

Chapter 1

The Glory of God

“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isa. 42:8).

Let’s open book by meditating on one of the prophetic songs that the Spirit often led us to sing during hours of worship and revival. I remember time and time again being among the people of God, when we sang one of these songs, and were caught up in the spirit. I distinctly remember experiencing an indescribable “wind of the Spirit” blow across the chapel hall, resulting in a sweet refreshing and an overflowing refilling of the Spirit from the presence of the Lord. There’s no doubt in my mind that, in those moments, many of us had experienced the manifest presence of God in the midst of His people.

The trumpet is once again going forth, the season of refreshing is again upon us, and the hour of His favor has come.

*All over the world, the Spirit is moving.
All over the world, as the prophets said it would be,
All over the world, there’s a mighty revelation.
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

The word of the Lord came to Habakkuk, while he was ministering as a watchman, saying, “*Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it*” (Hab 2:2). Habakkuk gave his full attention to God, waiting upon the tower and quietly listening to hear what God would say to him. He set himself there as a “watchman upon the walls” of a besieged city or as a guard on the border of an invaded country. In the first verse, he said to himself: “I will take my position and be on my watch, placing myself on my tower, I will look up, will look around, will look within, and will listen attentively to the words of His mouth so I can carefully observe His instructions and corrections.” We saw in the first chapter of his book how the prophet laments the iniquity of his time and cries with grief for the decay of righteousness among God’s covenant people. It was for this reason that God raised up the Chaldeans, a fierce and cruel nation to devastate Israel and be a dreadful scourge unto them to make them return to Him (Hab 1:6-7). Habakkuk cried unto the Lord to save His people from this terrible nation. After he had prayed, he set himself upon his watch, waiting for the answer from God.

This wise prophet employed all the means at his disposal to facilitate hearing from the Lord. He made a quality decision to eliminate all distractions and set himself upon the tower, and with all his attention focused on God was watching and waiting and listening to what God would say. Dearly beloved, as we are desirous of hearing from God daily in this loud and busy world, we must withdraw from the world, rise above her, and must raise our attention and fix our spirit and soul on what the Spirit is saying or about to say to the Church. Habakkuk’s decision to stand upon his watch signifies his patience, constancy, and resolution. He decided that come rain come snow; he would weather the storm, as a watchman does, and would keep waiting until he heard from the Lord. In this, Habakkuk the prophet was an example for us. We must fix our attention upon God and concentrate on Him. As the Psalmist said, “*My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up*” (Psa 5:30). Like an arrow, the Psalmist said he would direct his prayer accurately to the Lord and will then wait and listen carefully to “*hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly. Surely his*

salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land” (Psa 85:8,9).

And so the Lord answered Habakkuk saying, “Write the vision.” He had been praying and waiting on God and now, the reply had come. The answer had come, and the prophet was to proclaim the message to the nation. However, he was not only to tell it to the people then present, but also to write it that it may be read by the generations to come. The word of the Lord came to him concerning the immediate deliverance of the people of God, the destruction of their enemies, and of greater importance and of eternal significance, the manifestation of the glory of God in the midst of His people here on earth.

“And Jehovah answered me and said, Write the vision and engrave it on the tablets, that he who reads it may run” (Hab 2:2 LITV). The Lord told him to write down the message he was given through the vision, and not only that, but also to engrave it on tablets for clarity and to preserve it for posterity. This is to show the urgency of the message and to make it clear to all who read it. The message was to be engraved in plain legible letters on tablet of wood, ***That he may run that readeth it.*** It was to be written in such large capital letters, and made so plain, that a man might read the entire message with ease, and act upon the instruction with the urgency it deserves.

“And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, Zec 2:4 And said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein: Zec 2:5 For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.

Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith the LORD of hosts; After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye” (Zec 2:3-7).

The word of the Lord comes to a prophet, and it is the responsibility of that prophet to run with it. It is incumbent upon the prophet to ensure that the word is delivered to those intended with clarity. Those given charges of preaching the word of God should endeavor to make

themselves intelligible to the people they're sent. In addition, every believer must learn how to share his or her faith with others with clarity and confidence. We must all be diligent in prayer and should study *"to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Timothy 2:15). *"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"* (1 Peter 3:15).

God told prophet Habakkuk that because the vision was for an appointed time, the people of Israel must exercise faith and patience and wait for its fulfillment, because it would surely come to pass.

The people of God in the days of Habakkuk were to persevere and wait for the accomplishment of the *vision* (Hab 2:3). God told Habakkuk that the deliverance of His people from the power of the Chaldeans was imminent, but that they would need to wait for the appointed time in the counsel of God. *"The vision is yet for an appointed time", the Lord told Habakkuk.* It is set for *a particular season in the calendar of God;* for to *"every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven"* (Ecc 3:1). God has designated a specific time for specific work, and will surely complete His work at the appointed time. It is not for us to specify or to suggest the time schedule for God to perform His work, but to walk in faith, and to trust Him; for the Lord is saying the same thing to us that:

"The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:3,4).

Be of good courage my dear friends, the promises God made to you may seem to be dormant and not forthcoming for a great while, but it will come to pass. God's admonition to us is to walk in faith and wait for the manifestation of His promises. To inherit the promises of God we must not be weary in our walk of faith. The apostle admonishes us sayings: *"let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"* (Gal 6:9,10). Even if the promises tarry, let's keep holding on to faith for *"God is not slack concerning his promise,*

as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pe 3:9).

And so the word of the Lord came to the watchman prophet in answer to his prayers. The word that came spoke of salvation for Israel and total deliverance from their enemies. But the ultimate promise is that the Lord God will come to His people and that His glory will shine in their midst once again.

“O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah.

His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power” (Hab 3:2-4).

Paul the apostle left us a similar admonition in the tenth Epistle to the Hebrews. Here we are also admonished to wait patiently and to walk by faith so we can obtain the promises.

“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb 10:36-39).

To Habakkuk, the word of admonition was: *“Though it delays, wait for it, because coming it will come; it will not tarry”*(Hab 2:3,LITV). While, to us in the book of Hebrews, the apostle presents the same message in a slightly different way, stressing that we need to be patient to receive the promises and that in *“a little while, he that shall come will come, and will not tarry”* (Heb 10:37). The message in both passages was completed with the phrase—*“The just shall live by faith”*, which is the core of our Christian walk.

Therefore, to all you dear friends who have been praying, watching, seeking God, and waiting patiently in faith for a crucial promise, the Lord gives this vision. To all you *righteous one that live by faith*, comes this response of the "vision" of Habakkuk. The Lord says: "Don't give up. Don't faint in your faith; though it delays, wait for the promise. It is heading your way. It will arrive soon. Wait for it, it is about to knock at your door.

And to the body of Christ, the Lord God sends a message through the vision of Habakkuk. It's a message to be boldly written for our generation; a message to be carved in tablets for preservation for the coming generations; and a message to be written so clearly and with such urgency that all may run that read it. The message is that "***the Lord our God will return in mighty power and great glory***, and, as clearly delivered to Habakkuk, that "*the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea*" (*Hab 2:14*).

This fourteen verse of the second chapter of the Book of Habakkuk, is the climax of the prophesy in the vision given to Habakkuk.

God is by His Spirit, in this day and hour, speaking to the Church concerning the next divine visitation from the Throne. The Spirit is moving all over the world, and a fresh visitation of His manifest presence is upon us. "*The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie*"; "*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*" (*Heb 10:37, Hab 2:14*)

The words of the song in the opening section of this Chapter captures the "vision" that God has given the Church to be released upon us in this hour. The move of the Spirit, the manifestation of the Spirit, the transformational power of the Spirit, and the wonder-working supernatural power of the Spirit of God in its fullness is about to be unleashed upon the Church. We are beginning to hear the sound of the trumpets announcing the advent of the Feasts of Fullness. The glory of the Lord is about to fill His temple as the Spirit moves to the glory of our Father God. And all the earth will be totally covered and filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

The Spirit is moving; the Spirit is moving.

*The Spirit is moving; to the glory of the LORD.
The Spirit is moving; the Spirit is moving.
The Spirit is moving; to the glory of the LORD.*

In the New Testament, the Greek word for glory is “*doxazo*”, and its usage is meant to convey a sense of divine beauty and magnificence, and supernatural radiance and brightness. This word is used to describe the glory of God and the brightness of those who share in the heavenly glory. It describes the splendor and supernatural radiance of the dwelling place of the Most High God.

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev 21:10-11).

The glory of God is associated with light, a light so bright that no man can look straight at it without becoming blind instantly. That was the light that appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the way to Damascus. *“And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”* (Acts 9:3-4). When Saul got up from where he had fallen while seeing this vision, he was blind. The glory of God had appeared to him on the way. That glory of God is the light that lightens where the manifest Presence of God is. It is the light inside the cloud of His presence; it is the light that lightens the Holy of Holies; it is the light that lightens the city of God, even the New Jerusalem. *“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof”* (Rev 21:23).

In summary, the true meaning of this is that only God deserves glory, honor, and majesty. The glory of man is as grass, which withers away. Only He *“hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen”* (1 Timothy 6:16).

During the journeying of Israel in the wilderness, the primary way in

which God appeared to them, and manifested His glory, was in a cloud. We cannot describe exactly what this cloud looked like, but we get the impression from the Bible that it glowed brightly with some kind of divine light inside it. In fact, most of the time we think of the glory of God, we always associate light and divine radiance with it. And the Scripture confirms this also in the Books of Ezekiel and Revelation (Eze 1:28; Rev 21:23).

This glory of the Lord refers to the beauty and magnificence of the person and being of God Himself. When the psalmists give glory to the Lord, they're pointing out those attributes of His that exclusively give Him weight, honor, and importance. Words fail to describe exactly what God's glory looks like, but various descriptions of it in Scripture seem to indicate that it'll be the most beautiful sight we'll ever experience. All of the goodness and beauty we see in this present world is nothing in comparison to the refulgent glory of His Presence. Only He deserves glory and honor. Only He deserves worship and adoration.

"Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all" (I Ch 29:11).

The Glory of God

This brings us to the consideration of the ways in which God manifested His glory in our universe. The Bible teaches that God has displayed His glory through nature or through His creation. The Psalmist of Israel sang these words in the nineteenth psalm:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psa 19:2-4).

That was David's way of saying that the heavens display the awesomeness of God's beauty and splendor. The firmament preaches

sermons of God's greatness and divine ingenuity. The heavens and the firmament both preach sermons upon sermons about the existence of an omnipotent creator. God's Word translation renders the passage above as saying:

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky displays what his hands have made. One day tells a story to the next. One night shares knowledge with the next without talking, without words, without their voices being heard.

Yet, their sound has gone out into the entire world, their message to the ends of the earth. He has set up a tent in the heavens for the sun" (Psa 19:1-4).

The Psalmist stated that although there's no audible voice or sound, the message from the sky and the heavens are so clear that all should understand the messages they convey. This is not very clear in the King James translation, but clearly rendered in GW and Rotherham translations. *"There is no speech, and there are no words- unheard is their voice! Yet through all the earth hath gone forth their voice, and to the ends of the world their sayings"* (GW).

