



DANIEL R. HYDE

G O D
in
O u r
M I D S T

The TABERNACLE & OUR
RELATIONSHIP *with* GOD

ENDORSEMENTS

“It is refreshing to have an exposition of the tabernacle that avoids the allegorizing excesses that have so often been a feature of the ‘Christianizing’ of this important part of the Old Testament. Daniel Hyde seeks to give a sound exegesis of the text and, only then, to lead us ‘to see it through New Testament eyes,’ and thus to discover its testimony to Christ and its role in edifying the faithful.”

—DR. GRAEME GOLDSWORTHY

Former lecturer in Old Testament, biblical theology, and hermeneutics
Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia
Author, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*

“Saturated with sound exegesis, helpful insights, pointed application, and warm devotion, *God in Our Midst* helps us to see in the tabernacle not merely pieces of furniture or sets of curtains, but Christ Himself, in the beauty of His holiness and the peace of His pardoning grace. This book will drive pastors from the study to the pulpit, and parishioners from study to worship.”

—REV. BRIAN VOS

Pastor, Calvary United Reformed Church, Loveland, Colo.

“Danny Hyde has distinguished himself as someone who is historically and theologically grounded while consistently keeping things clear, Christ-centered, and relevant. This book on the tabernacle is no exception. Each chapter is a fine meal elegantly served up for the nourishment of the saints. I know now where I will turn first when it comes to books on the tabernacle.”

—DR. GERALD M. BILKES

Professor of New Testament and biblical theology
Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Mich.

“This work on the tabernacle not only demonstrates how the tabernacle foreshadows Christ in its exposition of Exodus 25–40, it lays out principles to help people read the Old Testament properly. The appendix on ‘Preaching the Pentateuch’ is worth the price of the book. Such passionate preaching of the Old Testament is greatly needed in the church today.”

—DR. RICHARD P. BELCHER JR.

John D. and Frances M. Gwin Professor of Old Testament and academic dean
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, N.C.
Author, *The Messiah and the Psalms*

“In *God in Our Midst*, Rev. Danny Hyde provides a true feast for the reader. He demonstrates a grasp of the Scriptures in terms of the grand storyline as well as the particular texts that flesh out the points he makes. His examination of the tabernacle—its building, sacrifices, personnel—are gateways to discuss a wide variety of theological matters and directions of rich, spiritual application. The tabernacle centers around the person and work of Jesus Christ. This book is rich in content devoted to theology and to piety. Lay members and ordained pastors will learn and relearn much in this book. Highly recommended!”

—REV. MARK VANDER HART

Associate professor of Old Testament studies
Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Dyer, Ind.

“As children learn with concrete objects and figures, the Old Testament people were taught by God with physical symbols such as the tabernacle. With centuries in between, most Christians have missed the beauty of God’s provisional dwelling place. Danny Hyde takes us back in time through the lens of the New Testament to grasp God’s artistic demonstration of His awesome and redeeming presence. What pointed to Christ in His first coming will shine with much more splendor in God’s definitive tabernacle in the new heaven and new earth.”

—DR. HEBER CARLOS DE CAMPOS JR.

Professor of systematic theology
Rev. José Manoel da Conceição Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
São Paulo, Brazil

“How refreshing to have a book that unlocks the treasures of this section of God’s Word so clearly and so faithfully. Daniel Hyde has handed us not only an excellent series of devotional studies on the tabernacle, he has given us an example of how to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. So many have sought the key to unlocking these chapters in allegory, imagination, and speculation, all of which has proven to make things complex and unprofitable. Instead, we are guided to simply read the text as it was intended to be read. Daniel helps us to hear God teaching His people about the promised Savior, Jesus, and the great things He would do to redeem and transform sinners. The secret, the mystery in it all, is Jesus. It is so exciting to be able to see these things for oneself. After the first few chapters of this little book, I am sure readers will be able to see the patterns for themselves, and make connections with more familiar New Testament passages. What could be more exciting than to know in greater detail the wonder it is to experience God in our midst? This would be an excellent resource for any Bible study group or class to open up a section of Scripture that sadly continues to remain closed to so many.”

