

CHANGING WANDERERS INTO WORSHIPERS

From the Exodus to the Promised Land

Investing in Things Eternal . . . Being Blessed

Selections from Exodus 38–40

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Stock markets may crash. Homes burn. Banks fail. Governments default. In this life, our investments accumulate atop a foundation as sturdy as wet sand. It may collapse. Maybe not.

While the uncertainty of life can make earthly investments a shaky business, it doesn't mean all hope is lost. The impermanence of things doesn't have to rob us of meaning nor our bodies' natural deterioration stifle our lives from echoing in eternity's hallways. God has revealed Himself by stepping out of eternity onto earth; He's given us the blueprints, via His Word, for constructing a life of everlasting significance—a life that brings us blessing and God glory.

Let's join Chuck Swindoll in Exodus 38–40 to examine the eternal investments the Israelites made and then reflect on those we can make today.



YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

In our last study, “Generosity: Willing Hearts, Stirred Within,” we looked at God's call for willing Israelites to give toward the construction of the tabernacle. God told Moses:

Here is a list of sacred offerings you may accept from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread; fine linen and goat hair for cloth; tanned ram skins and fine goatskin leather; acacia wood; olive oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; onyx stones, and other gemstones to be set in the ephod and the priest's chestpiece. (Exodus 25:3–7)

When the Israelites learned that God desired to dwell among them, they gave generously toward the construction of the tabernacle. The bulk of Exodus 25–40 consists of the plans and assembly of God's tabernacle. The following chart references Exodus 25–40, which details the implementation of each component of the tabernacle.¹

Quotable

*When you invest
in things temporal,
the risks are high
and great and often.
When you invest in
things eternal, the
rewards eclipse the
sacrifice.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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THE TABERNACLE IN EXODUS		
COMPONENTS	INSTRUCTIONS	COMPLETION
Ark	25:10–22	37:1–9
Table	25:23–30	37:10–16
Lampstand	25:31–40	37:17–24
Tabernacle	26:1–37	36:8–38
Altar of Burnt Offering	27:1–8	38:1–7
Courtyard	27:9–19	38:9–20
Oil for the Lampstand	27:20–21	
Priestly Garments	28:1–43	39:1–31
Incense Altar	30:1–10	37:25–28
Bronze Washbasin	30:17–21	38:8
Anointing Oil and Incense	30:22–38	37:29

Bible scholar T. Desmond Alexander observes God’s intended connection between the Mosaic law and the tabernacle:

The building of the tabernacle forms a natural sequel to the making of the divine covenant. Built according to divine instruction, the tabernacle became the focal point of the Lord’s presence in the midst of the people, and reminded them, through its materials and structure, of God’s sovereign, holy nature.²



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Observation

The first step of Bible study is observation. We observe the text by simply reading it. Slowly. Thoughtfully. Assiduously. So we'll do that with selections from Exodus 38–40.

Their Investment

Begin by reading *Exodus 38:21–31*, and summarize the contents of this passage in a single sentence.

How many pounds of each material did the Israelites give? Note that the New Living Translation performs these calculations for you.

Gold _____

Silver _____

Bronze _____

Their Reward

Next, read *Exodus 39:32–43*. What does this passage summarize for the reader?

According to 39:42–43, what two ways did Moses respond to the completed work?

1. _____

2. _____



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Lastly, read *Exodus 40*. What do verses 1–33 summarize?

What does 40:34–38 convey? What visibly represented God’s presence before the people?



Interpretation

During interpretation, we seek to understand what the text means historically so we can better grasp what it means theologically.

The exodus account reaches its climax in Exodus 40:34–38. God’s glory filled the tabernacle, and He drew near to the people. To better understand how *glory* is defined in Exodus, let’s use our concordance and look up every verse in which *glory* is used in Exodus—nine verses in the NLT. Don’t forget to review the context if you need a better understanding of the verse. We’ve performed the search for you at [Bible Study Tools](#) for a quick reference. In what ways did God demonstrate His glory in the book of Exodus?

Now, look up the keyword *glory* in your Bible dictionary. In what other ways does God glorify Himself?



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Based on your review of God's glory in the book of Exodus and the dictionary entry, write your own definition of the word *glory* as it relates to God.