What did David know of the heavens and how they express the glory of God? What does David mean when he says that every day speaks to him and to us? What does he mean when he declares that every night is a showing forth of knowledge? To what does he refer when he says that there is no place where "their voice is not heard"? Surely there is something more here than a mere wonder on David's part evoked by the immensity and grandeur of the star-lit sky. When we read the whole passage and note the words employed, we are told that the heavens contain a revelation from God; they prophesy, they teach knowledge, they tell of God's glory, and set forth His purposes and counsels.

The heavens do not speak English, yet they speak to every Englishman and every American. The heavens do not speak French, but they speak to every Frenchman. They do not speak Spanish, yet they preach to every Spaniard. They speak in every language to every people. And they speak and reveal the majesty of God's great plan and purposes to

His creation. This book of creation is not sold in bookstores, but it is to be read by everyone who lifts his eyes up to heaven.

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”(Rom 1:20). Have you ever been deeply impressed with the awesome greatness of God when you walked outdoors on a clear night and gazed up into the magnificent star-studded heavens? Yes indeed! The heavens declare His glory and the firmament His handiwork.

In which and what ways has this glory of God appeared? The primary word translated "glory" in the Bible, as mentioned above, literally means "heavy," "weight," or "substance." The glory of a person is the weight and substance associated with that person. When someone says, "She carries a lot of weight". What does that mean? What it means is that there is something very impressive about the lady being referred to that enables her to influence other people. In the first Book of the Bible, Jacob's wealth is called the "glory" of Jacob (Gen. 31:1). What that means is that Jacob was such an excessively wealthy man that that is what really impressed other people with Jacob, that is what gave him influence with those about him, that is what caused them to sit up and take note of who he was.

And then again in the book of Genesis, Joseph's very high position as the Prime Minister of Egypt is called the "glory" of Joseph (Gen. 45:13). Again, that simply means that it was the special position of Joseph in the government that impressed other people and gave him influence in the lives of his contemporaries. It was his powerful office that caused other people to have great respect for him. In Isa. 8:7 the Assyrian's great military power is called their "glory." The glory of man is that which is impressive or influential about a person. But this is earthly glory that has no weight with respect to true glory.

True glory is the weight, the divine essence and substance an entity possesses. What is the glory of a man? How much is his eternal weight? After he's dead and his remains are gathered in a casket, how much does he weigh? How much does what remains of him weigh eternally? *For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth*

away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever. (1 Peter 1:24)

“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory” (I Cor 15:40,41).

The Apostle begins his illustration in this verse by contrasting between bodies that belong to heavenly beings, like the resurrected body of the Lord or those of angels, with earthly bodies of humans and earthly organism. The sun has glory and the moon has its glory, but one surpasses the other in glory or brightness. *One star differeth from another star in glory.* The righteous shall shine as "the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn others to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever" (Dan12:3). Their future glorified bodies shall differ from their present, as one star differs from another.

The glory of God is the radiance of His holiness and perfection, the radiance of His infinite worth and majesty, and the radiance of His infinite beauty and splendor. It is an expression of infinite honor and majesty attributable only to the Almighty. God's glory is the awesome display of His beauty and holiness as declared by the seraphims in the sixth chapter of Isaiah.

“Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa 6:2,3).

The seraphim said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty". They continued by stating that the whole earth is full of His "glory". This means His Holiness fills the earth, and it manifests as divine "glory". His glory is the manifest radiance of God's splendor, holiness, and perfection. And when it goes public in the earth and fills it, it shows off as divine "glory." This is why divine glory is usually associated with the Presence of God in the midst His people. Moses understood this when he pleaded with God to go with them during the wilderness journey. "If Your Presence goes not with us," Moses pleaded, "do not

cause us to go up from here”. God heard and said, “*My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest*”(Ex 33: 14). After this, Moses then summoned enough courage to ask God to show him His glory.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen” (Exo 33:17-23).

The holiness of God can be defined as His divine and intrinsic attribute which is of infinite worth and value. And when the holiness of God becomes manifest in His creation, the whole earth will be full of His glory. The heavens will then perfectly display the glory of God, and man will fully manifest His glory, for he was created in His image.

Jehovah is the Most High God. He is great and greatly to be praised. He is the God of glory who appeared to our father Abraham as beautifully stated by Stephen:

*“And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The **God of glory** appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee”* (Act 7:2,3)

God is the source of glory. He is the genesis and the originator of all glory. In Him all glory emanates. He is the glorious God and in Him alone is found divine perfection and absolute splendor. He is glorious in Himself, in all his Persons. And the glory we’re discussing in this

book is from Him and of Him, the “God, and the King of Glory” (Psalm 24:7).

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah” (Psa 24:7-10).

My dear friends, the Holy Spirit is thus urging you today to lift open all the gates of your hearts and mind and the Jesus the King of glory in to become Lord and King over your life. Yes, you have received Him into your life and He’s your savior, but is He truly king? Is He ruling and reigning over your life? Is He just a silent listener at your table or does He call the shots? The King of glory wants to fill you, his house with beauty and splendor. He wants to fill His temple, that you are, with glory; Will you let Him?

The God of glory appeared to Abraham our father just before he set out on his journey to the land God promised him and his descendants. Several hundreds of years later, the glory of God appeared to Abraham’s descendants in the wilderness, coming out of Egypt and, on their way to the same land He promised Abraham few hundred years earlier.

The Glory of God Appeared

“And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger” (Exo 16:1-3).

*“And Moses said, This shall be, when the LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against the LORD. And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto 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**”* (Exo 16:8-10)

It’s interesting that we find the children of Israel murmuring against God here just after granting them a miraculous favor in the wilderness which gave them a refreshing experience. Just few days prior to this, they were at Elim where God gave them refreshing encampment. There at Elim, in the middle of the desert, God provided for them a camp with twelve wells and seventy palm trees. It was a cool and refreshing camp. And just before this camp God assured them that if they would obey Him, He will not only be their Deliverer from Egypt, but that He will also be their “*Jehovah Raphah*”, the Lord their Healer.

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.

And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters” (Exo 15:26,27).

But what happened few days later. They forgot all He did for them. They murmured against Him, and told Him it would have been better if He had left them in Egypt. They indicated that they preferred Egypt...they spoke against Him

and ridiculed all He did for them. The psalmist gave a better description of their actions in the seventy-eighth psalm:

“And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shown them. Marvelous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as a heap. In the day-time also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He cleaved the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the Most High in the wilderness. And they tempted God in their heart by asking food for their desire.

Yes, they spoke against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?" (Psa 78:11-25).

It was around two and a half month after they departed from Egypt, that the children of Israel began to desire to go back. They gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron and began murmuring. They said they preferred to have died in the land of Egypt while sitting by the flesh-pot and eating bread to satisfaction. They desired to return. It is for our sake, so we do not follow their step of rebellion that the prophet wrote: *"Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and rely on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!" (Isa 31:1 Webster).*

What do we see in the Church today? Don't we see a generation returning in drones to partake in the flesh-pot of Egypt? Sadly so; we see a new brand of believers who are no longer different from the people of the world among whom they have been "called out." They live in the flesh, walk in the flesh, and compete with the worldly men at the flesh-pots of Egypt. Not only that, they even run to the diviners of Egypt for help and trust in their armor for protection. Though these ones say they are born-again, and they could indeed be, but by their actions, they have spoken against the Lord and have not trusted in His salvation. Like the murmuring children of Israel discussed above who were also already delivered from Egyptian bondage but spoke against the Lord and did not believe, these new brand 'born-again' ones are, in essence, doubting God ability to *"furnish a table in the wilderness" and His ability to protect his people?" (Psa 78:11-25).*

In the Exodus incidence above, after Moses and Aaron had heard and endured the murmurings of the people against them and against the Lord, Moses declared God's response to the people. *"This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt"* (Acts 7:37-39).

Moses and Aaron told the congregation to expect God's response, saying:

"And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?" (Exo 16:7)

Moses and Aaron told them that God has heard their bitter murmuring and complaints against Him and had decided to give them their fleshly desires. God would give them manna to eat for breakfast, and would rain down meat for them to eat for dinner and they would eat to their heart's content. It was while Moses and Aaron were talking to the congregation that the "glory of GOD" appeared to Israel for the first time. *And He appeared in the cloud.*

*"And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto 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**"* (Exo 16:7-10).

The first mention of the term "the glory of the Lord", is found in the 16th Chapter of the Book of Exodus.. *It was not a pleasant occasion for it was at the time when the children of Israel were murmuring against Moses and Aaron for bringing them forth from Egypt into the wilderness. In answer to their murmuring and fear Moses promised them that the Lord would give them bread in the morning and flesh in the evening and that the glory of the Lord would appear to them as an assurance of His presence. And God honored the words of His servants. Thus it came to pass, in the morning, as Aaron spoke to the*

people, the whole congregation looked toward the wilderness and, *“behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in a cloud”* (Exod. 16:10).

This cloud of glory that appeared to Israel, was not the natural dark rain cloud, but the glory of God's presence. And it appeared not in the direction of Egypt, but as they looked toward the wilderness. The cloud of glory, and the manifestation of God's presence are only visible to the called-out ones as he or she marches on towards the Promised Land. His Presence becomes palpable to the believer who is sensitive to the leading of the Spirit and marches onwards and upwards, toward the calling of God in Christ Jesus. Even though the wilderness is a dreary place, a place of dryness, of barrenness, of lack and scarcity, where pressure and danger abound and there's nowhere to hide from the heat; it is those who marches on in faith that will experience the saving Presence of He who had said: *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”*. Our part of the task, here in this wilderness, is to *trust and obey*; and not to murmur against God or against His Christ. When we trust and obey, His Presence will appear in the *glory cloud* to abide with us. He will appear, not to rebuke, but to rain showers of blessings upon us from within the cloud of glory.

If we, the people of God, will learn to trust and obey Him, we will constantly enjoy these abundant showers upon our lives. The presence of the cloud of glory over and around us will be evident and palpable. He will daily bring us forth with silver and gold, and there *will be no feeble one among our tribe*.

This was the glory cloud that lead them forty years in the wilderness. It was God's presence given to lead them by day and by night. In the daytime it hovered over the congregation as a blessed shadow, protecting them from the suffocating heat of the wilderness sun. At night it was the fire that protected them from wild beasts and gave them light. And God Himself dwelt in that cloud. As long as Israel walked in the light of His fiery presence, no evil could befall them, neither could any plague come near their dwellings. *“Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years”* **(Deut 8:4)**.

“And he brought them forth with silver and gold; and there was not one feeble among their tribes. Egypt rejoiced at their departure; for the fear of them had fallen upon them.

*He **spread a cloud** for a covering, and fire to give light in the night. They asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and waters gushed forth; they ran in the dry places like a river.*

For he remembered his holy word, and Abraham his servant; And he brought forth his people with gladness, his chosen with rejoicing” (Psa 105:37-43).

