

THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Cloud” – Part II

Introduction-

In the close of Part I, we were answering the question: Why should we study the cloud?

1 Cor 10:1-6

1 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. NIV

In these verses, we discover three reasons why we should examine the cloud: God does not want us ignorant of it, it deals with the Spirit of God, and it is an example to keep us from evil.

As we shared before, the column or pillar of cloud was the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit among the children of Israel. This mighty sign was given to them to lead them through the wilderness and inspire them with a holy reverence for God, thus keeping them from evil.

In part two, we are going to examine the Holy Spirit as the cloud and see what He teaches us about communion with God, the habitation of praise, and sacrifice and intercession.

I. The Cloud of Communion With God – Ex. 33:7-11

1. Observations on the Godhead [The Godhead overhead]

As the overhead illustrates, though the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father, they all are God. Even though they are all One God and the same, they deal with us in different ways. We can see some of these different ways in the exodus.

A. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Ex 13:18

So God led the people around by the desert road toward the Red Sea. The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle. NIV

Here in Ex 13:18, we see that it was God [elohiym] that led the people. Elohiym is one of the names for the Godhead. It is a plural noun.

Ex 14:15, 24

15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

24 During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. NIV

In the Old Testament, Jehovah is the Father making covenant with His people. The redemptive qualities demonstrated in this name throughout the Old Testament are exemplified and fulfilled by Jesus Christ in the New Testament. The Lord spoke to Moses from the cloud and looked down from the cloud. This is the Father.

Ex 14:19

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, NIV

The Father looks down from the cloud. But here in verse 19, we have two other persons involved, the angel of God and the cloud itself. The angel of God is synonymous with "the angel of the Lord" (Judg 6:20-21¹). The angel of the Lord is a Christophany, a preincarnate manifestation of Jesus. The children of Israel do not see Him until Joshua meets him on the way to Jericho.

Thus, we have God leading the children of Israel: the Lord (Father), the angel of the Lord (Son), and the pillar of cloud (the Holy Spirit).

B. Face to Face

Ex 33:7-11

7 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.

10 Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent.

11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent. NIV

Moses would go to the tent to meet with God. The pillar of cloud would come down and the Lord would speak with Moses face to face.

¹ Judg 6:20-21 ²⁰The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. ²¹With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. NIV

Ex 33:12-23

- 12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'
- 13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."
- 14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
- 15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.
- 16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"
- 17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."
- 18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."
- 19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.
- 20 But," he said, "**you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.**"
- 21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock.
- 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.
- 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; **but my face must not be seen.**" NIV

How is it that the Lord can speak with Moses "face to face" in one verse and in the next chapter tell him that he cannot see "his face"? Once again, we see the Godhead in this section. The LORD is speaking to Moses and tells him that he cannot see His face. This is the Father. But he tells Moses that His Presence will go with them. This word for "Presence" is the same Hebrew word translated "face" in this section. The Presence is the Son, the angel of the Lord who was going with them unseen.

John 14:5-9

- 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"
- 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."
- 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."
- 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? NIV

The face of God came to us in human form. By his very actions performed in an earth suit, he allows us to see the face of the Father and not perish.

Heb 1:3

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. NIV

There is a face of God that we cannot see and live. Yet there is a face of God that if we do not seek, we shall surely die. Moses met God "face to face" in the cloud – that is by the mediation of the Holy Spirit. A further revelation of the Father would have been a death sentence (Gen. 32:30², Judg 13:21-22³)! But Moses could commune with God in the covering of the cloud and thus meet God "face to face."

C. The Name of the LORD

Ex 34:4-5

4 So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands.

5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. NIV

Verse 5:

- *The Lord came down in the cloud* -conviction of sin (Is. 44:22)⁴
- *He stood there with him* -conviction of righteousness (Jn. 16:10)⁵
- *He proclaimed the Name* -conviction of judgment (Jn. 12:28-32)⁶

Ex 34:6-7

6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." NIV

Verse 7:

- *Maintaining love* -conviction of sin (Heb 12:4-6)⁷

² Gen 32:30 So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared." NIV

³ Judg 13:21-22 ²¹When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD. ²²"We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!" NIV

⁴ Isa 44:22 "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you." NIV

⁵ John 16:10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; NIV

⁶ John 12:28-32 ²⁸Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." NIV

⁷ Heb 12:4-6 ⁴In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. ⁵And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's

- *Forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin* *-establishing righteousness*
- *Does not leave the guilty unpunished* *-executing judgment*

In the cloud, Moses receives a further revelation of the name of the Lord. The wonder of this name would be fully revealed with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the name above all names. Once again, the theme of sin, righteousness, and judgment is seen. The Holy Spirit accomplishes His convicting work that we might know Jesus, and in knowing Jesus we come to know the Father.

2 Cor 3:7-9, 17-18

7 Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was,

8 will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. NIV

Because the Holy Spirit has been poured out on us, we are able to behold the face of the Lord Jesus and be changed to the image of His glory, which is the glory of the Father (Heb. 1:3).

II. The Cloud of God's Habitation – Ps. 22:3

Ps 22:3 "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." KJV

1. Comparisons with Cumulonimbus Capillatus
[Show thundercloud overhead.]

2. His appearance in response to worship

A. In the tabernacle

Ex 40:26-29, 34

26 Moses placed the gold altar in the Tent of Meeting in front of the curtain
27 and burned fragrant incense on it, as the LORD commanded him.