—DR. DAVID R. JACKSON

Head of biblical studies

William Carey Christian School, Prestons, Australia

Author, *Crying Out for Vindication: The Gospel According to Job*

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

God in Our Midst: The Tabernacle and Our Relationship with God

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Para os pastores da Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil e Igrejas
Reformadas do Brasil:

“O cerne da questão é este: pregar a Cristo,
por meio de Cristo, para o louvor de Cristo.”

—William Perkins, *A Arte de Profetizar*



To the pastors of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil
and Reformed Churches of Brazil:

“The heart of the matter is this: preach one Christ,
by Christ, to the praise of Christ.”

—William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying*

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ABBREVIATIONS

- BC—Belgic Confession
- CD—Canons of Dort
- HC—Heidelberg Catechism
- WCF—Westminster Confession of Faith
- WLC—Westminster Larger Catechism
- WSC—Westminster Shorter Catechism

FOREWORD

Like me, you probably have been disappointed by many books on the Old Testament. The covers look great, the titles sound enticing, and the blurbs appear exciting. But one chapter in and you begin to flag. They are so boring, so academic, so impractical, and so suitable for your large pile of “read-one-chapter” books.

So, how can you improve your chances of selecting a book on the Old Testament that will bless your life? Let me tell you six things I look for when I’m choosing books on the Old Testament for my own spiritual edification.

First, I want a reverent and diligent handling of the text of Scripture. For too long the Old Testament text has been treated with less respect than a daily newspaper. It has been attacked, lampooned, and neglected, not just by those outside the church but by many within it. So, I want to be sure that the author views the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God, and then works hard to mine the maximum meaning out of each precious word.

Second, I expect any interpretation to start with the original context and park there for a while. Many books and sermons seem to regard the Old Testament as something hot off the presses and addressed directly to twenty-first-century culture. They fail to consider the original message to the original audience thousands of years ago and thousands of miles away. If you want to get on the wrong track immediately and lead others astray, that’s a sure-fire way of doing it.

Third, while accounting for the slow, progressive unfolding of God's truth over many years, the book should portray that truth as having one clear and constant message. At times, some writers imply that God started with Plan A, and when that didn't work He tried Plan B, then C, then D, and so on. In other words, instead of seeing God's message of a gracious salvation for sinners through the Messiah as one seed that gradually grows from root to shoot to stem to flower to fruit, they imply that God was forever starting over; planting then uprooting, replanting then uprooting, over and over again.

Fourth, I look for a book that follows Jesus' and His disciples' example in using the New Testament to interpret the Old. I know of one Old Testament professor who refuses to allow any New Testament verse ever to be mentioned in his classes; that's kind of like studying with the lights off. Of course, we should not read into the Old Testament what was known only to those in the New, but as Christ and His Apostles make clear, there was a lot more knowledge of the gospel in Old Testament times than is usually thought.

That brings me to my fifth requirement—the book must connect Old Testament believers with the New Testament church by demonstrating that both Old and New Testament saints were united in being saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. Was Old Testament faith as clear or strong? Did Old Testament believers see Christ as we see Him? Were Old Testament believers in possession of as much of the Holy Spirit as we possess? No, no, and no again. However, they did have saving faith, it was in the Messiah alone, and without the internal work of the Holy Spirit regenerating, sanctifying, and preserving them, they had no hope.

Finally, the book must apply the truth to the modern church. Too many Old Testament books are addressed only to the head. They stop far short of connecting the truth to people's hearts and lives. Worship, communion, obedience, and service are almost swear words to some writers.

Well, you're probably thinking by now, "There aren't many Old Testament books like that today, are there?" You're right, I'm afraid. But

I'm glad to announce that one has just been added to their ranks. It's this book on the tabernacle by my friend Danny Hyde, and what a rare treat it is to read!

