

# God Dwelling With His People

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes God's desire to dwell among His people and guide them through obedience to His Word and the Holy Spirit.*

**Duration:** 1:15:39

**Scripture:** Numbers 9:15, Deuteronomy 28:1, Joshua 1:8

**Topics:** "God's Dwelling"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a personal experience of feeling heartbroken and weeping over a situation. However, one day while reading the Bible, God spoke directly to the speaker and revealed His name. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being led by God and following His word. They also discuss the significance of the cloud in the wilderness as a symbol of how one should be led by God. The sermon concludes with a reminder to come out from the world and be separate, not touching anything unclean.

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## Transcript

Our text we find in Numbers, Numbers chapter 9, from verse 50. Please bear with us if we read quite a number of verses. Verse 15, sorry it is verse 15, Numbers 9 from verse 15.

On the day of the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony was set up. The cloud covered it. From evening till morning, the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire.

That is how it continued to be. The cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites sat out.

Wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. At the Lord's command, the Israelites sat out, and at his command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in the camp.

When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the Lord's order and did not sit out. Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a few days. At the Lord's command, they would encamp, and then at his command, they would sit out.

Sometimes the cloud sat only from evening till morning, and when it lifted in the morning, they sat out. Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they sat out. Whether the cloud stayed over the

tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in the camp and not sit out.

But when it lifted, they would sit out. At the Lord's command, they encamped, and at the Lord's command, they sat out. They obeyed the Lord's order in accordance with his command through Moses.

We'll end reading there. The tabernacle was a large tent. And in this tent, the altar was that where offerings were brought to God, there was a holy of holies and a place where priests came and worshipped God.

A year after the Israelites were in the wilderness, they came to Mount Sinai. And when Moses came down from the mountain, God commanded him and instructed him to build the tabernacle or to erect the tabernacle. And God commanded Moses and he said, Moses, be careful to do it exactly as I showed you on the mountain.

Be very, very careful that everything is according to the plan I gave you on top of that mountain. So they made and they erected the tabernacle. On the first day when it was set up, a cloud came down from heaven and rested over the tabernacle.

Before that, we also find where it speaks about the pillar of cloud. Now here it says that a cloud descended. I'm not sure whether it was a pillar of cloud or whether it was just a cloud.

Now, during the day, it was a cloud, but at night, it looked like fire. This cloud was a revelation or was a symbol of God's presence with his people. Where God descended and was amongst these people.

Through his presence, he would protect his people and he would guide and lead them. And they would not set out unless the cloud would lead them. In other words, God led his people in the wilderness according to his heavenly blueprint.

It's something amazing that God would come down from heaven to be amongst his people. And until today, it is still like that. In 2 Corinthians 6.16, God says, I will dwell amongst my people.

We people desire that when we die, that we should go to heaven. That is our goal. We Christians.

To go to heaven. But God's goal is to come down from heaven and to be amongst his people on earth. Even at this very time, perhaps you desire to go to heaven, but God desires to be here on earth amongst his people.

So God spoke to Moses and he said, Moses, prepare a place for me. A place that will be holy. Where I can come down and dwell and be amongst you.

That I can keep you and lead you here in the wilderness according to my heavenly plan. Yesterday, I read a book that somebody gave me. A person who has degrees and is highly qualified concerning taking pictures.

Photography. A man named Stelenbosch. He travelled here from Cape to Cairo, taking photos.

When he got there, he found some rabbits. This rabbit was dead. And then he has commented on that, that is also our lot.

We will also one day end like that. He wrote in a way that one can see he is not happy about walking on earth and being here. In what he has written, you notice that death isn't gain to him.

There is a fear of death in his life. Many people fear death. But to us believers, we shouldn't fear death.

Death should be gain to us. God came down and was amongst these people to lead them. In the same way, God desires to be amongst us and to lead us.

And God says, I will dwell amongst them and I will be their God and they will be my people. And then God says, therefore, for that very reason, come out from them. And be separate and touch no unclean thing.

And I will receive you. So God will receive you if you part from defiled people and have nothing to do with that which is defiled. And don't touch any unclean thing.

You know what it is to touch? Just to touch is forbidden. And he says, then I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. He says, the Lord Almighty, I wonder whether we who are God's children, we who are the church of Jesus Christ, really realize this, that God wants to be in our midst.

He wants to walk amongst us and dwell amongst us and he wants to be our father. But he says, for that reason, touch no unclean thing. Can you have worldly friends, friends who are living in the world and for the world and still not touch anything unclean? God's desire is to be amongst his people and to lead the church of Christ.

Not that we are just Christians, not that we are just a church and that we just carry on doing our own thing. No, God wants to be in our midst and he personally desires to lead us. As we are here in this world, many find themselves in a spiritual desert.