Chapter 2

Under the Cloud

“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1Co 10:1-6).

It was a day of mourning in Israel. Both young and old, men and women, clergy and laity, and even the men of war, all the congregation of the children of Israel lifted up their voice and cried all night. Why? Why were the people of God having an all night mourning party? They had just arrived at Kadesh, which was next door to the land of Canaan, and could have marched in after a few day’s journey to take the land. But there they were, at the door of their inheritance, the whole nation united in mourning, weeping all night, like one mourning the death of her firstborn.

Jehovah God, their covenant keeping God had brought them to the borders of the inheritance He promised. Moses had told them to go up and take the land. But the people proposed sending spies into the land

first. So Moses consented. God allowed them to send spies to the land, but this was prompted by their fear and unbelief. The spies went, and on their return brought back fruit samples from the land that flowed with milk and honey. The next correct steps for them to take, was to march-in, and possess the land. God's promise was that *He had given them the land*. However, they needed to march in to possess it. It was theirs, but they needed claim it by faith.

God has given us similar promises in His word. The Scriptures is the last Will and Testament left for us by our Lord Jesus. It is full of promises. He has left us an inheritance. But to enjoy it, we must claim and appropriate it by faith. What are you going to do about it, dearly beloved?

May we learn to obey God and go forward when He commands us to. May we not walk in fear and unbelief? May we not be of them that stand at the bank, testing the waters, when He tells us to jump in the river and swim in the ocean of His abundant blessings. May He help you and me to belong to the Caleb and Joshua generation, the generation of those that through faith and patience obtained the promises.

They therefore sent the spies out, who returned with news confirming exactly what God had told them concerning the land. They brought back evidence shown by the extraordinary cluster of grapes from the land as evidence of fruitfulness of the land, which indeed flowed with milk and honey.

“And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.

Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there.

And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Num 13:27-29,32-33).

But when the ten spies told the congregation that the giants, the descendant of Anak dwelt there, the children of Israel were totally emasculated. Fear and panic took over the whole assembly, and the nation of Israel cried all night because of the evil report brought by the ten spies. As a result of the evil report from the ten spies, the children of Israel began murmuring against Moses and Aaron and were about to result to mutiny.

How often do we allow the difficulties of life to draw us into unbelief and then cause us to speak evil of the position to which we have been divinely called? These originate from our forgetfulness of God’s promises. We must keep His word before our eyes and constantly dwell upon it in our heart. We must then rely upon Him, trust that He’s both able and willing, and will surely perform that which He has promised. When in difficult situations, we should not depend on our strength or abilities, but wholly rely on Him and His limitless resources.

Israel failed again. Was God a grasshopper in comparison to the sons of Anak? It was He who brought them out of Egypt and parted the Red Sea before them. It was He who had told them that He would bring them into the land of promise. Why did it matter if the walls were a mile high, or that the 9-foot giant tribe inhabited and defended the city? Since God was on their side, whoever or whatever stood against them would most surely fall for their sake. God had spoken, the only thing standing between them and their victory was their unbelief. *May it not be that way for you and me. May we not make God look like a grasshopper before the mountains and the giants that confronts us in our daily lives.*

Caleb and Joshua then stepped in. These two silenced the people and encouraged the congregation to consider the promises of God advising that the children of Israel should march in and take the land immediately. *“Let us go up at once and possess it,”* was the encouragement from Caleb and Joshua who had also gone as part of the twelve spies send to check out the land. These two brought a good

report of the land because they were trusting in the promise of God and had faith in His power to perform what He had promised.

“And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not” (Num 14:6-9).

Caleb was a type of the faithful remnant. He represented the company of those who have tasted the blessings of the land of promise and are introducing it to the people and encouraging the people of God to move into the realm of fullness. What happening among the masses of God’s people, God always leaves Himself a remnant. *“The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God”* (Isa 10:21). And through the remnant, or through the faith of the remnant, God brings deliverance to the masses. In the midst of apostasy and worldliness of a church generation, God has always left Himself a remnant.

However, the congregation did not appreciate what Caleb and Joshua said and the mob would have lynched both of them if God had not intervened.

*“But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And **the glory of the LORD** appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel”* (Num 14:10).

And the Lord was angry with His people because of their incessant provocation and told Moses He would disinherit them. Moses, the man of God and the intercessor for Israel stepped in again at this time as no one else could and pleaded on the behalf of the people. Thank God for Moses. He was their ever-present advocate before Jehovah. What a picture for us! Not a perfect picture of course, but at least a shadow picture of our resident Advocate, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is up in

heaven interceding continually for us, a high priest after the order of Melchisedek.

“And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)

*And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy **cloud standeth over them**, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night” (Num 14:13,14).*

Moses played an intermediary role between God and the people (*baptized into Moses*). God essentially met them in Moses and that was their preservation, otherwise, their sins would have destroyed them. *“it was through a prophet that Israel was saved, and it was by a prophet they were preserved”*. When God was displeased with Israel, He spoke to Moses about it. And that gave Moses opportunity to plead their case and receive mercy for them. This happened on several occasions in the wilderness. *It was by the prophet(Moses) that they were preserved*. On the other side, when Israel was displeased with God, they instantly made it known. They did this openly with bitter complaint and murmuring against Moses, and on this particular occasion, they were contemplating on stoning Moses and Aaron to death. Here he was a type of Christ, who interceded for his persecutors, and *prayed for those that spitefully used Him*, leaving us an example to follow in His steps (Mat 5:44).

Moses’ intercessory prayer was, *“Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now”* (Num 14:19). This prayer was similar to the intercessory prayer of our Lord Jesus for those that crucified him. *“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do”* (Luke 23:34).

However, most of their complaint and murmurings against Moses, was indeed not against him, but directed against God. It was God who had brought them out of Egypt. He was to blame for all their problems. However, Moses took the brunt of their complaining because he was the one standing in between, for He was the intermediary and the

intercessor who had access to and was the link between both God and man. Everything that transpired between God and Israel went through the hands of Moses. When they were displeased with God they told Moses of it (Num 14:2); when God was displeased with them He revealed it to Moses. For the Scripture says “Certainly, the Almighty LORD doesn't do anything unless he first reveals his secret to his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7 GW). And Moses was a prophet, and more than a prophet but also shepherd and intercessor of the erring people passing through the wilderness. He therefore watched over them, carried their burden, and pleaded for them averting disaster on several occasions when their sins could have destroyed them.

On this occasion, what God said to Moses was that the *children of Israel* would not regard His words but that they continuously treated Him with contempt. This was because they had said,

"If only we had died in Egypt or this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land-just to have us die in battle? Our wives and children will be taken as prisoners of war! Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" They said to each other, "Let's choose a leader and go back to Egypt" (Num 14:2-4).

What a mutiny! They most likely had decided to get rid of Moses and Aaron and were planning to choose a new leader from among themselves to lead them back to Egypt. It was at this juncture that Caleb and Joshua stepped in and spoke saying:

"The land we explored is very good. If the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us. This is a land flowing with milk and honey!

Don't rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land. We will devour them like bread. They have no protection, and the LORD is with us. So don't be afraid of them" (Num 14:7-9, GW).

Israel chose to believe the report of the ten spies and would not listen to Caleb and Joshua. The carnal man always prefers the counsel of the flesh and would rather walk in the flesh rather than walk by faith. So it was here.

But when the congregation of Israel talked about stoning Moses and Aaron to death, the stake was raised to a whole new level. It was at that instance that the *glory of the Lord* appeared unto them, shining upon the Tent of meeting (Num 14:10). That was when the Lord spoke to Moses.

The Lord will defend His anointed ones. They don't need to defend themselves, or threaten their attackers; the Lord is the defender of His messengers. Consider what Moses did on this occasion. When the people confronted him, were planning to stone him, and said they would choose a leader to take them back to Egypt. The Scriptures tell us that "*Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces touching the ground in front of the whole community of Israel assembled there*" (Num 14:5). Moses was, in effect, pleading with them not to rebel against the Lord. And Caleb and Joshua joined Moses by speaking for the Lord.

Moses did not try to defend himself neither did he threaten them that God would strike them down if they dared touch him like many of our fire and brimstone preachers fragrantly do today. He fell on his face pleading with them. Neither did he care for his own life, for he had given all up to obey God and to ensure His plan with regards to His people Israel, came to pass.

It was when the people were heading toward mutiny, would not listen to Caleb and Joshua, but were hatching the plan to kill Moses and Aaron that the glory of God appeared. The glory of God appeared as a shining cloud upon the Tabernacle of the congregation. In pleading with God, Moses described the appearances of God in the glory cloud to His people in the wilderness as follows:

"And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;)

*And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy **cloud** standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud and in a pillar of fire by night"* (Num 14:13-14).

"Thy Cloud Standeth Over Them"

What did the glory cloud signify every time it appeared before His children in the wilderness? The glory cloud signified the unique presence of God. It always told the people of Israel, when it appeared, that Jehovah was present at that place, in the cloud at that time, for a special purpose. On the occasion discussed above, the cloud appeared to defend the Lord's anointed and to correct the rebellious people. The Lord God Almighty was in the cloud. It was His glory cloud made manifest before Israel.

When Moses was pleading with God on their behalf, he used the fact that the surrounding nations already knew that the manifest presence of Jehovah God was with Israel; that the children of Israel, His people had seen Him with their eyes when He appeared to them in the glory cloud. He was reminding God that the Egyptians and the rest of the heathen nation would mock His name and conclude that because He, God, could not take His people all the way to the land of promise as He promised, that was why they perished in the wilderness. "They would say", Moses explained, "*even though His cloud standeth over them, and He led them them by day in a pillar of cloud, and at night, but because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore to them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness*" (Num 14:16).

While Israel walked in the light of God's presence, and under the protection of the cloud, no calamity could harm them, no enemy could attack them, no evil could befall them, neither could any plague come nigh their dwelling. God was with them in sovereign power in all their marches. "And the Lord said unto Moses, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe for ever" (Ex. 19:9). And again, "*And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the Holy Place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in **the cloud upon the mercy seat***" (Lev. 16:2).

The key text for this chapter comes from apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians. In the opening verse of the tenth chapter of his first epistle, the apostle writes: "*I want you to know, brothers and sisters,*

*that all our ancestors who left Egypt were **under the cloud**, and they all went through the sea” (1 Co 10:1).*

A large portion of the saints at Corinthian were Gentiles and were not intimate with the miraculous Exodus of God’s people from Egypt. They were uninformed concerning the dealings of God with the Jews during their passage through the wilderness. And even those that were Jews among them might not, distinctly in their recollection, remember most of the things God did for their forefathers in the journey to the land of promise. And those that remember through the reading of the Old Testament might not necessarily have a clear understanding of importance and the examples that God kept in those pages for the New Testament Church. The apostle, therefore in this letter, clearly brings these to their recollection as an illustration and as an admonition.

