

Linking Moses And The Pillars Of Cloud And Fire With Jesus' Suffering

'Our forefathers were all under the cloud, and all of them passed through the Red Sea, and all of them were baptised into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea' (1 Corinthians 10:1 & 2). The Hebrew word for this unique cloud is 'Shekinah' which means 'God's visible Presence'. It was not like the normal clouds we see in the sky.

The experiences of the Children of Israel are examples for us to follow (1 Corinthians 10:6). The Israelites had faith in the blood of the Passover lamb to deliver them, which corresponds to our having faith in the blood of the Lamb of God to deliver us from sin. We have to declare our faith in the blood of Jesus, just as Israel had to place the lamb's blood on the outside of their houses. The Lord Jesus, our Passover Lamb is endorsed by the New Testament; 'Jesus, our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us' (1 Corinthians 5:7).

The blood began the Israelites redemptive route, but it did not get them out of Egypt. If all they did was believe in the blood, they would have remained in slavery. There were two more experiences awaiting Israel before they could be freed. Their deliverance from Egypt was not accomplished by the blood, nor by the cloud, but by the sea. The 'baptism' through the waters of the Red Sea was the final cut-off point from slavery, because the Egyptians could not follow them through the Sea. Water baptism is not just a ritual, it is part of the total provision of God for our salvation and the renewing of our minds. It is a part of the whole salvation process. It was the water that freed the Israelites from their slave masters, and it is water baptism that rids us of the bondage of sin.

We can see how accurate the experience of the children of Israel was. They went down through the Red Sea just as we go down into water baptism. Then the cloud came down over them, 'baptising' them. Their experience is a complete pattern of being baptised in the water (Red Sea), then immersion in Holy Spirit (the cloud) just as we have, except it was an Old Testament example for us to see. The cloud is a 'type' of the Holy Spirit. 'A few people (Noah and his family), actually eight in number, were saved through water, and baptism, which is a symbol of their deliverance, now saves you' (1 Peter 3:20 & 21). The non-believers and the wicked cannot pass through the waters of baptism into salvation, likewise, the Egyptians could not pass through the Red Sea. Without water baptism we do not have a legal right to expect freedom from enemy attack. Evil forces cannot follow us through the waters of baptism, and the cut-off point is the water, just as it was for Noah, his family and the Israelites. Once we have been baptised in water, we can ask for deliverance from evil.

If we go back to 1 Corinthians 10:2, we read that there was one baptism in two different elements; through the Red Sea and also in the cloud and fire. Just as we are baptised in water, so were they. Just as they were baptised into the 'cloud' and 'fire' of the Holy Spirit, so are we. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire were a 'type' of baptism in the Holy Spirit. That is continued in the New Testament. 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Luke 3:16). 'And there appeared to them tongues resembling fire which settled on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:3 & 4). 'One body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all' (Ephesians 4:4 to 6). If we are baptised in water and not in the Holy Spirit, then we are not fully baptised. Just like Israel had to experience baptism in two parts, so do we. Almost every place in the New Testament where one baptism is mentioned, the other is also mentioned. The New Testament believers never separated the water from the cloud; or the water from the Holy Spirit.

We can apply the following scriptures to our own personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. The Israelites were living in a completely different atmosphere than anyone else (Exodus 13:21 & 22), and they took their atmosphere with them wherever they went. If we study the tabernacle, we see that it had four coverings without any windows. It would have been unbearably hot without the covering of the cloud. The cloud changed the temperature of the desert and cooled it down, so it was not so extremely hot during the day. Sand in a desert loses heat very quickly, so the fire stopped the desert from being freezing cold at night; it gave the Israelites both light and warmth. The cloud and the fire correspond with Jesus' description of the Holy Spirit as our Comforter. This heavenly atmosphere led them and went with them all the time. As believers, we also need to have the Holy Spirit's 'atmosphere' about us, not just to guide us, but so we can be seen to be different from the world.

