the elders are the ones whom God has charged with leading the congregation.

But we regularly give an account –

the monthly reports in the bulletin,

and then when we set the budget and report that to the annual congregational meeting.

In doing this, we are seeking to follow the principles outlined here (and elsewhere) in the scriptures.

Chapter 39 then deals with the priestly garments –
and this is where we hear so much of the refrain, “as the LORD had commanded Moses.”

2. “As the LORD Had Commanded Moses”: Making the Priestly Garments (39:1-31)

- a. The Ephod (v1-5)
- b. The Onyx Stones of Remembrance (v6-7)
- c. The Breastpiece (v8-21)

39 From the blue and purple and scarlet yarns they made finely woven garments,^[d] for ministering in the Holy Place. They made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

² He made the ephod of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. ³ And they hammered out gold leaf, and he cut it into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet yarns, and into the fine twined linen, in skilled design. ⁴ They made for the ephod attaching shoulder pieces, joined to it at its two edges. ⁵ And the skillfully woven band on it was of one piece with it and made like it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁶ They made the onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold filigree, and engraved like the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel. ⁷ And he set them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod to be stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

⁸ He made the breastpiece, in skilled work, in the style of the ephod, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. ⁹ It was square. They made the breastpiece doubled, a span^[e] its length and a span its breadth when doubled. ¹⁰ And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; ¹¹ and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹² and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ¹³ and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in settings of gold filigree. ¹⁴ There were twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They were like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. ¹⁵ And they made on the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure gold. ¹⁶ And they made two settings of gold filigree and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece. ¹⁷ And they put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece.

¹⁸ They attached the two ends of the two cords to the two settings of filigree. Thus they attached it in front to the shoulder pieces of the ephod. ¹⁹ Then they made two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod. ²⁰ And they made two rings of gold, and attached them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, at its seam above the skillfully woven band of the ephod. ²¹ And they bound the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it should lie on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece should not come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Verses 1-21 focus on the ephod and breastpiece (which all becomes one garment).

This is what Aaron would wear when he would enter the Holy of Holies once a year.

On his shoulders were the “stones of remembrance”

because they have the 12 names of Israel engraved on them –

and so when Aaron enters the Most Holy Place

he bears the names of the 12 tribes –

all Israel enters the Holy of Holies in Aaron.

God commanded this so that Israel might learn –
so that *we* might learn –
that we need a high priest who bears our names as he comes into the presence of God.

And that is what Jesus has done!
The Eternal Son of God wears not merely a few rocks,
he wears *our nature* –
he comes before the Father in *our humanity*.

d. The Robe (v22-26)

e. The Garments for the Priests (v27-29)

f. The High Priest's Crown (v30-31)

²² *He also made the robe of the ephod woven all of blue, ²³ and the opening of the robe in it was like the opening in a garment, with a binding around the opening, so that it might not tear. ²⁴ On the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. ²⁵ They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates all around the hem of the robe, between the pomegranates— ²⁶ a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate around the hem of the robe for ministering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

²⁷ *They also made the coats, woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, ²⁸ and the turban of fine linen, and the caps of fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine twined linen, ²⁹ and the sash of fine twined linen and of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, embroidered with needlework, as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

³⁰ *They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, “Holy to the LORD.” ³¹ And they tied to it a cord of blue to fasten it on the turban above, as the LORD had commanded Moses.*

The garments of the priests are made of the same material as the inside of the tabernacle.

The priest and the tabernacle are, in that sense, identified by what they are clothed in.

Of course, we understand *why* –

because Jesus is *both* priest and tabernacle!

If the point of the tabernacle is that ultimately God will dwell in humanity,
then we plainly need a priest who looks like a tabernacle!

(And John tells us that the Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us!)

Verses 32-43 then summarize the work.

3. “Then Moses Blessed Them”: Final Summary of the Work (39:32-43)

³² *Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished, and the people of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. ³³ Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; ³⁴ the covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins, and the veil of the screen; ³⁵ the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; ³⁶ the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ³⁷ the lampstand of pure gold and its lamps with the lamps set and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; ³⁸ the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance of the tent; ³⁹ the bronze altar, and its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; ⁴⁰ 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; ⁴¹ 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.