Exodus 40:34–38 records the manifest reward of the Israelites' generosity after the craftsman shaped the thousands of pounds of gold and silver into the dwelling place of the God who created the mountains, seas, and all living things. The reward? God's presence. Notice how the tabernacle creates both distance and nearness between the presence of God and the Israelites.

According to 40:35, why couldn't Moses enter the tabernacle?

The author commented on how a cloud not only formed a barrier but appeared before all the Israelites as their guide for the journey, assuring them that God resided with them. Now let's use our imagination to stand with the Israelites before the awesome glory of God. Based on your reading of the tabernacle components and the end of Exodus, witness the scene. Visualize the bronze washbasin, priestly garments, and the ark of the covenant. Put yourself in the Israelites' sandals and imagine your life in Egypt as it contrasted with life directed by God. After internalizing the scene, record below what you saw and how you felt.

Almost certainly, no Israelite stood before the tabernacle and thought his or her offerings toward the work weren't worth it. God's eternal rewards are always worth our temporal sacrifices.



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Correlation

During correlation, we compare our passage with other biblical passages that address a similar topic. We do this because God’s work of redemption threads the entire biblical story to form a tight-knit tapestry. Because our text focuses upon God manifesting His glory to the Israelites, we’ll turn to 2 Corinthians 3:7–18, which will help us develop our understanding of God’s glory.

Take a moment to read *2 Corinthians 3:7–18*. Note especially how Paul contrasted the glory that God showed during the time of Moses with the glory Jesus shows to you and me. Summarize this contrast in the table below.

Glory of the Old Way through Moses	Glory of the New Way through Christ



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Application

During application, we internalize the truths of our text, absorbing it like a sponge because God changes us from the inside out. God transforms us when His Word enters through the door of our minds to nestle in the home of our hearts—and it will always find ways to rearrange the furniture of our priorities.

In his sermon, Chuck emphasized the rewards of eternal sacrifice when he spoke about the Israelites watching the glory descend upon the tabernacle:

I would imagine those really lost in the worship of the moment had forgotten by then what they had given—because, you see, when you invest in things eternal, the rewards eclipse the sacrifice.

Eternal activities include practices such as giving, serving, mentoring, encouraging, and praying, to name a few. Reflect on your life and jot down some of the activities of eternal investment that you already do on a regular basis.

Now reflect and consider if there is an area of life in which you would like to increase your eternal investing. It could be volunteering in the children's ministry on Sunday mornings, cleaning the church building once a month, or increasing your church giving by two percent. Pick just one and imagine what life would look like if you invested more in that area. Then, record your plans—very specifically—for growing toward your investment goal.

Remember: no eternal investment is so small—not even giving a cup of cold water in Jesus' name—that it does not attract the attention of the King of Heaven.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for the blessing of eternal investments. As Your Son said, “It’s more blessed to give than to receive.” Please help me to grow in generosity, in my investing in things eternal. I know I have all I need in You, that I don’t have to concoct an arbitrary meaning of life with my own ingenuity, and that I don’t have to rely on my own hands to find a blessing. You’ve blessed me. You are blessing me. I just want to share what You’ve given me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 36, kindle; chart based on Enns’ outline.
2. T. Desmond Alexander, “Exodus,” *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, 4th ed., rev., ed. D. A. Carson and others (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity 1994), 93.



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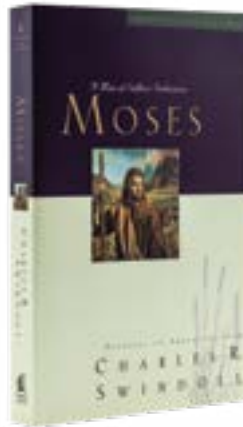
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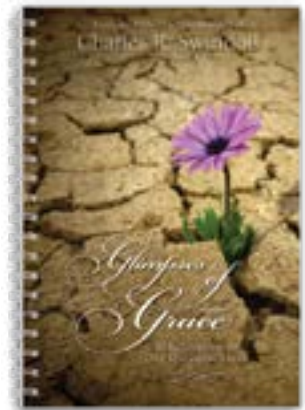
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2018–2019 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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