In doing this, he was warning them as well as us, present-day believers, not to be careless or rebellious in our Christian walk as most of them were, but to submit and consecrate ourselves to God. What he was saying was, *“I would not have you unmindful or forgetful of these things that happened to them but would have you recollect their experience, and let their example influence your conduct to godly living”*. The Corinthian believers were converted from idol worship and were in danger of returning to it due to strong influence from their former friends and pagan families. The apostle began the thread of this message from the earlier chapters, admonishing them that they were the temple of God and should conduct themselves as fitting for God’s holy dwelling. So in this tenth chapter, he drew the analogy with the forefathers in the wilderness, who were under the mighty power and glory of God but did not all please Him. He then warns the Corinthians and in turn warns us present day believers saying:

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of

serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor 10:5-11).

God would not want either you or me to be ignorant either. He does not want what happened to them to happen to us. He wants us to take note of what happened to them, learn from their errors of the rebels, and embrace the faith of Caleb and Joshua; for as apostle Paul said, **“all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come”** (1 Co 10:11).

The verse states, “that our fathers were under the cloud”. As we discovered above, the cloud was a symbol of the divine presence of God with the Israelites. It was a visible manifestation of the Presence of God as on Mount Sinai, in the Tabernacle, and in the Temple of Solomon.. They were all under the divine covering. The cloud served several purposes. The Psalmist gave a beautiful rendition of this in the 105th psalm:

“He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river. For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness” (Psa 105:37-43).

The glory cloud was a protection for them, being a cloud covering to screen them from the scorching heat of the desert sun. At night, it was a pillar of fire which protected them from beasts of prey, and shined light to guide them in the way. This was also a type of Christ, who for us *is a covert from the heat, as well as from the storm; a protection of*

His people from the justice and wrath of God, and from the rage and fury of men and devils. Isaiah the prophet in the spirit spoke of Him saying: *“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken”* (Isa 32:1-3).

Moses in the Scriptural text quoted above from Number 14, said *“and that thy **cloud** standeth over them”*. It was a symbol of the divine favor and protection. It was a guide, a shelter, and a defense. Isaiah prophesied about this as well, saying:

“And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense.

And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain” (Isa 4:5,6).

Christ, who dwelt like us in human tabernacle, is the minister of the true tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man. He’s a shadow from the heat and a covert from the storm. He is our place of security from the heat of a fiery law, which works wrath; from the flaming sword of justice which calls for vengeance; and from the wrath of God, which is poured forth like fire upon sinners.

So when Israel travelled in the wilderness, they were under the cloud of glory, which surrounded them, so that the Pharaoh their oppressor could not overtake and recapture them. It was above them, so that the heat and sun and the hail and rain could not hurt them. And underneath were the everlasting Hands which carried them *“as a nurse carrieth her sucking child in her bosom”* And ahead of them, the Ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days journey, to search a resting place for them” *O! the mercy and tender-loving kindness of God, how indescribable! And how inexplicable! Even to a rebellious people.*

Chapter 3

The Glory Cloud

“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (I Tim 6:16).

“And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims” (II Sam 6:2).

The mountain was engulfed in smoke. Thunder and lightning, smoke and heavy cloud covered the mountain, and a loud blast of the trumpet was heard from the midst of the cloud. Israel encamped at the base of mount Sinai, and the Lord God came down on top of the mount to give Israel the law. Sinai was literally on fire because God came down in a blazing flame upon it and the smoke from it ascended as from a huge furnace. Moses had prepared the people for two days to meet God. They gathered in the camp waiting for the presence of Jehovah to appear visibly to speak to them as planned. But when the time came, and God descended in a thick cloud upon the mountain, and the mountain was on fire and shook violently; they were frightened and ran into hiding.

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die” (Ex 20:18,19).

God Almighty was on mount Sinai. He had come down to visit His people and to speak to them, but fear kept them away from the presence of God. They stood far away from the “cloud” inside which God was during the divine visitation. It was a scary sight. The sight was so terrifying that Moses himself was trembling. Though fear kept the children of Israel away from the Presence of God, but sin was the root cause of the distance between them and Jehovah. It was sin that brought fear. Was this not the situation with Adam at the beginning?

“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself” (Gen 3:8-10).

Man dwelt in the Presence of God at the beginning while he was placed in the Garden of Eden. He experienced the manifest presence of God, walking with Him daily. Man, a spirit who had a physical body, walked with God at the cool of the day, saw God distinctly and spoke with Him. God is Spirit and cannot be circumscribed within a physical shape and dimension, so we really cannot tell how God appeared to Adam and Eve as far as the physical is concerned though they could see God clearly with their spiritual eyes. However, they dwelt in the Presence of God.

We belong in the Presence of God. Adam and Eve continually basked in the glory of God’s Presence. They dwelt with Him and He with them, and enjoyed His fellowship. God was said to have been walking with them in the Garden in the ‘*cool of the day*’. The divine presence they enjoyed is beyond our ability to comprehend. Nothing on earth can be likened to the divine presence of God.

Do you daily experience the “Presence” of God? Or should we ask—When last did you enjoy the Presence of God? If this sounds strange to you, then make it your number one assignment today to set some time apart in prayer and fasting, get in the Word and begin to practice

ministering in the Presence of God. And there He will speak to you from within His mercy seat between the cherubim of glory. Every believer must learn to practice being in the Presence of God. It is mandatory. Every member of the royal priesthood must learn to offer sacrifices, and must also of necessity have something to offer.

What did the special cloud of God signify to Israel every time it appeared? It signified the unique presence of God. It told the people of Israel, when it appeared, that Jehovah, the God of Israel was present at their camp for a special purpose. When the cloud came down out of heaven and rested on top of mount Sinai, it signified that God had come out of the realm of spirit to meet with the nation of Israel in His manifest presence on the physical plane. He was in the “cloud” on mount Sinai.

*"And Moses went up into the mount, and a **cloud** covered the mount. And the **glory of the LORD** abode upon mount Sinai, and the **cloud covered** it six days: and the seventh day He called unto Moses out of the **midst of the cloud**. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And **Moses went into the midst of the cloud**, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights" (Ex. 24: 15-18).*

It was there, in the radiant cloud and flaming fire of God's glory that Moses received instruction for the building of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, which became symbolic as the dwelling place of God among His people in the wilderness. It became a dwelling place of the glory of God and His Presence that He promised would go with them.

The children of Israel experienced the visible manifestation of the presence of God during their journeying through the wilderness. Most of these visible manifestations took the form of fire, lightning, the cloud, or a combination of all these. Most of the time it was in the form of a cloud. Whenever they saw “the cloud” appear, they knew that God was in their midst. They often heard God speak to Moses from within the cloud. And on mount Sinai, a combination of cloud and fire, lightning and earthquake accompanied the visitation of God when He came down to give them the Law and Commandments.

One of the major purposes of the Tabernacle or the Temple is to serve as the abiding presence of God. It was designed to be His dwelling place. Yes, God is omnipresent, but in the Old Testament, He chose specific location where He put His presence so His people who could only approach and worship Him on the physical plane would know where He was, and where to meet Him. And so God told Moses to construct the portable tabernacle in the wilderness, so He could dwell in their midst and travel with them through the wilderness.

During Israel's pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan God gave Moses the fine-print of the Tabernacle and commanded him to get to work. *"And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it"* (Ex 25:8,9). This was the task God gave to Moses. So Moses and the skillful men chosen by God, got to work as commanded and completed the tabernacle. It was an elaborate task requiring intricate construction of different furnishing and articles of worship for the sanctuary. Finally, after many months of construction, following the intricate instructions given by God, the tabernacle and every furnishing were completed in every detail.

At the time of dedication of the Tabernacle, the glory of God descended upon it.

"And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat: When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses. And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

*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" (Ex 40:35).

"And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the

mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat” (Lev 16:2).

The Tabernacle in the wilderness was the Tent or dwelling place of Jehovah. *Make me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them*, was God’s request. The word ‘dwell’ used in this verse came from the Hebrew word *shākan*, which means abide, reside, dwell. This literally means “presence” and it refers to the bright cloud of God that settled on the Tabernacle and remained in the Holy of Holies. In essence, when the children of Israel dedicated the Tabernacle in the wilderness they saw the glory of God in the form of “the cloud” descended right down upon the Most Holy Place and remained there. The dwelling presence of God was permanently at the center of their camp. The glory of God, which was housed by the divine cloud permanently dwelt in the Most Holy Place. Centuries later, when Solomon completed the beautiful temple in Jerusalem, on the day of dedication, once again, the “glory cloud” of God came and the people of Israel stood in awe as they watched the “glory cloud” go right down inside the Holy of Holies of Solomon’s temple. And the glory cloud abode in the Holy of Holies, specifically between the cherubim on top of the Ark of the Covenant in the temple. From there Jehovah spoke to His people through Moses in the wilderness, and through the high priests on the Day of Atonement in the temple at Shiloh. The glory cloud shined with divine light from the Mercy Seat between the cherubim of glory.

When the high priest went into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he did not need any natural light in that innermost chamber. The light from inside the “glory cloud” between the two cherubim lit the place. The glory light of God dwelt inside the cloud and that was the light of the Holy of Holies, unlike the Holy place that had light from the seven golden candlesticks, or the outer court that depended on external light from the sun.

Every time the glory cloud descended, Israel had come to know its significance as the presence of God. So when they saw the glory cloud descended and remained on the Tabernacle of Moses, they knew that the dwelling Presence of God was permanently among them. They therefore, referred to this glory cloud, this light-filled cloud, which

houses the manifest presence of God, as the **“dwelling glory”** of God, or the **“shekinah glory of God”**. The word shekinah in Hebrew essentially means "dwelling." *The word was derived from the verb "shakan", coined as a substantive (noun form) from the verbal forms used to describe the habitation of the physical manifestations of God as described in Exodus 24:16, 40:35 and Numbers 9:17-18.* The word was also used to describe the "glory cloud" over the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle, and the thick cloud that filled the temple of Solomon.

And since this glory cloud always signified that God was present and dwelling at the place where the cloud appeared, the name **“dwelling glory”** or **“shekinah”** is profoundly accurate. It signifies a divine visitation of the presence of God on the earthly plane.

How accurate! They did not realize how prophetically significant this naming was going to be when the real **“Shekinah”** of God would appear on earthly stage. Yes, they saw the type and shadow of the shekinah descend upon, and abide inside, the wilderness tabernacle; they saw it descend upon, and abide in the innermost sanctuary of the temple of Solomon; but little did they know that the true *Shekinah glory of God, the true Light and Glory of the Father*, of whom these were types and shadows, would in the fullness of time appear and tabernacle with us.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Joh 1:14).

Yes the ultimate form of God’s dwelling presence among us appeared in the New Testament when God **“tabernacled”** with men. He was the true shekinah glory of God among us. The Shekinah or **“dwelling presence”** of God is the primary purpose of the Temple. There was therefore, nothing left when the Shekinah departs from the Temple in the days of Eli, and in the vision of Ezekiel, but an empty building. The glory departed from the Sanctuary and ICHABOD was engraved on the gate of the temple at Shiloh. The glory departed from the temple at Shiloh and only darkness was left in the holy of holies behind the second veil. The light, or the brightness of God’s glory that filled the temple had departed.