Danny handles the text with reverent care and rigorous diligence, mining the text for all its meat and milk. He describes the original context, people, and situation so graphically that eventually you wonder if he possibly lived in tabernacle times. While respecting the varying degrees of revelation through the ages, he demonstrates the covenantal unity of God's sovereign and gracious plan in both testaments. He avoids the pitfall of imputing New Testament understanding to Old Testament believers, but also welcomes the graciously provided light of the New to understand the Old. And he gives us, at last, a modern book on the Old Testament that treats the believing Israelites as brothers and sisters in Christ rather than as slightly confused, animistic, legalistic idolaters. Of course, if you've read any of Danny's previous nine million books (a joke to brighten up the editor's day), you'll know that he has a passion to bless the church with books that minister to the head, the heart, and the hand. This book is no different. It will lead you to worship, it will prompt obedience, and perhaps above all it will inspire you to commune with the God who delights to dwell among us and in us.

This will be a great book for pastors and teachers who have been inspired by the wonderful resurgence of interest in the Old Testament, and especially of a Christ-centered understanding of the Old Testament, and yet open their Bibles at Exodus and Leviticus and wonder, "Eh, what do I do now?" Danny shows you.

But any serious Christian will also benefit from this book. It will not only open up previously undiscovered parts of the Bible, it will show you the wonderful unity of the Scriptures from start to finish. Above all, it will inspire you to seek communion with God through Jesus Christ, Immanuel, "God with us."

—Dr. David P. Murray

Professor of Old Testament and practical theology
Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan
January 2012

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Since this book is the fruit of my preaching through the book of Exodus, I must acknowledge first and foremost the congregation the Lord has called me to serve. We have experienced all of the ups and downs, joys and sadnesses, as a church family these past twelve years. I am blessed to have gone through with you “a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance” (Eccl. 3:4). Through it all, we have known the comfort and correction of our gracious triune God’s presence in our midst.

I thank Dr. David Murray of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, who is not only a colleague but a friend, for his foreword to this book and for his gracious words about life and ministry. Our discussions about the tabernacle and the need for believers today to see the riches of Jesus Christ’s grace in ancient biblical institutions have spurred me on in writing this book.

Of course, Greg Bailey, director of publications for Reformation Trust, and the whole publishing ministry of Ligonier Ministries deserve my gratitude. Although you often go unnoticed, all the books that are being read across the world because of your efforts are the fruit of your God-glorifying work.

Finally, I praise my loving, gracious, and precious triune God for giving me my wife, Karajean. From the beginning of our relationship, when we would read the Word together on our college campus, until now, as we read it together as a family with our beautiful boys, we have

always experienced the presence of God in our midst as a team. I pray that our family will continue to be a little camp in the wilderness of this world, facing the glorious presence of our God in Christ, even as we await the addition of yet another member into our tent at this time of writing.

INTRODUCTION

“An earnest and prayerful study of the tabernacle, and the purposes it served, cannot fail to increase our knowledge of the grand truths of redemption.”¹ This is how William Brown, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, called serious students of the Word of God to read and meditate on the tabernacle narratives of the Old Testament.

Yet few Christians seem to have done this. I learned this over the first seven years of my ministry. In those years, I preached through a great portion of the New Testament: John, Acts, Romans, Colossians, Titus, Hebrews, 1 Peter, Jude, and Revelation. I did this in order to lay a foundation of solid biblical doctrine for the church I was planting. Toward the end of those years, the Holy Spirit led me to give my people a basic overview of the Old Testament so that they could read it in a Christ-centered way, as the Apostle Paul did: “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen” (2 Cor. 1:20, KJV). I ended up preaching a series that highlighted the story line of Christ and His redemption, beginning in Genesis and going through His coming in the Gospels. Though I thought this would be just a brief survey before I returned to preaching through the New Testament, I realized that my people—like so many other Christians today—had a woefully inadequate grasp of the Old Testament.

