

The Cloud of God Is Moving

Summary: Israel in the wilderness was blessed when they followed God's cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. We in the New Testament era can likewise incur great blessings by "**following the cloud**" of God's presence, purposes, and guidance.

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Exodus 13:17-22 ...[18a] So **God led** the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea.... [20] After leaving Succoth they camped at Etham on the edge of the desert. [21] By day the **Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them** on their way and by night in a pillar of fire **to give them light**, so that they could travel by day or night. [22] Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.

- The people of God, then and now, should **follow the cloud!** Follow the Lord; follow the leading and guiding of His Presence and His Holy Spirit.
- [21] It was not simply a cloud, but rather it was the **Lord** going "ahead of them" in a pillar of cloud and fire. When that pillar of God was moving, it meant that **God was moving**. For what purposes?
- [21] "to **guide** them on their way"
- [18] "So **God led** the people..."
- [21] "The Lord went **ahead** of them..."
 - That's where we want the Lord in our lives — "**ahead**" of us, leading us, directing us, not following after us cleaning up the damage caused by our impetuous, headstrong decisions.
- [21] "by night in a pillar of fire **to give them light**"
 - God is light; this world is full of darkness. [Look to God and His Word, the bible](#), to give **light** to your paths in this life.
- [22] The appropriate place for the pillar of cloud and fire was "**in front** of the people."
 - That's always where the Lord should be — in front! Jesus told His disciples to **follow Him**, not to run off willy-nilly following their human-inspired promptings.

Exodus 14:8,19-20 The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly.... [19] Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of **cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them**, [20] **coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel**. Throughout the night the cloud brought **darkness to the one side and light to the other side**; so neither went near the other all night long.

- [19f] Sometimes the glory cloud (the Lord's presence) moves around "behind" us to **shield** us from our enemies.
- [20] And as the cloud did, sometimes the Lord's presence brings **us light and them darkness** — "darkness to the one side and light to the other".

*Exodus 33:7-9 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." anyone **inquiring of the Lord** would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. [8] And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. [9] As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of **cloud would come down** and stay at the entrance, while the **Lord spoke with Moses.***

- The pillar of cloud came down as **Moses "inquired of the Lord."** God is always willing to hear our petitions. Be **men and women of prayer**, and you will find yourselves consistently in step with God's "cloud".

*Exodus 40:33-35 Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses finished the work. [34] Then the **cloud covered** the Tent of Meeting, and the **glory of the Lord filled** the tabernacle. [35] Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because **the cloud** had settled upon it, and the **glory of the Lord filled** the tabernacle.*

- The cloud of God speaks of the **glory of God** upon His Tabernacle. The New Testament tabernacle/temple is the individual **believer** (1 Corinthians 6:19) and the **church, filled with God's glory** (1 Corinthians 3:16 and Ephesians 3:21).

*Exodus 40:38 So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel **during all their travels.***

- The cloud and the pillar of fire were with Israel "during **all their travels.**"
- God has said, "I will **never leave you nor forsake you**" (Hebrews 13:5). There is no time in your life, good or bad, joyful or sad, in victory or defeat, when the Lord abandons you.

*Numbers 9:18-22 **At the Lord's command** the Israelites set out, and at His command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. [19] When the cloud **remained** over the tabernacle a **long time**, the israelites **obeyed** the Lord's order and did not set out. [20] Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a **few days**; at the Lord's command they would encamp, and then at his command they would set out. [21] Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening till morning, and when it lifted in the morning, they set out. Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they set out. [22] Whether the cloud stayed over the tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in camp and not set out; but when it lifted, they would set out.*

- [18] The cloud taught them to **follow the Lord's commands**. At the Lord's command they made camp, and at His command they broke camp. The same **instant obedience** to the Lord's direction is likewise required of us.

- [21] "Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening till morning" — at times, God is moving **quickly**.
- for example, at the height of the Charismatic Movement, our home church in Anchorage, Alaska, grew in **just a few years** from a few hundred to **1,400** people. God was moving mightily and *quickly*.
- [19] At other times, "the cloud remained ... a **long time**, [and] the israelites **obeyed** the Lord's order and did not set out."
- For example, Israel camped for nearly a **year at Mt. Sinai**. Can you imagine the imagine the frustration of the "type A's"!
- But remember, in this *seemingly quiet* time at Sinai God gave them the **Ten Commandments**, the **Law**, the **priesthood**, the pattern for the **tabernacle**, and more.
- So when the **cloud** of God is **not "moving"**, that doesn't mean God is not working! God is often working quietly but powerfully in our lives *behind* the scenes.
- Those are times to [19] **obey** the Lord and to grow and profit from what He is doing in your life.

Deuteronomy 1:32-33 In spite of this, you did not trust in the Lord your God, [33] who **went ahead of you** on your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by day, to search out **places for you** to camp and to **show you the way** you should go.

- From the "cloud" narrative, we learn to let the **Lord go ahead** of us, "to search out **places** for [us] ... and to show [us] **the way** [we] should go."
- Let God set the **agenda** for your life. Let **Him** determine the places for you to "camp". Let Him define and show you the way that He has chosen for you.

1 Corinthians 10:1-6 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our **forefathers were all under the cloud** and that they all passed through the sea. [2] They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. [3] They all ate the same **spiritual food** [4] and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. [5] **Nevertheless**, God was **not pleased** with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. [6] Now these things occurred as examples to **keep us** from setting our **hearts on evil things as they did**.

- One final lesson for us: Like Israel of old, we can have **all those blessings** — the glory cloud, the pillar of fire, heaven-sent food and drink, the presence of Christ the Rock — and **still fail God!**
- Unlike Israel in the desert, let's **not take for granted** the blessings of God by "setting our hearts on **evil things**, as they did."

Summary of the blessings of following God's cloud:

- We will receive His leading and guidance.

- He will illuminate our pathway.
- Following His "cloud" will keep us from following our purely human impulses and promptings.
- His cloud (or pillar of fire) will shield us from our enemies.
- While illuminating us, at times his cloud will bring darkness and confusion upon our enemies.
- The cloud came down at times in response to Moses' seeking God in prayer.
- The cloud and pillar of fire speak of the glory of God in His Church.
- The cloud speaks of God's abiding faithfulness to you, of His promise never to leave or forsake you.
- Following the cloud speaks of unquestioning obedience to the Lord's commands.
- Sometimes the cloud of God will move quickly in your life, family, or church.
- At other times, the cloud will seem to have stalled, but God is still working dramatically on your behalf.
- God's cloud will show you the places He wants you to go and the precise way to get there.
- Unlike Israel of old, do not take the cloud of God for granted and lightly turn aside from God to evil things.