We also noticed that the appearance of the glory of God or the manifest presence of God is always accompanied by brilliant light. This is not surprising, for *God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all*. And the opening passage tells us that He dwells in unapproachable light, and our Lord Jesus is the Light of the world. Below are a few verses, some of which we shall meditate upon further in the sections and chapters to follow which contain this revelation.

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:” (Ex 13:21).

*“As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the **brightness** round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the **glory** of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake”* (Eze 1:28).

*“And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the **earth shined with his glory**”* (Eze 43:2).

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee” (Isa 60:1). *For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and **his glory** shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles **shall come to thy light**, and kings to the brightness of thy rising”* (Isa 60:1-3).

*“For God, who commanded the **light to shine** out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the **light of the knowledge** of the glory God in the face of Jesus Christ”* (II Cor 4:6).

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Rev 21:23).

The ninth chapter of the Book of Numbers tells us that the cloud contains light inside it. It states that, when night came, the pillar that rested upon the Tabernacle of Moses during the day glowed like fire at night giving them light. It was the same glory of God that they saw during the day that became a light-giving pillar of fire at night.

And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, even the tabernacle of the testimony. And at evening there was on the tabernacle the appearance of fire, until morning. So it was always; the cloud covered it, and the appearance of fire by night.

And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, then after that the sons of Israel pulled up stakes; and in the place where the cloud abode, there the sons of Israel encamped.

By the mouth of Jehovah the sons of Israel pulled up stakes; and by the mouth of Jehovah they encamped. All the days that the cloud remained over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. And when the cloud tarried over the tabernacle many days, then the sons of Israel kept the charge of Jehovah, and did not pull up stakes” (Num 9:15-19, LITV).

By day it appeared as a cloud in contrast to the desert sun, hovering over the multitude as a blessed shadow, protecting them from the suffocating heat of the wilderness. By night the same pillar became fire with glowing splendor giving them light and heat. They saw the blazing fire at night and the bright cloud by day. *"In the daytime also He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire" (Ps. 78:14).*

The Book of Ezekiel threw some additional light into this as pertaining to the glory cloud that appeared to Israel in the wilderness. In the first Chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel, we read:

“Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God. In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity, The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

*And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a **great cloud**, and a fire infolding itself, and a **brightness** was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire.*

*As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.** And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake” (Ezek 1:1-4,28).*

If we read this from another translation that’s easier to understand, the first part of the passage above is rendered as saying: *“I saw a storm coming from the north. There was an immense cloud with flashing lightning surrounded by a bright light. The middle of the lightning looked like glowing metal. In the center of the cloud I saw what looked like four living creatures”* (Eze 1: 3-5). The fire or the glowing metal, the lightning, and the four living creatures are inside the cloud.

The twenty-eight verse of this first chapter then goes on to tell us more about the awesome creature inside the cloud and the bright light that surrounds the living creature. The brightness around him, the Bible says looked like a rainbow in the clouds. *“The brightness all around him looked like a rainbow in the clouds. It was like the LORD’S glory. When I saw it, I immediately bowed down, and I heard someone speaking”* (Eze 1:28, *GW*). The conclusion of the vision was that this was the likeness of the glory of the Lord who was in the cloud that Ezekiel saw.

God wants us, His children, in this day and hour to dwell in His Presence. He desires that His *“Shekinah”* glory would reside in us. He wants to make us His Holy of Holies. He wants to fill us with divine light. He also wants us to dwell and walk in the light. His desire is that His light will so fill us that it will radiate out, and glow forth from our physical bodies, and that the world would see us like a glowing light-bulb, showing forth His bright light, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. And this will not be like the glory on the face of Moses, but this will be the excellent glory of the Son of man, even the glory that does not fade away.

“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt 17:1-5).

On that great occasion when the Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John up into the mount and was transfigured before them, suddenly there appeared a bright cloud— a cloud with a light in it! And out of that bright cloud the voice of the Father came concerning the Son, saying, *“This is my beloved Son: hear Him!”* It is more than a coincidence that, as Peter spoke, a cloud overshadowed them and a voice came out of the cloud. One of the significant facts in connection with the glory cloud of God’s presence which manifested at various times throughout the Old Testament was that God always *spoke* from the cloud. This happened first on mount Sinai (Ex. 19:9,20). God spoke from cloud during the dedication of the Tabernacle of Moses. *“And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses”* (Ex. 33:9).

“When Moses had ascended the mountain, the cloud covered the mountain. The Presence of the LORD abode [‘shakan’] on Mount Sinai, and the cloud hid it for six days. On the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. Now the Presence of the LORD appeared in the sight of the Israelites as a consuming fire on the top of the mountain” (Exodus 24:15-17).

Moses heard the voice of God from within the cloudy pillar. In the same manner, the disciples heard the voice of God while the cloudy pillar overshadowed them. They beheld His glory and then heard the voice of telling them to listen to the Son. The physical body of the Lord Jesus is the *Shekinah* inside which the glory of God dwelt. That indeed, was the *“dwelling Presence”*; and here Peter, James and John had the opportunity to behold this glory. Peter wrote about this in the opening Chapter of his second Epistle:

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (II Pet 1:16-19).

The disciples had heard Him tell them of the majesty and glory of the Father and what He had given to the Son, but never grasped the significance of the glory of the Christ who walked the road with them. On that great occasion when the Lord Jesus took Peter, James and John up into the mount and was transfigured before them, they beheld a little of His glory. Suddenly, the Scriptures tell us, there appeared a bright cloud or a cloud with a light in it. And out of the bright cloud came the voice of the Father speaking concerning the Son. The Father spoke from the midst of the glory cloud. He spoke from the Shekinah, telling us to listen to the Son. Up until then, it was only the voice of the Father that we heard. From then on, said the Father from the glory cloud, He would speak to us through the Son, the heir of all things. These, indeed, are the things which the Bible says, *even angels desire to look into.*

Chapter 4

Move With the Cloud

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Ex 13:21,22).

“And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore” (Jos 3:3,4).

Sand, sand, everywhere, and not a single indication of water source in sight. Moses! Can you tell us what’s going on? We’ve been looking everywhere for water for our children and families for three days now with no success! What’s the deal here, Moses?

This new congregation in the wilderness just finished a revival meeting less than four days ago. The anointed prophetess, Miriam, was the worship leader. *“Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea”*, was the theme song. They sang beautifully, Miriam even wrote the music and played the instrument. And there was a great prophecy concerning the plan of God for the people during this revival. That was barely four days ago. But today, something serious is happening, and the people

had totally forgotten the supernatural events at the Red Sea, forgotten the promises God gave them, and forgotten the great revival of the days before yesterday.

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?” (Exo 15:22-24).

After three days of unsuccessfully searching for water, they finally found an oasis at Marah. The multitude rushed to the bank of the oasis, and was just about to start drinking when they discovered that the water was bitter. It was extremely unpleasant.

This was the first test for these young travellers in the wilderness. God gave them this test to see what they would do. It was a sore trial. Three days searching for water in the desert with little children, old people, and probably pregnant women; and after finding water, it was undrinkable.

God is through this telling you and me that we would meet sore trials on our way to the Land of Promise, but that we must not let these trials retard our progress. We must not let the trials remove our joy, like it did with them. He wants us to trust Him in the face of trials and difficulties and rejoice in Him, for the joy of the Lord, the Scripture says, is our strength.

In the midst of the trial, let us trust Him and totally look onto Him for sustenance. And even when we seem to begin to see what seems to be the end of the trials, let us not rely upon our understanding but still rely on Him. They saw water at Marah, but could not drink because it was bitter. God can change that which we think we can run to as solution to our problems into futility. This is because He wants us to depend on Him totally, and to the end. We are to run to Him for solutions to every issue. If we trust in things or a way that was a sure solution to our problems in the past instead of Him, these too might become additional

disappointments. He does this so that in our disappointment in the manmade solutions and way-out of difficulties, we may be driven to Him who alone can turn bitter water into sweet.

And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them” (Exo 15:22-25).

Let’s not forget the question we were about to ask concerning this whole predicament that Israel got into. They were brought out of Egypt under General Moses and crossed the Red Sea. After the revival they set on their way into the wilderness.

Was General Moses an inexperienced navigator? Why did he lead them through the waterless route? Or maybe we should ask a different question first, before sitting in “*the seat of Moses*” and judging Moses! (*you know what I mean*). Who led Israel this way?

Was it Moses? Or was it Aaron? Who was leading the people of God after they came out of Egypt and crossed the mighty Red Sea? No! It was not Moses or Aaron. It was God Almighty! He led the way by His pillar of cloud. Both Moses and the congregation of the children of Israel followed the cloud of glory by day and the pillar of fire by night.

The order of procession during the journeying of the camp of Israel was after this manner:

1. The pillar of cloud regulated the movements of Israel. When the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward on their journeys.

“So it was always; the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.

At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they encamped: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents.

And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not” (Num 9:16-19).

2. When it was time to leave a camp and begin the journey to next stage, the trumpet was sounded to alert the people. At the sound of the trumpet for the journeying of the camp, everyone would get out of their tent, disassemble the tents and ready to follow the pillar of cloud (Num 10:1).
3. Moses, Aaron, and the sons of Aaron were always in front of the congregation just behind the pillar of cloud. The Kohathites tribe, sons of Aaron, had the assignment of bearing the Ark of His Presence on their solders (Num 10:21). The people were then to follow keeping some space between them and the Ark of God so they could clearly see which way to go as they all *move with the cloud*.
4. And when they reached the new destination where God decided for them to camp, the cloud would remain stationary, and there they would setup their tents. So it was by the leading of the Most High that they travelled in their journey through the wilderness.

“And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

And the cloud of the LORD was upon them by day, when they went out of the camp. And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel” (Num 10:33-36).

They were told to follow, but required to leave some space between them and the Ark of the Covenant, so they could clearly see the way to go, for the glory cloud would led them through the ways they had never gone before. This is the way Joshua the commander gave the instructions, and I quote:

*“As soon as you see the ark of the promise of the LORD your God and the Levitical priests who carry it, break camp and follow them. However, stay about half a mile behind them. Don't come any closer to them so that you will know which way to go because you have **not gone this way before**” (Jos 3:3,4, GW)*

This is the same instruction given to you and me today. Don't jump ahead of the Holy Spirit. Follow clearly and accurately from behind. Walk in the steps and the foot-track left by the Ark of God. Do not veer to the right or to the left. Be led by the Spirit of God, for as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. Keep your eyes on the Ark of God leading the way. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Don't pre-empt the route. However smart or experienced you are, you will be woefully wrong. So, don't depend on your previous experience however accurate and profound they might have been in the past. Follow the cloud like a new and inexperienced traveller would. Follow with complete attention. Listen, learn, take note, and grow. Depend totally on the Guide and don't question His judgment or the optimality of the route He has designed. He that inhabits the glory cloud knows the way through the wilderness, and all you need to do, is follow.

