

# (The Holy Spirit) 4. THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

by A.B. Simpson

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## Transcript

"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of 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." Exodus 13: 21, 22.

"And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud of darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all night." Exodus 14: 19, 20.

"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. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: but if the cloud were not taken up then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and the fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." Exodus 40: 34-38.

"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, â€˜Rise up, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee.â€™™ And when it rested, he said, â€˜Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.â€™™ Numbers 10: 34, 36.

"Moreover, 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. " 1 Corinthians 10: 1, 2. The application to the Holy Spirit of these beautiful passages, and of the sublime figure that runs through all of them, is rendered certain by the words of the prophet Isaiah, in the sixty-third chapter. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them: and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and He fought against them. Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within him? That led them by the right hand of Moses with His glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name? That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not

stumble? As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest: so didst Thou lead Thy people, to make Thyself a glorious name."

The prophet expressly recognizes the Holy Spirit as the presence who dwelt in the midst of Israel, and led them through the Red Sea and the wilderness. The figure under which He is represented in these passages is striking and sublime. It was customary for ancient armies, when marching through a foreign country, to be led, especially by night, by great illuminations of torches and beacons carried in front of the advancing host, and rising in the darkness with lurid smoke and flame. It would not, therefore, be altogether surprising for the host of Israel to see in front the majestic signal of the pillar of cloud and fire; and yet, this was no merely human beacon light. With a majesty unearthly and divine, it reared its fiery column to the sky, and marched, like a mighty sentinel, before the host, pausing when they were to rest, moving when they were to advance, separating them from their foes, and sometimes spreading its folds like the canopy of a great celestial tent about their heads, and sheltering them from the fiery heat of the desert, sun.

1. It was a supernatural symbol. They were to be guided henceforth by Jehovah Himself. This was their peculiar distinction, that "the Lord alone did lead them." This was the place where Moses was interceding for them with God. "Wherein shall we be distinct from all the other people of the earth, except Thou go with us," and His gracious answer was, "My presence shall go with you and I will give you rest." The pillar of cloud and fire did not represent even an angel\

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