

FOLLOWING THE CLOUD

Ex. 13:21-22 – *“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. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.”*

From the Exodus to the conquest of Canaan, the pillar of cloud was the leading factor in the lives of the Israelites.

The Cloud Was The Visible Emblem Of God’s Presence

It wasn’t a common cloud, but a supernatural, mysterious cloud. It was the visible expression of the invisible GOD. The cloud veiled His majestic, overwhelming glory. He was in it. He spoke and did His work through it.

That cloud was also a symbol of the Holy Spirit. By the Holy Spirit, the Lord manifests himself to, in, on, and with the church, during her pilgrimage in this present age (Jn. 14:16-17).

The Cloud Was The Constant And Infallible Guide Of Israel

Deut. 1:32-33 – *“The Lord your God, 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.”*

In Jn. 16:13, Jesus tells us, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.”*

Sometimes the pillar of cloud would stop for a night and go the next morning. Then it would stop for a few days, and they would stop for a few days. The Israelites never knew from moment to moment or day to day what the cloud was going to do next.

George Muller: God not only orders our steps, He also orders our stops.

The Cloud Was The Mighty Defense Of Israel

Exodus 14:19-20— *“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.”*

At the Red Sea the cloud changed position, and it came between the Israelites and the Egyptians, delivering the one and destroying the other.

The pillar of cloud can also easily be acknowledged as a type of Christ Himself. God veiled in flesh. The coming of Christ to the Cross was the coming of the pillar of God between us and our great enemy sin. He came between that He might overcome the Devil, and save all them that believe.

The Cloud Descended To Fill And Rest On The Tabernacle

Ex. 40: 34-35—*“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”*

The nations around them had sacred places and buildings, but they were empty. The Tabernacle was consecrated and blessed to have the glorious divine presence of the God of all glory.

The Shekinah glory of God shone forth from the inner most chamber of the tabernacle—the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant.

The New Testament tabernacle/temple is the individual believer (1 Cor. 6:19) and God’s presence and glory is in the church (1 Cor. 3:16 & Eph.3:21). The *Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you* (1 Pet. 4:14).

The Cloud Departed When The Wanderings Of Israel Were Over

After Israel entered the Land of Promise, all the external manifestations of God's presence disappeared, and the vision that came to Joshua in front of Jericho — the Son of God with a drawn sword in His hand — became from that day onward a pledge of the same **presence, protection, and power** (A. B. Simpson).

From that time on, the external sign was withdrawn, and their Leader was to be with them by faith and not by sight.

It is the same for us, when we come into the fullness of Christ, we have fewer signs, we have less of the wonderful and spectacular; but we have more of the working of faith and power. We must learn to trust the Holy Spirit, even when we cannot perceive the signs of His presence.

The Cloud Of God’s Glory Will Supernaturally Reappear One Day

The cloud shall once more descend upon and dwell among Israel. When God regathers His scattered people, when He resumes His covenant relationship with them, and brings them to a saving knowledge of their Messiah-Redeemer, then shall be fulfilled the ancient promise found in Is. 4:2-6—

“In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel.....Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. ‘It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.’” (Arthur W. Pink)

Soli Deo Gloria!