“But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness.

And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night:

He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people” (Ex 13:18,20-22).

The Lord God Almighty will lead you and me through this wilderness. And not only will He lead, He will also protect and defend us. We just need to trust Him and honor His words like Caleb and Joshua. We need to wholly follow the Lord, even when faced by insurmountable obstacles and opposition. God will defend us.

“And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians,

And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians” (Exodus 14:24-25).

You must move with the cloud. Follow the cloud wherever it leads. You must not be left behind. Do not engage yourself in anything that might prevent you from moving when the cloud signals and the trumpets sound. Live your life like Abraham did, and like the men of faith, dwelling in movable tents and not in permanent structure, knowing that the Spirit might move you to the next level anytime. Live like them, not holding tightly to this world, but always *“looking for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”*.

Once the cloud lifts up from the Tabernacle of the Congregation, and the trumpets begin to sound, every Israelite must get ready to move. You must not build anything that will tie you down to that camp or city or level of experience in God. When the sound of the trumpets is heard, and the Spirit says it is time to move to the next stage, you must be ready to move. For it is He that moves us from glory to glory until we reach the full maturity that is found in Christ Jesus. We should not become attached to this world or any of her alluring toys but to move with the cloud as it leads. We are to follow the Ark of His Presence, and to follow with clear sight and accurate foresight. We’re to follow in His steps, for ***we have not traveled this way before.***

I learnt a new song during our Prayer Conference this year which stayed with me for a while and became the title of this little book. The song isn’t really new to my brethren who organized the meeting but was surely new to me. I had mouthed it with them the first time we sang it during the anointed prayer meetings, stumbling through the wordings, and had picked up a third of the lyrics. On the way to Service, Sunday after the Conference, I asked my beloved brother who was driving us to church to dictate the wordings of the song for me to write down.

The cloud of glory is moving

*Let us move with the cloud
Let your spirit arise and your strength be renewed
Come let us move on together
As we follow where He leads, new heart to receive
As we move in the cloud, move in the cloud.*

This song, in a beautiful way, summarizes the message the Holy Ghost gave us in the meeting. We are to go forward. We are to follow the glory cloud that is leading the way. This will take us to the next level of spiritual experience in God's schedule for us. He does not want us to settle for mediocre experience, but desires for each of us to press on to the full measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

When God brought His people out of Egypt, He took them through the Red Sea and into the wilderness. But His plan was not for them to settle anywhere in the wilderness; His plan was to bring them to the Land of Promise. His plan was to bring them into the land that flowed with milk and honey. His plan was to bring them into the mountain of His inheritance. The wilderness was just a place of transition.

Dear believer, God has brought you out of the world not to leave you in a place of defeat or barrenness but to lead you into the land of fullness and abundance, and into a place of victory. The wilderness experience you might be experiencing in your life today, is not your destination, it is transitory. You are destined for the Promised Land. Keep your eyes on the final destination. Locate it on the map and set your GPS locked to its coordinates. There will be detours, potholes, accidents, dead-end roads, hijackers, stormy weathers, and all sorts of unfavorable obstacles on the way; but take heart and be of good courage. He has said: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"*. He has promised to be with you always.

"But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:" (Isa

43:1-3).

A preacher once told a story to narrate this. It was about a man who went through many trials. He had prayed and prayed while going through the hard testing and didn't seem to see the answers in the ways he'd been picturing it. His roads had been very rough. He passed through fire and through many waters and seemed not to see any light at end of the tunnel. He became bitter. So one day, after it all, at the end of his trials he heard God speaking to him. Then he asked God: "Where were You God, while I was going through all those difficult times? Where were you while I was passing through the fire, and destitute of life wading through the tumultuous waters?" he asked. And God said to him, "*My child, I was the One carrying you in the palm of my hand*"

Let that be a lesson for you and me. If we find ourselves passing through Marah, we must remember He has promised, He will never leave us nor forsake us. "*But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen*" (1 Pet 5:10,11).

And so the cloud of glory, which led His children through the wilderness, is the One who leads us today. The Spirit of glory is leading us onwards and upwards, and from glory to glory. The visible presence of God represented by the cloud determines the journeying schedule of Israel. The glory cloud led them from camp to camp. When the cloud settled in a place, they settled. And when the cloud moved, they moved, always following the cloud. The cloud governed where they go and when they go. The sound of the trumpet announced to the whole nation when it was time to disassemble their tents and follow the cloud.

"And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them; that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation” (Num 10:1-3).

We are without doubt standing at the threshold of a new dimension in God, a higher realm in the Spirit, and a new level of experience. At such a time like this, many will refuse to go on. A inherent thing in all men is that characteristics that make them reluctant to leave the security of familiar territory to press forward into the challenge of the new. They feel that they have journeyed far enough and that the effort of pressing into the new realm is too great a risk. We tend to become rigid, settled, and satisfied with the status quo.

But God is today trumpeting a message into our hearing. He is speaking to us to disassemble our tents and begin our journey to a new realm beyond the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. He is pointing us to a new spiritual level beyond anything we have ever seen before. He is projecting us towards the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The trumpet is beginning to sound.

Can't you hear the sound of the trumpet? Arise, come out of your denominational chamber, everyone of you, disassemble your tents, let the priests the sons of Kohath bear the Ark of God on their solders for it is time to move forward. The ***Cloud of glory*** has removed from its stationary position and is beginning to move, *arise brethren*, be of good courage, and *let us move with the Cloud*.

Chapter 5

Transfigured in the Cloud

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitness of His majesty (glory).

For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, saying,

This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount" (II Pet. 1:16-18).

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). This is the message we received from John the apostle concerning God making His tabernacle with us. The prophets had spoken about it; the people of God had been waiting for centuries, but when the fullness of time was come, God was made manifest in the flesh and dwelt among men. Men saw the beams of His divine glory shining through the physical temple, the Vail of the flesh, in which it resided. Men's weaknesses are usually discovered by those close to them, but the opposite was true with Christ. Those most intimate with Him saw His glory. Though He took on the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, yet, His form was like the Son of God.

The apostle Peter gave us a more comprehensive description of what they experienced, when they had the opportunity to behold the glory of the Son of God.

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitness of His majesty"

Peter here declares that the message he was giving to us was not a made-up story, but one that he witnessed during the ministry of the Lord. He stated that he and a few other disciples were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty and glory. John said, *"We beheld His glory"* When did they behold His glory? When were they eyewitnesses of His glory? It's true they beheld His glory when they followed Him as He ministered to the multitude. They were with Him when He went about *doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the leper, raising the dead, and teaching the gospel of the Kingdom*. They surely beheld the *Shekinah glory* beaming forth through of the veil of His flesh. But Peter and John were principally referring to the wonderful experience they both together with James had, when they were with Him on the mount of transfiguration. Peter continued:

"For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount" (II Pet. 1:16-18).

The disciples of the Lord Jesus had become accustomed to seeing Him heal the sick, open blind eyes, cleanse the leper, and even raise the dead. And they had heard Him tell of the majesty and glory of His Father in heaven, and of the glory, which the Father had given Him. But they had never grasped the significance of the glory and the majesty of the Christ who walked the road with them.

"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

*While he yet spake, behold, a **bright cloud overshadowed them**: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him**" (Matt 17:1-5).*

On the great occasion narrated in the verses above, the Lord Jesus took Peter, James, and John up the mount and was transfigured before them. There appeared a bright cloud, and this overshadowed them. And the voice of God was heard from within the cloud saying, *"This is My beloved Son: hear Him!"*

This passage described the glory of the Son of God. This is that glory which the Father gave to the Son, and the Son has decided to share with His body at His appearing. Christ our Lord has received us into the glory of God (Rom 15:7). On the mount, His transfiguration glory was witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. Christ appeared in His glory on the mount and these two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared with Him. This indeed is a picture of what is going to happen when Christ is manifested in the saints; we, His saints will appear with Him in His glory. Apostle Paul writes: *"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear **with Him in glory**"* (Col. 3:4). *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together".* *"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing **many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings"* (Heb 2:10). This wonderful experience of being glorified together speaks of a time to come when the company of the sons of God shall be glorified with Christ, sharing with Him the fullness of His glory.

Similar to the experience of Moses inside the blazing cloud on mount Sinai, the voice of God was heard on the mount of transfiguration. In fact the common thread in all the occasion when the cloud of glory appeared was that a voice, ***the voice of God came out of the cloud***. On the mount of transfiguration, a voice came out of the cloud, saying, *"This is My beloved Son: hear Him!"* It was always the Father who spoke out of the glory cloud to our fathers. But now He's speaking to us through the Son. The Father now commands us from the excellent glory to hear the voice of the Son of God. The first chapter of Hebrews reads:

*“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days **spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

*Who being **the brightness of his glory**, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb 1:1-3).*

Jesus is the brightness of God's glory! He is the light of God's glory. He is the light that lightens every man that comes into the world. He was the brightness of God's glory when here on planet earth in the form of a man. He was the Shekinah, the light and the glory cloud of God's presence, which dwelt among men. *“And they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us**” (Mat. 1:23).* He was God's Tabernacle among men. And God spoke from within His Tabernacle.

At the dedication of the temple of Solomon, the glory of God filled the new temple. It was also in the form of a thick cloud as it happened earlier during the dedication of the Tabernacle of Moses. The glory cloud was so thick that the priest could not stand to minister.

“It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord;

So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God” (II Chr 5:13-14).

But God has yet spoken of a new day and a new Temple, a living Tabernacle unlike the temple of Solomon. God Almighty has decided to make this new temple His eternal dwelling place. It is a Tabernacle with exceeding glory; a Tabernacle not made with hands.

“And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.

The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts” (Hag 2:7-9).

Emmanuel was the only dwelling place or *Shekinah* of God among men when Christ Jesus was here on earth. He was the “walking, talking” Temple of God among us. God’s plan is to have many vessels just like Him here on earth, multitudes in which the glory of God will reside among men. The body of Christ is the new temple that God is perfecting on earth, and each believer is a living stone in that temple. The purpose of God is to fill this new house, with glory. And we saw the first-fruit fulfillment in Jesus Christ of Nazareth who was the temple of God on earth two thousand years ago. God has forsaken all physical temples and animal sacrifices, and has moved into His new tabernacle, which is the corporate body of Christ.

We are the body of Christ. Each of us is a temple of the Holy Ghost. “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” (I Cor 3:16). All of us, born again Christians, together form the grand Tabernacle of God. This tabernacle is what God spoke about and He intends to fill it with unprecedented glory. This new tabernacle will be His eternal dwelling place. It will be the abiding place for His glory. God has been moving His *Shekinah* from tent to tent. He moved from the Tabernacle of Moses to the Temple at Shiloh, and from Shiloh to the Tent of David on mount Zion, from the Tent of David to Solomon’s Temple. He is finally moving His dwelling place to the heavenly Jerusalem and to the highest mountain in that heavenly city, even the heavenly Zion, the city of our God and the mountain of His holiness (Ps 48).