28 Then he put up the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.

29 He set the altar of burnt offering near the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting, and offered on it burnt offerings and grain offerings, as the LORD commanded him.

34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. NIV

discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, ⁶because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." NIV

Moses burned incense (worship and intercession) and burnt offerings (sacrifice and praise) and the glory cloud filled the tabernacle.

B. In the temple

2 Chron 5:12-14

12 All the Levites who were musicians-Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives-stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets.

13 The trumpeters and singers joined in unison, as with one voice, to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, they raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever." Then the temple of the LORD was filled with a cloud,

14 and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God. NIV

When King Solomon dedicated the Temple, there were too many sheep and cattle sacrificed to count! In response to the sacrifice and praise, the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

1 Kings 8:6, 9-13 NIV

6 The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.

9 **There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb,** where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD.

11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple.

12 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud;

13 I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

This is the same incident from a different perspective. In 1 Kings, the appearance of the cloud is connected with the placing of the ark (and thus the covenant of God) in the holy of holies of the temple.

➤ *We are the temple of the Holy Spirit - 1 Cor 3:16⁸*

➤ *When we are saved, the law of God is written in our hearts -2 Cor 3:3⁹*

➤ *The Holy Spirit takes residence in our hearts (Eph 2:22¹⁰) and we manifest the Lord's glory (2 Cor 3:18¹¹).*

⁸ 1 Cor 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? NIV

⁹ 2 Cor 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. NIV

¹⁰ Eph 2:22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. NIV

C. In us

1 Cor 6:19-20

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. NIV

We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. That His glory can shine from us is evident by the story of Stephen.

Acts 6:15

All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel. NIV

Acts 7:47-51

47 But it was Solomon who built the house for him.

48 "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

49 "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?

50 Has not my hand made all these things?'

51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! NIV

The Holy Spirit was clearly evident on his face as he preached the Gospel to the Sanhedrin. The "glory cloud" that was on Stephen revealed to him the Father and the Son.

Acts 7:55-56

55 But Stephen, **full of the Holy Spirit**, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

56 "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." NIV

III. The Cloud of Sacrifice and Intercession

1. Sacrifice

Acts 2:17-19

17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. NIV

¹¹ 2 Cor 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. NIV

Peter is quoting the prophet Joel¹² with reference to what had occurred on the day of Pentecost. This “blood, fire, and pillars of smoke” takes us all the way back to the first appearance of the cloud when God cut covenant with Abram in Genesis 15. Though in the natural Joel was speaking of the return of the daily sacrifice to the Temple, it was prophetic of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

As we discussed when we looked at the dove, the Holy Spirit is a spirit of sacrifice.

- *Blood* - *the blood of Jesus.*
- *Fire* - *the work of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Pillars of smoke* - *sacrifices of praise.*

In the Old Testament system, there were two columns of smoke: one from the altar of burnt offering (sacrifice) and one from the altar of incense (intercession).

2. Intercession

A. Natural cloud observations

- Cumulonimbus Capillatus (the anvil headed thundercloud) has the longest vertical extension of all cloud formations at times reaching from 3000’ up to 60,000’.
- Nah 1:3 “The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. **His way is in the whirlwind** and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.” NIV *When a funnel cloud drops out of the bottom of the thunderstorm and births a tornado, heaven and earth are connected in a very tangible and visible way. The wind of heaven swirls to the ground and the vacuum it creates pulls earth up to heaven.*

B. The altar of incense

Lev 16:12-13

12 He [Aaron] is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain.

13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and **the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die.** NIV

- The Lord appeared in a cloud over the atonement cover. Aaron was to provide a cloud of smoke to come between him and the glory of God that he would not die.
- The smoke of incense represents the prayers of the saints (intercession). Rev 5:8¹³

Eph 2:18 “For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” NIV

Because of the accomplished work of Jesus Christ, we have access to the Father by way of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our cloud of intercessory prayer.

¹² Joel 2:30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. NIV

¹³ Rev 5:8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. NIV

Rom 8:26-28

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but **the Spirit himself intercedes for us** with groans that words cannot express.

27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. NIV

C. Prayer points

Zech 10:1

Ask the LORD for rain In the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone. NKJV

I believe that we are in the time of the latter rain (the springtime rain). We need to ask the Lord for His outpouring and He will send the flashing cloud and refreshing showers (the light and outpouring of the Holy Spirit).

Isa 45:8

"Rain down, you heavens, from above, And let the skies pour down righteousness; Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation, And let righteousness spring up together. I, the LORD, have created it. NKJV

We cannot forget that rain is for a harvest. When we pray for the Holy Spirit to pour out His righteousness on us, let us also seek the Lord for open doors of utterance (an open earth) that they might bring forth salvation!

Conclusion-

God wants us to know that He communes with us through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit leads us in praise, sacrifice and intercession. His manifest glory in our lives as He convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment are to keep us from evil and enable us to reap in the Lord's harvest field that we may all enter the promised land together! Amen!

[Share the grace – 2 Cor 13:14, Ps 23:6]