The fire and cloud offered the Israelites total protection from any attack of the enemy. The cloud moved and stood behind the Israelites (Exodus 14:19, 20 & 24). They were immersed in the cloud. They all entered into, passed through, and came out the other side of the cloud, which stood between the two camps. It was darkness to the Egyptians, but light to the Israelites. That is what the Holy Spirit is. To the unconverted, the world is dark, but He is light to the children of God, and He separates the saved from the unsaved. The Angel of the Lord was in the cloud and the Lord looked out of the cloud. The Angel of the Lord was Jesus

before He came to earth as our Saviour, so in that cloud was the Presence of the Redeemer. Once we have the cloud identified, every detail regarding the cloud speaks for itself. The glory of the Lord is associated with the cloud. 'Then the cloud (Shekinah) covered the Tent of Meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle! Moses was not able to enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud remained upon it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. In all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the Israelites went onwards; but if the cloud was not taken up they did not journey on until the day that it was taken up. For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and the fire was in it by night, in sight of all the house of Israel' (Exodus 40:34 to 38; Numbers 9:15 to 23). Provided we walk in stride with the Lord, we are entitled to have the cloud over us to guide and protect us all the time, and we need to be as sensitive to the Holy Spirit as the Israelites were to the cloud.

'Moses used to take his own tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the Tent of Meeting. Everyone who sought the Lord went out to the Tent of Meeting which was outside the camp. When Moses entered the Tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the door of the Tent ... and the Lord would talk with Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend' (Exodus 33:7, 9 & 11). Where was the Lord? In the cloud. The cloud brought the Presence of the Lord (our Saviour) face to face with Moses, so they could talk like friends. That is what the Holy Spirit does with us. He brings the Lord so close to us, we can talk to Him face to face.

Moses had a difficult time leading the Israelites and seemed to be ready to give up on them, when God sent Jesus as the Angel of the Lord to help him. "But now go, lead the people to the place which I have told you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you" (Exodus 32:34). The Shekinah Cloud is mentioned several more times in the scriptures. The cloud will be back in the future on Mount Zion near Jerusalem (Isaiah 4:5). Moses climbed Mount Sinai and was immersed in cloud. 'Moses went up the mountain, and the (Shekinah) cloud covered the mountain' (Exodus 24:15). We have already seen that the Lord Jesus (the Angel of the Lord) was in the Shekinah Cloud in Exodus and He spoke to Moses face to face from the cloud like a friend. Keep that in mind as we look at this verse; 'Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John and led them up on a high mountain, and behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them and talked with Him (Jesus; face to face) about His exit from life. Behold, a shining cloud overshadowed them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am delighted. Listen to Him!" The disciples were 'seized with alarm' in 'violent fright' and they were 'struck with fear' as they entered into the cloud. In other words they were utterly terrified (Matthew 17:1 to 7; Mark 9:2 to 7; Luke 9:28 to 35).

We see here, God the Father came down in the cloud and immersed Jesus and the three disciples. They were 'overshadowed' by the cloud, just as the Israelites once had been. In both the Old and New Testaments, Moses was on a mountain, he was immersed in the cloud and he spoke to Jesus face to face. Just as Jesus, the Angel of the Lord, strengthened and supported Moses during his difficult time leading the Israelites, so Moses came to support his long-time friend Jesus, in His greatest hour of need. We can only imagine what Jesus was feeling as He approached His crucifixion. He was so grieved and depressed about it, He asked God three times to 'take the cup' from Him (Mark 14:36). He sweated so intensely under the pressure of it, His perspiration was mixed with blood from broken blood vessels just under His skin. This condition is medically known as hematomidrosis. Hematomidrosis causes tissue damage and dysfunction of major organs, including the heart. This will explain why, when the Roman soldier stabbed Jesus just after He died, both water and blood flowed from His body (John 19:34).

The scriptures reveal Jesus' emotional torment just before He was tortured and crucified by the Romans. 'Jesus began to show grief and distress of mind and was deeply depressed. He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sad and deeply grieved so that I am almost dying of sorrow" (Matthew 26:37 to 44) ... 'He began to be struck with terror and was deeply troubled and depressed. He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sad so that it almost kills Me!"' (Mark 14:33 to 39) ... 'And being in agony of mind, He prayed all the more earnestly and His sweat became like great clots of blood dropping down on the ground'. An angel from heaven appeared to Jesus to strengthen Him' (Luke 22:43 & 44). The whole time Jesus was suffering this immense emotional agony, the disciples slept! Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus for the modern equivalent of about \$25, then later regretted it, but it was too late (Matthew 26:15 & 16; 27:4). After Jesus was arrested, the disciples ran, hid and Peter denied all knowledge of Him three times (Matthew 26:58, 69 to 75; Mark 14:27 to 30; 14:51 & 52). Looking at all of these events, it is no wonder Jesus needed Moses, Elijah and an angel to come and strengthen Him in spirit!

By studying the scriptures, we can see the link between Moses, the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire, and the suffering of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus our Messiah.

Amen and God bless you.

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