In vain, that God has promised us the promised land, the Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. It's heartbreaking that many go out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, going into the wilderness, but they get old. They grow old in the wilderness and that's where they die, never having reached the land flowing with milk and honey, the promised land, Canaan, whilst yet in this world.

And Canaan is not heaven. Canaan is here in this world, but to be a Christian in the desert is a Christian in Romans 7, where he's governed by sin. What I want to do, I can't.

What I don't want to do, that's what I do. That's desert. Canaan is the land where we are more in all these things, more than conquerors, where we've got the victory over beer, cigarettes, drugs, lust of the flesh, that's Canaan.

Canaan is the land where we are more in all these things, more than conquerors, where we've got the victory over beer, cigarettes, drugs, lust of the flesh, that's Canaan. God was to lead them through the wilderness until they would reach the promised land. God spoke to Moses and then said, Moses, you go and tell the people, you see, God can speak to a person directly, but sometimes God uses a person and speaks to you through a person.

When a preacher preaches, in actual fact, it's not him who is speaking, it's God who is speaking through him. That is when he doesn't preach nonsense, but preaches the word of God. And God commanded Moses and he said, Moses, for as long as the cloud is resting over the tabernacle, remain in the camp.

Don't set out, whether it might be a day, a month or a year, but you need to stay there until God says, now move on. So for some, that must have been difficult because they were in a hurry to get to Canaan. So if it would return to six months, nine months or even longer, it would be very difficult for them to stay there because they wanted to move on to get to Canaan.

But they had to wait. But for us whites, to wait is one of the most difficult things. We're always in a hurry.

Think of Saul, the king of Israel. He couldn't wait. He couldn't even wait for four days.

If he had the bee in his head, he wanted to go immediately. And he did it. But he had to pay a high price for it.

Even if you're a man, a big man, a clever guy, whatever you are, you can't move before God has moved. You've got to walk in his footsteps and not that he has got to walk in your footsteps. Over and over again in the Bible we find they that wait upon the Lord.

They that wait. But we can't wait. And that's what went wrong for us.

Then we pray, God, what do you want me to do next? What do you want me to do in the future? Something big. Don't pray that. You're a fool if you pray like that.

Pray, God, I'm here now in this place. What do you want me to do now? Maybe that tabernacle doesn't move. But you are carrying on.

You can carry on, but you'll go on on your own and leave God behind. Direction from God is not just for your next big moves, but where you are right now. Say, speak to me, Lord.

What do you want to show me? And that's what he tells you, you do. Sometimes they'd stay and suddenly in the middle of the night, But the fire would lift and they had to carry on. Sometimes during the morning, sometimes during the evening, Day or night, God moves as he wills and as he likes, not as we like.

Sometimes people may have said, oh, why at this time of the night? We're asleep. I'm in bed now with my husband. I would move and they had to move as well.

Although for them, it could have been more convenient to walk at night in a desert. It is better, easier and more pleasant to walk at night than during the heat of the sun during the day. But God didn't say all right, because in a desert at night, it's easier.

You'll always move at night. No, sometimes it was burning hot. He says, you move now.

I'm moving. So when you are a Christian, it's not always an easy way. Don't think that.

No. Sometimes it's difficult. The sun is hot.

And God says, I'm moving. And you follow me. If you want to be with me.

There's no place in the Bible where it says the climate will always just be right if you're a Christian. Like the old, I forgot now, years ago. There was a sect here in South Africa.

And they preached health, wealth and prosperity. School of truth. The elderly people will know them.

But now it's been swallowed by some Christians. And they preach health, wealth and prosperity gospel. The Bible doesn't know such a thing.

For you Christians, there are good times and there are bad times. Easy times and hard times. But no matter what comes your way.

If the Lord is there to guide, to lead in all these things. Paul says, sometimes I had too much. Sometimes I had too little.

Sometimes I ate too much. Sometimes I didn't. I starved.

Sometimes I had enough clothing. Sometimes I suffered because of the cold. Day or night, when you are a Christian.

But it doesn't matter whether it's day or night. The only thing that matters is that God is there. And that he leads.

And that everything goes according to his commandment. Now we can say. How privileged they were.

Wouldn't you have liked to live in those times? Where God is there. And you only move when he moves. And go where he goes.

They should have never sinned. They couldn't have gone wrong. They just looked at the cloud.

They just looked at the fire. And then followed it. How easy God made it for them.

Something they could see with their eyes. Now. Listen to this.

It's just as easy for us as it was for them. The only possibility is that it's still easier for us than for them. You may say, Elo, how can you say such a thing? We don't see the cloud if we only see it.