*“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the **holy Jerusalem**, descending out of heaven from God,*

*Having **the glory of God**: and her **light** was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (Rev 21:10-11).*

God is moving His permanent dwelling place to New Jerusalem, the heavenly city. John saw this new city descending out of heaven and

containing the “*Shekinah*” glory of God. This is where God will tabernacle with man eternally. This is where the city that He built for the “*cloud of witnesses*” is; those of whom the Scripture says: “*they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city*” (Hebrews 11:16). The city He prepared for them is inside the New Jerusalem, on the heavenly Zion, the highest mountain in the city of God.

“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King” (Ps 48:1,2).

God is moving the dwelling place of His glory to mount Zion. And His glory cloud will now be in the grand living Temple, which is made up of innumerable *clouds of witnesses* on God’s holy mountain. He has moved His glory from Jerusalem below, “*which now is and is in bondage with her children*”, to *But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all*” (Rom 4:25,26).

God has moved His glory cloud from physical temples to the living body of Christ, from houses made by hands to living stones, and from physical cloud to myriads of living “clouds” of witnesses. Their dwelling place is heavenly Jerusalem, and in the fullness of time, they will be become the “*shekinah clouds*”, uncountable multitudes of “clouds”, inside which God’s glory would eternally dwell, and all together will form the grand “*shekinah glory Tabernacle*”, the eternal “*habitation of God through the Spirit*” (Eph 2:22, Rev 21:1-3).

God’s presence is still in the cloud, but it’s now in the transfigured bodies of myriads of His holy ones. They have become the place of His “dwelling Presence,” His *Shekinah*, where His glory, His strength, His splendor and His beauty reside.

“For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind

Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds” (Psalm 57:10,11; 104:3; 68:34).

David declares that God's mercy and truth reaches unto the clouds. He states that His strength is found in the clouds and that God *"maketh the clouds His chariots"* We know these verses are not referring to the bright and fluffy clouds that we see with our physical eyes, for Christ has ascended far above all such clouds. He's referring to the "clouds" which form His body. He's referring to the multitudes or myriads of His saints—those that, *"like clouds"* have risen with Him far above all heavens and will descend, *"like the clouds"*, with Him when He returns to rule and reign. These ones form the great body through which God will reveal His purpose in this end-time.

Clouds are often used in scripture to symbolize something that's exalted, and to set forth the might and the majesty of our coming King. *"Ascribe ye strength unto God: His Excellency is over Israel, and His strength is in the clouds"* Let's pause and sing another chorus that I learnt this year:

*Your Name is infinitely great
Your Name is infinitely great
Your righteousness rises up unto the heavens
And Your Name is infinitely great.*

"His strength is in the clouds". Let's meditate on that for a moment. With that thought in mind, I ask myself, how much strength does He have according to me? Ask yourself, dear Reader, how much strength does He have according to you? How much glory does He have in the clouds? His glory is in the clouds. God has filled His new dwelling place with surpassing glory.

"For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished" (II Corinthians 3:10-13).

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Cor 3:18).

The Old Covenant had glory. God manifested His glory to the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai. But it was a limited glory, and one that could lead man to eternal life. And if that ministration of death was glorious how much more will the ministration of life exceed in glory? So when Moses returned from the cloud up on mount Sinai, the skin of his face shone with the glory of the Old Covenant, he covered his face because he realized the glory was fading. His face shined because the Old Covenant had God’s glory in it, but the fact that it was fading indicated that the glory was destined to pass away. Moses, therefore, put a veil over his face.

The veil that Moses wore upon his face became a veil on the minds of God’s people. Because Moses put a veil over his face, for they could not see the end of the glory on his face, and thus could not see the end of the Old Covenant and its Law. The veil thus prevented them from seeing Christ, who is the fulfillment of the Law.

*“But we all, with the veil removed” **The open face is the "unveiled" face.** This is the day and hour of the great unveiling. God is causing our eyes and minds to become unveiled. And as the veil is being removed from our eyes, and we behold the glory of God in the cloud we are being transformed. As we fix our eyes on the Shekinah glory we are being transfigured into the same image from glory to glory. Into which image are we being transformed? We are being transformed into same image! As behold His face in the Shekinah, we are being transformed into the same image. And not like Moses whose facial transformation was fading away, ours is a total and permanent transfiguration into the image of Christ.*

Chapter 6

Clouds

with Water

*“Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter rain; so the LORD will make **bright clouds**, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field” (Ex 13:21,22).*

What is a cloud? This question should probably have been answered a while ago, especially at the beginning of this book. One dictionary defines the word as visible collections of water particles suspended in the air at a high elevation above the earth's surface. It is made up of millions of tiny molecules of water. When a mass of warm moist air rises from the earth and reaches a colder section above, the moisture in the air condenses and forms a cloud. As the concentration of water molecules increases the cloud becomes so heavy with droplets that it can no longer hold them, and the droplets spills over and we have rain.

A cloud, therefore, speaks to us of a vessel that contains water. This is the true cloud that God is talking to us about here. There are two kinds of clouds. The first kind, referred to as “*bright clouds*”, referred to in Zechariah’s prophecy above, is the one we delight in. In the scriptural passage above, the prophet admonishes us to ask the Lord for rain during the time of the latter rain. The prophet then assures us that God will make *bright clouds*, which are laden with water, and will through these bright clouds give showers of rain to every grass in the field. This first kind is a vessel of condensed water vapor floating in the atmospheric heaven above the earth plane. When these clouds become full of water, they empty themselves upon the earth.

Water speaks of life. True cloud contains water. Water typifies the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that quickens or makes alive. Bright cloud implies a cloud with light in it. A true cloud, that is, a true vessel must contain the water of life which when poured out upon the earth will become a blessing and a refreshing for the inhabitants of the earth. God by His Spirit pours living water upon His creation to refresh and impart life to every living creature. He consummated this in Christ Jesus.

A cloud speaks of a vessel that contains living water and thus contains life from God. God pours His kind of life and His glory into this vessel. And being filled, the vessel empties its content upon humanity. That is the nature of the '*Shekinah Cloud*' discussed in Chapter 4. God filled Jesus of Nazareth with His glory and majesty. God filled Jesus with His Spirit without measure. God poured into Jesus of Nazareth His perfection, and *"it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell"* (Col 1:19). He became the vessel of the fullness of God. He was the true and perfect "Shekinah", totally and completely full of living water. And not only this, He was the fulfillment of the "glory Cloud" which was fully laden with the Life of God and emptied its entire content upon humanity. Blessed be God for evermore!

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17)

While speaking to the woman at the well, the Lord Jesus indicated to her that He possessed God's living water and could give it freely to anyone who would ask.

*"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee **living water**. Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:*

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:11-14)

The Lord Jesus was filled with the fullness of the life-giving attributes of God. However, the plan of God is to pour the life that is in Jesus Christ into His body, until we are filled with all the fullness of God. He

is the '*Shekinah*' and He is filling the clouds so these can become like Him and have His nature. And then each member of His body will in turn be poured to bring life to the unsaved masses of humanity, just as God poured life it into Jesus and Jesus poured it into us.

Glory to God Almighty! And glory to Emmanuel, the Tabernacle of God, the manifested '*Shekinah*' glory of God among us, for He's filling the little '*clouds*' with glory, and we are destined to become like Him.

Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind" (Psa 104:1-3).

Dear brothers and sisters, if we are full of God like Christ our example was, we'll be pouring out life-giving substance upon the unconverted souls in our neighborhoods. A true ministry is a vessel filled with living water. They are vessels unto honor, clouds with water, whose purpose is to pour life-giving rain upon the people on earth here below. A true ministry has life to give and willing to empty herself to become a blessing to others. It's a cloud laden with water and which pours out its life upon a dry and thirsty people. That's what Jesus our Lord did. He poured out His life for us all. *"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many"* (Mat. 20:28). We must therefore follow in His steps and pour out ours for the brethren. The purpose of our ministries, in this hour, must be to pour out our lives so the salvation message could reach the ends of the earth.

On the other hand, Jude tells us in his one-chapter Epistle that false ministries are "*clouds without water*". This is the second kind of clouds. And not surprising, the dictionary gave a second meaning for cloud as "anything that obscures or darkens; or that causes gloom, trouble, suspicion and disgrace." There's one type of cloud that brings life and refreshing, there's another that darkens, brings gloom and obscurity. These are clouds without water. False ministries are clouds

without water. They have no life to give but are just establishments of men which are instituted to glorify man. And since man has no inherent glory, "*with respect to the glory that excelleth*", these are empty clouds. Jude writes:

"Woe to them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

*These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: **clouds they are without water**, carried about by winds; withered autumnal trees, without fruit, twice dead, plucked out by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jud 1:11-13).*

Jude's words are very strong and scary. He was talking about false ministries. These ones, he said followed the example of Cain, who slew his brother and remained unrepentant, rebellious and hateful. These false ministries were and are also guilty of covetousness, and a reckless and immoderate love of money. Jude likened these to empty clouds because they have the appearance of true ministry yet they have no life to give. They are doing it for filthy lucre sake, or for fame and to be seen of men. They are like the fig tree with leaves but no fruit. They look very much like the real cloud but no life-giving water in them. They may claim or boast to manifest spiritual gifts, but they are pretenders, blowing empty wind, and laying empty hands on empty heads. As it is written in the Book of Proverbs, "*Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain*" (Prov 25:14).

Peter speaks of these false ministries as well using equally strong language. He began by saying that there were false prophets among the people in the early church and that we should be warned because there would be false one among us as well. He stated that these false prophets who would sneak in quietly would even in some way deny the Lord. And that the sad thing is that many would follow their destructive ways, and through their covetousness, lasciviousness, and immoral ways, the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Peter then used similar words to Jude saying:

"Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet.

These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (II Pet 2:15-17).

But in spite of these, God has His multitude of saints, clouds laden with living water, who are going to be revealed in the fullness of time. Jude concluded his scary message above with a prophecy in the fifteen verse, quoting Enoch the seventh in Adamic family-tree as saying

"Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints" (KJV).

What King James translation rendered as saying "ten thousands" actually means countless multitude or myriad of His saints. The Literal translation of the Bible rendered this verse as saying:

"And 'the seventh from Adam,' Enoch, also prophesied to these men, saying, Behold, 'the Lord came with' myriads 'of His saints,' (Jude 1:14, LITV)

"Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about these people when he said, 'Look! The Lord has come with countless thousands of his holy ones" (Jud 1:14, ISV).

God still has countless multitude of saints who have separated themselves unto Him, and the prophets who saw the visions of Christ's second coming, saw Him returning with countless thousands of His saints; saw Him as *one like unto the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven*. Not just one cloud, but He's coming with the *"clouds of heaven"*. And the Book of Revelation declares: *"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen" (Rev 1:7).*

The Lord Jesus is still at work in us. And as Jude stated toward the end of the same epistle, the Lord is *"able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding*

joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jud 1:25).

