

Christ and the Pillar of Cloud

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Christ has many names and titles associated with his responsibilities and work (Ex. 23:20-21; cf. Isa. 9:6; Rev. 19:11-15). In addition to this, Christ was identified by one particular manifestation associated with Israel's exodus from Egypt. Once this is understood, a connection can be made between Christ and other members of Almighty God's spiritual household.

Moreover, brethren, I (Paul) do not want you to be unaware that all **our fathers were under the cloud**, all passed through the (Red) sea (1Cor. 10:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

The scripture above describes the Israelites coming out of Egypt under, what appears to be, a cloud like any other seen in the sky. However, upon closer scrutiny this is no ordinary cloud.

And **the Lord went before them** (the Israelites) **by day in a pillar of cloud** to lead the way... (Ex. 13:21a; cf. 13:22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The cloud that led them out of Egyptian slavery also appeared when the Lord stood at the door of the tabernacle.

Then **the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud** and stood in the door of the tabernacle... (Nu. 12:5a; emphasis added).

It is an assumption to think this is an ordinary physical cloud. In reality, the pillar of cloud was synonymous with the Angel of God. As Paul confirmed, ancient Israel was baptized "unto (by, or through the action of) Moses in the

cloud" (1Cor. 10:2). As no one can be baptized into another human being, the Israelites were not baptized into Moses. Instead, they were baptized into the spirit-being that would later become known as Jesus Christ (1Cor. 10:4; cf. Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1Cor. 12:13). In the following scripture, Moses' description of the Angel of God and the pillar of cloud make the two synonymous. In other words, these were not two separate entities. Instead, Moses was explaining that the Angel of God was a pillar of cloud whenever he manifested himself as such.

And **the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them** (Ex. 14:19).

This was a miraculous phenomenon because no physical cloud in the sky could lead a nation through the wilderness; let alone manifest itself as darkness to one group of people while simultaneously providing light to another.

So it (the cloud) came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus **it was a cloud and darkness to the one** (the Egyptians), and **it gave light by night to the other** (the Israelites), so that the one (group) did not come near the other all that night (Ex. 14:20; cf. 14:24; Nu. 14:14; Isa. 58:8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The following scripture confirms there was no separation between this cloud, and the spirit-being that Paul described as "that spiritual Rock," which was Jesus Christ (1Cor. 10:4).

Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, **the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud**

(Ex. 16:10; cf. 24:15-18; 34:5; 40:34-38; Lev. 16:2; emphasis added).

This same cloud is associated with giving the law and commandments of Almighty God to the nation of Israel.

And **the Lord said to Moses, 'Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud**, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever' (Ex. 19:9a; cf. 19:16; emphasis added).

Therefore, contrary to what many Christians teach today, Christ not only upholds his Father's law and commandments today, he was the spirit-being who gave them to ancient Israel. Almighty God did not pronounce these commands at Mt. Sinai, because no one has ever seen or heard Him.

And the Father Himself, who sent me (Christ), has testified of me. **You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form** (Jn. 5:37; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he (Christ) who is from God (Almighty); he (Christ) has seen the Father (Jn. 6:46; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Before proceeding any further, it is important to note that Exodus 19:9 is prophetic because it states that Moses' teachings would "last forever"; despite every effort to ignore or destroy them.

... 'that the people may hear when I (the Angel of God) speak with you, and **believe you** (Moses) **forever**' (Ex. 19:9a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Therefore the law and commandments that Almighty God gave to His Angel, were then given

to Moses and the Israelites. These same commands are being taught today and will continue forever (Gen. 18:19; Ex. 12:24; 31:17; 32:13; Lev. 16:29, 31). This process began on a national scale when Christ pronounced his Father's law and commandments at Mt. Sinai. Christ taught his disciples these same commands during his earthly ministry (Mt. 7:21-23; 19:17; Jn. 15:14). Following Christ's return to rule this planet, he will enforce his Father's law and commandments because he does not change (Heb. 13:8; cf. Isa.2:2-4; cf. Zech. 14:16-19). Therefore, whatever his Father told him to do in the past, he will do again in the future.

For I (Christ) have not spoken on my own authority; but the Father who sent me gave me a command, what I should say and what I should speak (Jn. 12:49; Ed. note in parenthesis).

...Therefore, whatever I (Christ) speak, just as the Father has told me, so I speak (Jn. 12:50b; Ed. note in parenthesis; cf. Jn. 14:10).