What I experienced has been confirmed to me by many colleagues. Vast numbers of Christians and churches in our time and place do not know the Old Testament well.² In the words of Brown, we pastors need

to give our people an earnest and prayerful study of the Old Testament, including the centerpiece of its religion for four hundred years, the tabernacle. That is what I hope to provide in this book.

Of course, one challenge we face in doing this comes from the New Testament itself:

A tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. *Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.* (Heb. 9:2–5, emphasis added)

Ever since those words were written, generations of Christians and preachers have wished that the Apostolic writer *had* spoken in detail of the tabernacle and its furnishings. But since one aspect of the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is not only that the authors were “carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21) in their writing, but even that they were led away from writing what they originally intended (Jude 3), the Holy Spirit did not go into detail about the furniture in the tabernacle. Because of this, the task falls to preachers to exposit and to apply the meaning of these structures and articles of furniture. Let us, then, enter behind the curtain and into the Most Holy Place.

However, before we jump in and start seeking to understand the particulars of the tabernacle, we need to grasp some general facts and principles: what the tabernacle was; how it fit into the story of Israel's wilderness wandering; how we can best read and understand the narratives about it, especially in light of the theme of God dwelling with His people; and how we ought to respond as Christians to the biblical teaching about it.

WHAT WAS THE TABERNACLE?

The tabernacle (Latin, *tabernaculum*, “tent”) was the Lord’s temporary dwelling place during the Israelites’ forty-year wilderness wandering and their first three hundred-plus years in the land of Canaan. God revealed the instructions for building it to Moses (Ex. 25:1–31:11) and inspired him to write an account of its construction (Ex. 35:4–40:38).³

The tabernacle actually has several Hebrew names in the narrative of Scripture, all of which signify something about its purpose. First, it is called “the sanctuary” (Ex. 25:8, *miqdash*; Ex. 38:24, *qodesh*), as it was the place of the holy presence of God. So, it was a holy place. Second, it is called “the tent of the Lord” (Ex. 25:9, *mishkan*; Ex. 26:7, *’ohel*), as it was the place of His temporary dwelling among His people. It is also called the “tent” in the New Testament letter to the Hebrews (Heb. 8:5; 9:21, *skēnē*). Third, it is called “the tent of the testimony” (Ex. 38:21; Num. 9:15; cf. Acts 7:44, *’ohel ha-edut*), as it was the place where He testified to His covenant of grace with Israel.⁴ In fact, the two tablets of the law were also called the “testimony” (*edut*). The conservative Lutheran commentator C. F. Keil (1807–1888) wrote that the law of God was described as the “testimony” because it was housed in the tent of the testimony:

[The tablets were so called] not merely because they bore testimony to the divine will, but also and at the same time to the divine nature, because they manifested those divine attributes under which Jehovah reveals Himself, His essence and being, in and to Israel. It is not merely what Jehovah requires of His people Israel as their covenant God, but it is, at the same time, what He is and desires to be for Israel, that was embodied in the ten words written upon the tables of stone; and this testimony it was that constituted the pith and essence of the old covenant.⁵

Fourth, the tabernacle is called “the tent of meeting” (Ex. 27:21; 28:43; 30:20; 40:32; Num. 8:24, *’ohel moed*), as it was the place where

the Lord met with His people, as represented by the priests. In fact, until the tabernacle was constructed, the Lord met with Moses alone, as the representative of the entire people, in another tent also known as the tent of meeting, “face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Ex. 33:11). That meeting and fellowship between the Lord and Moses was to occur on a larger scale in the tabernacle between the Lord and His people, although the one-on-one, personal aspect was lessened.