You might think that by now it would be clear that Israel had done
as the LORD had commanded Moses!

Chapters 25-31 gave the description of how to make all these things.

Chapter 35 then gave an opening list of all that they set out to make.

Chapters 36-39 have given a detailed description of what they made.

And now at the end of chapter 39 we have the summary of what they made!

(And then in chapter 40 we'll get *two more* lists of *everything!* –
as the LORD commands Moses to *assemble* everything,
and then Moses assembles it!)

But before we start assembling the tabernacle,
we should notice that “Moses blessed them.”

Think about how often Israel *failed* to do as the LORD commanded!

And then pay attention to verses 42-43:

⁴² *According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work.*

⁴³ *And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it. Then Moses blessed them.*

They did it!

(And for those who are wondering,

yes, this is the verb *asah* – to do or to make – that we looked at last time!)

This is no small accomplishment!

They listened to the Word of the LORD.

They followed the direction of their Spirit-filled leader, Bezalel and Oholiab.

And they did as the LORD had commanded.

Then Moses blessed them.

We are not given the words of the blessing,

but we are on safe ground

if we think that it was something like the blessing that we hear in Numbers 6:

“The LORD bless you and keep you,

the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you,

the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

A blessing is not a prayer.

It is not a wish.

It is a declaration of God's peace and favor.

As we come here to the end of the book of Exodus

we know that Israel will wind up rebelling and grumbling in the wilderness.
In the end, they will refuse to believe God's promises and they will wander for 40 years.
All that generation will perish in the wilderness.
As God will say in Psalm 95,
 "so I swore in my wrath, they shall never enter my rest!"

What is this saying about their eternal condition?

We need to be careful not to go beyond scripture.
 Scripture certainly warns us *not to be like them*
 lest we apostatize and perish eternally.
But do not confuse the sign with the reality.
 After all, *Moses* will perish in the wilderness as well!
 Moses does not enter the Promised Land!

So we cannot say that all those who perished in the wilderness will burn in hell forever!
 Yes, God judged that generation – as a warning to all future generations!
 If you have been redeemed from bondage (like Israel from Egypt),
 and if you have been blessed by God (like Israel was by Moses),
 then do not harden your hearts as they did in the rebellion!

I don't doubt that the leaders of the rebellions were apostates
 who had repudiated the LORD God of their fathers.
But I fully expect to see most of that generation at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb –
 all those whose trust was in what these priestly garments represented –
 all those who believed the LORD –
 even though in moments of weakness they stumbled and fell.

After all, what did God say about what his *name* means:
 "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious,
 slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,
 ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,
 but who will by no means clear the guilty,
 visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children,
 to the third and the fourth generation." (Ex 34:6-7)

God will judge those who rebel –
 but he is merciful and gracious –
 and his *purpose* is to bring a people near to himself.

And that is where Exodus ends in chapter 40:

4. The Assembly of the Tabernacle (40:1-33)

a. Tabernacle Before Priest: The LORD Explains the Process (v1-15)

40 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.

What day is it?

On the first day of the first month.

It has been exactly one year since Israel left Egypt.

The Passover lamb was slaughtered on the 14th day of the first month.

So, with two weeks to go until the first anniversary of the Passover, the LORD commands Israel to erect the tabernacle.

It would appear that they have spent around 6 months in construction.

Now they are ready for assembly.

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. 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.”

Notice that verses 1-15 provides a detailed account of the *order* in which everything is supposed to be done.

Start with the tabernacle –

then the furniture of the tabernacle –

then the altar of burnt offering and the basin –

then the courtyard.

Then anoint all the tabernacle and all that is in it in order to consecrate it.

Then bring Aaron and his sons and wash them with water and anoint and consecrate them as priests.