Almighty God also gave His Angel the authority to judge, and examples of this occurred frequently throughout Israel's history (Ex. 23:20-21). In many instances, this judgment was associated with the same cloud that brought the Israelites out of Egypt.

And **when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous**, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper (Nu. 12:10; cf. 16:42-45).

The Angel of God, who later became known as Jesus Christ, confirmed that Almighty God had given him responsibility to judge matters in accordance with the law and commandments.

For **the Father** judges no one, but **has committed all judgment to the Son** (Jn. 5:22; emphasis added).

Just as the cloud was always with ancient Israel, so Christ promised to be with the individuals that Almighty God had given to him (Jn. 6:44, 65).

I will not leave you (Christ's disciples) orphans; I will come to you (Jn. 14:18; cf. Mt. 18:20; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Jesus Christ is seen prophetically as returning to rule this planet "in a cloud." This associates him with the same cloud that led ancient Israel out of Egypt.

Then they will see **the Son of Man coming in a cloud** with power and great glory (Lk. 21:28; emphasis added).

Christ is also seen as a mighty angel coming in a cloud.

And I (John) saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, **clothed with a cloud**. And a rainbow was on his head; **his face was like the sun**, and his feet like pillars of fire (Rev. 10:1; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

... 'These things, says **the Son of God who has eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass**' (Rev. 2:18b; emphasis added).

This mighty angel spoke with Moses on Mt. Sinai, and protected Moses from the brightness of his glory.

And he (Moses) said, 'Please, show me your (the Angel of God's) glory' (Ex. 33:18).

But he (the Angel of God) said, 'You cannot see my face; for no man can see me, and live.'²¹And

the Lord said, 'Here is a place by me, and you shall stand on the rock.'²²So it shall be, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand while I pass by.²³Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but **my face shall not be seen** (because it was like the sun in glory; cf. Rev. 10:1) (Ex. 33:20-23; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Other loyal spirit-beings, or angels, are also described in scripture as "clouds."

Therefore we (human beings who have repented of sin and been baptized; cf. Ac. 2:38) also, since **we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**... (Heb. 12:1a; cf. Heb. 1:13-14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Disloyal spirit-beings are also described as clouds, but devoid of the water that symbolizes God's Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:38-39).

...they (fallen host and everyone under their influence) are **clouds without water**, carried about (along) by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit (another symbol of the fallen host; cf. Eze.31:6-18), twice dead, pulled up by the roots (Jude 12b; cf. Prov. 25:14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

These (fallen host and everyone under their influence) are **wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest**, to whom the gloom of darkness is reserved (for a future judgment) (2Pet. 2:17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The prophet Ezekiel was given "visions of God" which included a great cloud. Therefore, any appearance of a cloud associated with visions, or miracles, needs to be viewed as symbolic and representative of spirit-beings, or angels.

Then I (Ezekiel) looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north (location associated with God's throne; Ps. 48:2; Isa. 14:13), **a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself**; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of fire (Ezekiel 1:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In a reference to creation, spirit-beings are described as "clouds above." Many will read this account and conclude it is describing literal physical clouds being created. However, with a clearer understanding of God's figurative language, scripture will reveal many activities in the spirit realm that otherwise would remain hidden.

When He (Almighty God) established the clouds (spirit-beings) above... (Prov. 8:28; Ed. notes in parentheses).

God also gives commands to these "clouds" or spirit-beings. In one example, some angels are told not to allow any rain (symbolic of God's truth) to fall on His people due to their sins. In this example, God's people are compared to His vineyard (Isa. 5:1).

I (God) will also command the clouds (angels who minister to God's people) that they rain no rain on it (God's vineyard representing His people) (Isa. 5:6b; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Everyone called and chosen by Almighty God will be in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6). These are the ones who repented of their sins, and continued living in accordance with God's law and commandments during their lifetime (Rom. 6:4). Following the first resurrection, these individuals will be fellowshiping with loyal angels who are described as "clouds" using God's symbolic language (Heb. 2:5-9).

Then we (God's elect) who are alive and remain (as physical human beings at the time of Christ's return) shall be caught up together with them (God's elect who died previously) **in the clouds** (with God's angels) to meet the Lord (Christ) in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (1Thes. 4:17; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So, combining the context of a scripture, with a correct understanding of God's symbolic language, often reveals activities occurring within the spirit realm. Ignoring this truth limits the reader to a literal interpretation of events in scripture and can lead to a misunderstanding of activities in the spirit realm. As a result, prophecies that pertain primarily to the spirit realm are erroneously applied to events that are purportedly going to take place on the physical earth.

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