He is continually pouring of Himself into us with the ultimate goal to fill us totally with Himself, for *"in him was life; and the life was the light of men"* (Joh 1:4). Our responsibility is to yield and let Him fill us with Himself so we are full of light and life like God's Shekinah cloud. And when we come to that measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, we will like Christ be poured out and will bring deliverance and life and refreshing to a groaning creation.

The whole creation is awaiting this manifestation of a company of people who would become like Him. The earth, the dry and barren lands are eagerly waiting with prayerful expectation, for the appearing of these clouds of glory, clouds full of water to pour their refreshing rain upon the earth. Their life-giving rain will be emptied upon a dry and cursed earth, and the entire creation will be released into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Chapter 7

He Cometh with Clouds

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:1-2).

The eleventh Chapter of the Book of Hebrews presents a list of men and women who obtained a good report through their faith. These great ones, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouth of lions, *quenched the violent of fire, waxed valiant in fight, received their dead raised to life*, suffered and overcame cruel scourging and imprisonment, refused deliverance but confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. These forsook the world and everything in it and declared plainly that they were seeking a heavenly country. *“For they looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Heb 11:10).

The sixteen verse of the Book said something really important for us to note. Because these men and women shun the world and eagerly sought for the heavenly city, God was very proud of them. The Scripture says: *“wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city”*. Because these saints were not worldly-minded, were not lusting after any earthly real-estate property or inheritance, but passionately desired to be in God’s presence in His heavenly dwelling, God was proud of them and prepared for them, a city.

Let's pause here and consider these things. Is God proud of you today with regards to your passion and attitude towards worldly things? You're born again all right, but will the Almighty God be ashamed to be called your God today? If He looks into your heart, will He see any passion for Him and the things He considers important? Or are you full of passion for worldly things? Let's all pause and think about these things, and then, let's do something about it. It's my prayer that "*we would walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto his kingdom and glory*" (1 Thessalonians 2:12).

The author of Hebrews closes the chapter concluding that the world is indeed not worthy of these men and women, and that though these great ones received a good report through faith, they did not receive the promise. The reason he gave was that God kept the better things for the end-time, so that they should not be made complete without us. These have completed their race and are waiting in the stand for us to complete ours. It's when we're done with ours that God will release the better things He had promised, and we'll be made perfect together.

These great men and women together with all others who have fought the fight, completed the course, and finished their race, are waiting among the spectators in the stand, cheering us on.

It's from here that the twelfth chapter of Hebrew starts its message:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb 12:1).

The Greek word for "*cloud*" is often used in classic Greek for a large body of individuals, and it is used in this symbolic way in twelfth Chapter of Hebrews. After enumerating the exploits of the great heroes of faith in the Old Testament dispensations, the apostle says, "*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about **with so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run*

with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb. 11:39-40; 12:1-2).

"Cloud of witnesses" as used in the original Greek corresponds in our modern day to a stadium of spectators. From the viewpoint of the one running the race and looking up into the stadium stand at the tens of thousands of spectators, as he looked from the track on this vast multitude of human faces, set in a variety of gorgeous coloring, these vast congregations would appear like a cloud, composed of countless units, but all making up one large aggregate.

A stadium of spectators surrounds us as we run our race. And this great "cloud" of witnesses of which the apostle speaks is made up of *overcomers* gathered out of all the ages. These are they who were either literally or figuratively sawn asunder, beaten, slain by the sword, destitute, and tormented. They were stoned, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, *"that they might obtain a better resurrection"* (Heb. 11:35). And though in their day they received not the promise, yet God had prepared better things for them and us and we are going to be perfected together (Heb. 11:40).

God's Word Translation renders this passage as saying, *"Since we are surrounded by so many examples of faith, we must get rid of everything that slows us down, especially sin that distracts us. We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up.*

The apostle is saying that—seeing that we are surrounded by these men and women of faith, a cloud of witnesses, who have successfully completed their race, that we should like them, get rid of worldly things, so we too can complete our race with flying colors. They are a cloud of witnesses for us. They are witnesses to the fact that it is possible to run the race and finish well. And they are not few in number; they are a 'cloud of witnesses'. A natural cloud is made up of *myriads* of water particles and so is this one. Enoch the man of God threw some light into this in his prophecy:

"And prophesy also to these did the seventh from Adam--Enoch--saying, 'Lo, the Lord did come in His saintly myriads'" (Jud 1:14, Literal Translation)

King James Bible translates this as saying--"Behold, the Lord cometh

with ten thousands of his saints”.

The original word used in this verse in Greek is “*urias*”, and should be rendered as meaning countless, innumerable, or myriad. Enoch, the man who so closely walked with God that God took him away permanently, prophesied with an exclamation saying: “*Behold!, the Lord cometh with multitudes of His holy ones*”

Paul the apostle in his Epistle concerning the return of our Lord and Savior wrote saying that we or the believers who will be alive when the Lord returns, will not precede these *cloud of witnesses*. This means the patriarchs, the apostolic fathers and all the saints that slept in the Lord from the beginning until now, will be raised to meet the Lord first, before we get to meet Him. That’s why they form the *cloud* that would come with Him when He returns for us. King James Translation again used the word “prevent them.” It really means that we shall not have our transfiguration before them. The dead in Christ shall have their transfiguration first, and will see Him before us. After they’ve seen Him, and have become like Him in their resurrected body, (“*we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is*”), they will form His entourage, the cloud that will accompany Him at His return, to take us.

“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord”(I Th 4:15-17) .

The Literal Translation (LITV) renders this passage as saying: “*For we say this to you in the Word of the Lord, that we the living who remain to the coming of the Lord will not at all go before those who have fallen asleep. Because the Lord Himself shall come down from Heaven with a commanding shout of an archangel's voice, and with God's trumpet. And the dead in Christ will rise again first*” (I Th 4:15-17, LITV).

The clouds that He will come with are His entourage. A king never goes anywhere alone. He goes with a royal entourage, which include his elite guard. In the case of the King of kings, He comes with clouds of conquerors and overcomers, sons of God who have partaken in the second resurrection and have been transfigured to be like Him. He comes with myriads of His saints who are replicas of Himself. He comes with sons whom He has brought to glory by being the Captain of their salvation. He comes with clouds.

“Behold! He cometh with clouds!” was the exclamation given by John while on the Isle of Patmos. He must have seen this in a great vision along with the other revelations the Lord gave him.

“Behold! He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Rev 1:7).

Several hundreds of years earlier, Daniel had seen this event in a vision. He reports this in the seventh Chapter of his book. In the gospels, both Matthew and Mark reported the Lord Jesus Christ confirming this fact about His return with the same description as Daniel who saw this more than 2500yrs ago and John who saw the vision at Patmos fews years after the Lord’s resurrection and ascension.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt 24:30). “_ And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory” (Matt 13:26).

He comes with clouds indeed! And these are clouds with water. These clouds contain ministries like that of the Son of man who poured Himself out to save humanity. These clouds contain sons of God after the same order as the firstborn. These ones will pour themselves out to bring deliverance to all of God’s creation. Christ Jesus is their example and forerunner. They follow in His steps. Just as the first-fruit is the sign pointing to the coming bountiful harvest, and the feast of first-fruit is a sign to the Feast of Tabernacles, so also our Lord Jesus Christ the first-born is a sign to the manifestation of the myriads of the

sons of God coming at the end of the age. When Christ appears, then they will also appear with Him in glory (Col 3:4).

The old man took the baby in his arms, blessed God, and said, "*Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For my eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel*" (Luk 2:29-32). He then turned to Mary and Joseph, blessed them, and said to the mother, "*Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against*"

Simeon, the devout man who had been praying and waiting in the temple for years for the arrival of the savior, gave this prophecy concerning the sign associated with His ministry. Simeon prophesied concerns His first coming and there was also a similar prophecy which concerns His second coming that is soon to happen. At his first coming, the Lord Jesus was set as a **sign** that would be spoken against, but at his second coming, as a sign to be admired, and marveled at by the nations.

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Mat 24:30).

After his resurrection, the Lord Jesus showed the apostles plenty of convincing evidence that He was alive. For forty days he appeared to them and talked with them about the kingdom of God. Finally, He gathered them on mount Olives and ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father.

"But ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth.

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Act 1:8,9).

And while they were all standing there looking up in amazement, two angels appeared beside them said:

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up to heaven? this same Jesus who is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Act 1:9-10).

A cloud received Him during His ascension, but according to the angels who spoke to them on mount Olives, He will return in the same manner. This is consistent with the answer our Lord gave the high priest when asked if He was the Messiah or not. The Lord said:

*"Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and **coming in the clouds** of heaven" (Mat. 26:64).*

This statement and the implications of whom Jesus was claiming to be, was more than the high priest could bear. This statement infuriated the high priest so much that he rose up, tore his own garment, raised his voice in anger saying, *"He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy."* He knew that our Lord was claiming to be deity, the One who spoke to their forefathers from the cloud of glory, the Almighty God, who had filled the temple at Jerusalem with the glory cloud so that the priests could not enter the holy place to minister. This was why the high priest was so bent out of shape. He knew that the Lord was claiming to be Messiah who would come in the cloud of glory, which once filled the temple of God at Jerusalem.

But as we discussed above, Daniel wrote about this. In a vision He saw Christ, one like the Son of man" coming with the clouds of heaven. Daniel wrote: *"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of **man came with the clouds of heaven**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed"* (Dan 7:13,14)

According to Daniel's vision, the son of man will come with the clouds. Several New Testament verses confirm this with an interpretation of what the clouds stands for. From Jude and apostle Paul we read, *"To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in*

holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints” (1 Thes 3:13). “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints” (Jude 1:14).

The most urgent message to you and me from this, first, is that the Lord Jesus is coming soon. Are you ready to meet Him? Are you looking forward to seeing Him personally and prepared to give an account of how you have lived your life in this pilgrimage era. If you're a child of God, this is not about condemnation, for there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. It is about giving an account of your stewardship and receiving a commensurate reward from the Master. There are prices, and there are crowns, but these are reserved for “he that overcometh”. Salvation is free, but those that complete the race successfully win prices. *“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2 Peter 3:11).* For the Lord our God is coming, and as Zechariah stated in the closing of his prophecy in fourteenth chapter of his book saying, *“..... and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee” (Zech 14:5).*

The passage from the Book of Acts quoted above tells us that a cloud received Him and they saw Him no more. He was taken up in a cloud. We were also assured in the passage, and in Daniel's vision, that He is coming back again in a similar way in which He left. Daniel saw Him, as *one like the son of man* coming with the clouds of heaven. John in the first Chapter of the Book of Revelation confirmed this.

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (Rev 1:5-7). Yes, Daniel the prophet saw this in his vision. *“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like a Son of man came with the clouds of heaven.” “Behold, He cometh!”* Not with the bands of swaddling clothes in Bethlehem's manger, but He comes with *“rags of*

thousands of His Saints”; He comes with myriads of holy ones; He comes with multitudes of ones like unto Himself who have been transfigured by Him. He comes with replicas of Himself. He comes with clouds.

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