And then verses 16-33 show how Moses did all this.

b. “So Moses Finished the Work” – As the LORD Had Commanded (v16-33)

¹⁶ This Moses did; according to all that the LORD commanded him, so he did. ¹⁷ In the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, the tabernacle was erected. ¹⁸ Moses erected the tabernacle. He laid its bases, and set up its frames, and put in its poles, and raised up its pillars. ¹⁹ And he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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. ²² He put the table in the tent of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil, ²³ and arranged the bread on it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁴ He put the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle, ²⁵ and set up the lamps before the LORD, as the

LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁶ He put the golden altar in the tent of meeting before the veil, ²⁷ and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. ²⁸ He put in place the screen for the door of the tabernacle. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it for washing, ³¹ with which Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. ³² When they went into the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, as the LORD commanded Moses. ³³ And he erected the court around the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the screen of the gate of the court. So Moses finished the work.

Or rather, Moses did *almost* all of this.

Did you notice that Moses left something out?!

Verse 31 says that Moses and Aaron and his sons washed – as the LORD commanded Moses – but they never got around to *anointing* Aaron and his sons – they never put on the priestly garments!

The tabernacle is finished – but there are no priests!!

I have no doubt that Moses was turning to Aaron and saying,

“Okay, brother, why don’t you kneel and I will anoint you with the holy oil...”

when God interrupted!

It’s not a matter of disobedience.

Moses is trying to do what God commanded!

But God interrupts!

The strangest statement is at the end of verse 33:

“So Moses finished the work.”

But he *hadn’t* finished the work!

The priests aren’t consecrated!

The holy garments aren’t consecrated!

And you *can’t tell me* that this is just “assumed” in the text!

A text that repeats all the details of the tabernacle twice.

A text that repeats all the different parts of the tabernacle *six times*!

And it just *forgets* or *omits* the priestly garments!!!

No.

Six times this information has been repeated!!

Every other time the list is complete!

(And Leviticus 8-9 will take up the narrative again

and make it clear that the consecration of the priests began

after the glory of the LORD had filled the tabernacle.

The consecration of the priests was a seven day ritual –

so that only on the *eighth day* would the priest begin his priestly service on behalf of others.
And then later in Numbers chapter 9 we are told that on the fourteenth day of the first month, they celebrated the LORD's Passover.)

So there must be a point.

God wants you to see that the *tabernacle* comes before the *priest*.

The glory of the LORD fills his dwelling place *before* the priest begins his service!

The consecration of the tabernacle has rendered the tabernacle a fit place for God to dwell. The priests are not magicians or sorcerers who are able to “summon” the presence of God! No, this is the place where God has chosen to make his name – his glory – to dwell.

The priests *serve* at the tabernacle – they do not *establish* the tabernacle.

5. The LORD Dwells with His People (40:34-38)

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.

Exodus concludes with the glory of the LORD filling the tabernacle.

God has left Mt. Sinai in order to join himself to his pilgrim people as they sojourn in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land.

This principle runs throughout the scriptures –

and so it is because of this that when a church is planted by or received into a presbytery, the *first thing* is that the *members* are received – because that is the tabernacle – the holy dwelling place of God.

Only then can the regular officers – pastors, elders, deacons – be called (or received).

At Pentecost in Acts 2,

the glory of the LORD will fill the temple once more.

Except this time, the temple consists of the *people of God*.

The Spirit of God is poured out upon the church consecrating us as a holy temple – a holy dwelling place for God!

Only later, in Acts 6, will we find the ordination of the officers of the church.

You might say, “But there are the apostles!”

Yes – just like in Exodus, there was Moses.

You have the extraordinary officers – those who hold a unique office.

God uses Moses to build the tabernacle – and later the apostles to lay the foundation –

(think of what Jesus says to Peter, “On this rock I will build my church”)
but the ordinary pattern is that the temple precedes the priesthood.
The priest can only be consecrated once the tabernacle is in place.

And just as the pillar of cloud and fire led Israel through the wilderness,
so now the Spirit of God leads us through the wilderness.

And we are called to build upon the foundation laid by the apostles.

Our task is to build on this foundation using the building materials specified by the scriptures.
Jesus has given us our direction in how to build this tabernacle.

Disciple the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father Son and HS,
and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

The way that we build is by putting into practice the things that Jesus has commanded –
to the *end* – for the *goal* – of the extension of Christ’s kingdom,
so that God’s will would be done – on earth as it is in heaven.

The purpose of this temple is so that the glory of the LORD would fill the whole earth!