THE STORY LINE

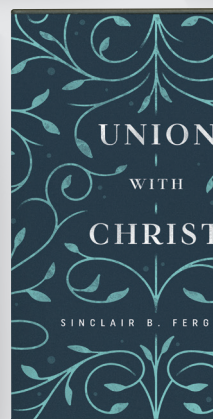
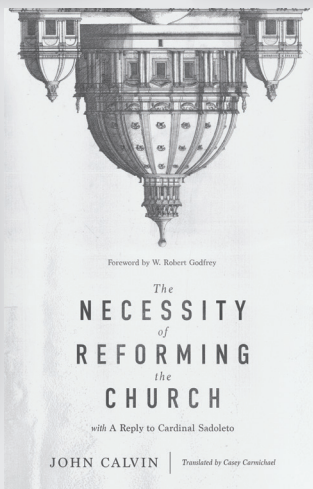
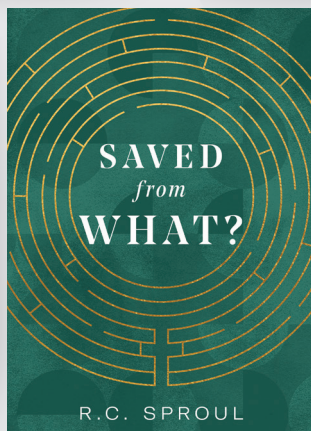
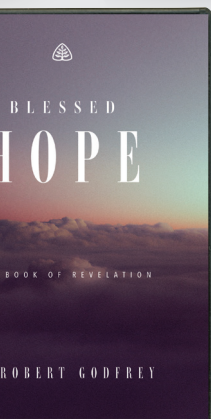
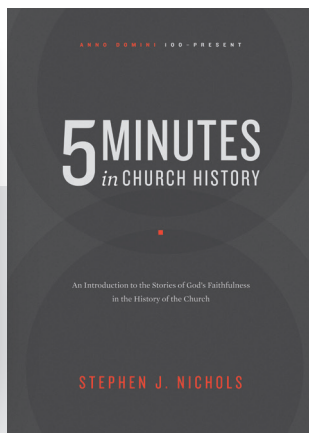
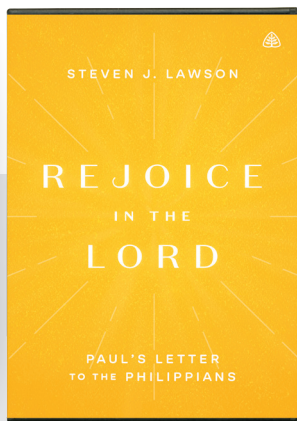
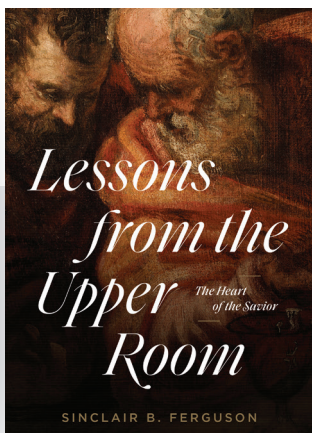
We also need to be familiar with the story line of the book of Exodus and how the tabernacle fits into that story. What happened before and after the tabernacle was built? How did the tabernacle flow from and into this larger story?

Geography

The story line of the book of Exodus takes place in three geographic locations. The story opens where Genesis ends—with Israel in Egypt—and continues there in chapters 1–13 (cf. Gen. 50:22–26). After leaving Egypt in the dark of night, the Israelites proceed into the wilderness, the Sinai desert, which is the setting for chapters 14–18. Surprisingly, however, the book of the “exodus,” that is, the departure from Egypt, does not spend most of its time on that dynamic event. Instead, the majority of the book takes place at a static location: Mount Sinai. The narrative in this location covers more than half of the chapters, 19–40.

There is a wonderful theological and practical reason why more than half of Exodus is set at Sinai. The Holy Spirit is teaching us that redemption occurs for the purpose of invocation, that salvation happens for the purpose of adoration. The Israelites were saved from Egypt that they might serve the Lord. Likewise, our purpose for being called out of the darkness of the world is that we might be called into the brilliant presence of God. We exist, as the memorable words of the Westminster Shorter Catechism teach us, “to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever”

We want to see men and women around the world connect the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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