We don't see the fire if we only see it. Here's our cloud, the word of God. You can take it in your hands.

You can read it with your own eyes. The very words of God. God is a cloud for us.

And that cloud is his word. There's the fire as well. We've got his word.

And we've got the Holy Spirit. Why should any man, any woman, any young man, young person, teenager, go wrong having the Bible? Where we've got everything black on white. We've got everything black on white.

Whether you're in the countryside or in the city, the Bible is the same. The word of God. Why don't the Christians use it? Why don't they do what the Bible says? God will be among us if we are obedient.

Follow his word and order. Just read the Bible, it's full of it. In Joshua 1, verse 8, God says, Joshua, you read this book day and night.

And heed whatever is written there. Do what I command you. And you'll be on the right track all the time.

The Bible is the same. You don't have to learn it from Joshua 1, verse 8. Joshua 1, verse 8. 28. Deuteronomy 28.

If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all the commands I give you, the Lord your God will bless you. He'll bless your offspring. The Lord will bless everything that you do.

But if you don't obey, diligently obey, these curses will be upon you. We've got the cloud. We've got God's word.

We've got the Holy Spirit. We've got Christ himself. Not somewhere in the air.

But right in the center of our being. That is if your Christianity is genuine. But if it's just hidden knowledge, it's worth nothing.

And then you can live a life in sin. But if you heed that cloud, his word, his spirit, then you are safe. If you just spoke to him, we'll ask him to share with us.

Indeed, friends, it is the truth, that this word of God is God's cloud and the fire is his Holy Spirit with us. I would have loved to read this for you in Afrikaans, because it's much clearer even in Afrikaans. My wife became ill and then she had a stroke.

And while I was in Uppington preaching, I received the news, the heartbreaking news that my wife had passed away. Whenever I would remember her, my heart would be so sore and I would weep. But one day before the schools opened, on that Monday, I opened the Bible.

And God spoke to me directly. I read Ezekiel 24, verses 15, 16, 17 and 18. Ezekiel 24, verses 16 to 18.

The word of the Lord came to me, And God said to me, And God said to me, Friends, when I read this word, it was as if God spoke directly to me, personally. My tears dried up and I spoke to Satan in Afrikaans. I told the devil, look, a human being has a mouth, but an animal has a mouth.

I told him, before my wife died, I had a mouth, but now I have a mouth and I'm going to open it. I told him, before my wife died, I had a mouth, but now I have a mouth, but now I'm going to open it. God's cloud is indeed with us.

And God spoke to me directly. My tears were wiped away. I still remember my dear wife, my beloved, but now I'm really opening my mouth, even wider than before, preaching the word.

Even as I've come here, I was down in the Matatjies, Kokstad area, preaching there, and I've come here now to be ministered unto as well during this conference. God says in His word, He wants to lead us and guide us and keep us right to the end. I've got a chance now, ten times, to read you all those verses.

If you sin, you must sin because you don't listen to the word of God, or you don't read the word of God, or you don't allow God to speak to you through His word. I've got a chance now, ten times, to read you all those verses. If you sin, you must sin because you don't listen to the word of God, or you don't allow God to speak to you through His word.

Some Christians are going in a circle, and this is the devil's circle. Always the same. Today they get angry, jealousy, grudges.

Tomorrow it's the same. Next year it's still the same. He quarrels with his wife, he gets angry with his wife, his children.

Devil's circle. Now you know German, devil's circle. Those that are laid, not by the passion of the flesh, or the lusts of the flesh, or the lusts of the eye, but the Spirit of God.

And dear wife, don't play the fool with your husband. The word says you bow as unto the Lord. But if you don't listen to God's word, you bring the curse of God upon you, yourself, and your children.

Just the curse. And you husband, you do the same. Live according to the word, and be laid by the Holy Spirit.

Then the blessing will be there. Read the Old Testament about the children of Israel in the desert, and you'll be surprised because of all the sin in their lives, in spite of the cloud and the fire. And the tabernacle that was there, the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.

But today the Holy of Holies should be here inside your body, in your heart. Holy of Holies should be within you. Don't you know that you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and that God dwells within you? And the angels should sing as they look into your life.

Holy, holy, holy. When you're with your wife, when you're with your children, with your neighbors. Holy, holy, holy.

Do they do that? That's what your life has got to be like. That's what your life has got to be like. I hope you understood, and I hope that we have an ear to hear what God tells us through His word and by His Holy Spirit.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, let your holy words sink deeply into our hearts and lives. And transform our lives, make everything new.

And we thank you for the privilege that because of the cross and your precious blood, we can be men and women that walk with God. Not with occult powers. Not with demons and devils, but with the triune God.

Amen.

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