

## **200422-4 Nu 9,15-23, The Cloud over the Tent of the Testimony–CThurman**

In the first part of this chapter the LORD commanded Israel to observe Passover. The nation has been nine months in the wilderness of Sinai, (cf. Ex.19.1) but this Passover marked the one year anniversary of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Remember, Passover was on the fourteenth day of the first month, Abib. But there was a problem. Some Israelites were defiled because they had tended to the body of the dead and the time required for cleansing from this defilement, which was a full seven days, could not be accomplished before the day of Passover arrived. (cf. Nu.19) So a question was put to Moses, 'Why should we be kept back from observing Passover?' Moses in turn put this question before the LORD. The answer that the LORD gave was that for the unclean and the sojourner Passover may be observed on the fourteenth day of *second month*, rather than in the first month. (cf. Nu.9.10, 13) This is the beginning of what is called *Second Passover*. By this provision all of the children of Israel could observe and remember the great deliverance that the LORD gave to Israel from the land of Egypt. Let me mention one thing before we consider the rest of this chapter in our study today.

As there are two Passovers there are two deliverances to be noted in the history of mankind. One was the deliverance of the natural seed of Abraham from Egyptian bondage. The other is the deliverance of the spiritual seed of Abraham from the condemnation of this world. Both of these were accomplished by the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

I need to make a correction to the last lesson. I said that following Second Passover the Israelites would have observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread. I need to back away from that as it appears they did not. According to Nu.10.11, the Lord commands Israel to begin their sojourn on the twentieth day of the second month. Had the Feast of Unleavened Bread been observed with Second Passover there would have been a holy convocation on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> days of the month and therefore they were to stay in their places & rest from the usual work of the day. (cf. Ex.12.16; 16.29)

***15 ¶ And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning.***

From earlier studies we know that the tabernacle is a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ come among His people, Israel. The tabernacle viewed from the outside was an unappealing tent. One would have to know what was on the inside in order to appreciate the value of the tent. Jesus Christ appeared as another man among men. One has to know who He is to appreciate why He came to Israel and among men. He is the God-man. He is the Son of God come among men to redeem His people from the condemnation for sin before God. What we have been reading about in the book of Numbers is of all the preparation required for Israel to begin their sojourn to the land of Canaan. Israel is an army of 603,550 men able to war. They are very close to being ready to set forward on their journey. When the tent was erected *the cloud*, not a cloud, *the cloud* covered the tabernacle.

The main point of this verse tells us that: *the cloud covered the tabernacle*. Around this we gather the other facts: *on the day the cloud ... and at even the appearance of fire*. Immediately we understand that this cloud & fire is a continuous presence upon the tabernacle, day and night. This will be explained more as we read.

This verse also tells the place where the cloud is located over the tabernacle. It is over what is called *the tent of the testimony*. The *tent of the testimony* refers to that part of the tabernacle where the Ark of the testimony is located inside.

*'The tabernacle, namely, the tent of the testimony, or, the tabernacle towards or above the tent of the testimony, i. e. that part of the tabernacle in which was the testimony, or that ark of the testimony; for there the cloudy pillar stood, Lev. xvi. 2.'* Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Holy Bible, vol. 1, p.279

*'[F]or from the day of the completion of the tabernacle it rested by day as a dark, by night as a fiery, column, on that part of the sanctuary which contained the ark of the testimony (Lev. xvi. 2).* *J-F-B Bible Commentary, vol. 1, p.536*

‘The cloud did not cover the whole structure, but the “tent of the testimony,” *i.e.* the enclosure which contained the “Ark of the testimony” (Ex. xxv. 16, 22) ...’ *Barnes Notes*, vol. 2, pp.202, 203

It is true that the glory of the LORD filled the entire tabernacle at this time so that Moses could not enter into it.

*Ex 40:34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

*35 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.*

But the cloud is situated directly over that part of the tabernacle called the *most holy*, or holiest of all.

*Ex 26:33 And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.*

*He.9.3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle (σκηνη, tent) which is called the Holiest of all;*

This mercy seat is located in the tent of the testimony. The cloud reminded the children of Israel of God’s mercy. It was at the mercy seat where God spoke to His people on the basis of the blood of the sacrificial victim that was sprinkled upon it and before it once a year. As you might recall, this was a type for the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. As He hanged there on the cross His blood sprinkled upon his own body. (There is no piece of furniture in heaven. Think of the Person of Jesus Christ.) Here it is that God speaks to His children from the mercy seat. Christ is the place of mercy.

*Ex 25:22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims*

*which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.*

The mercy seat was a solid gold lid to a box called the Ark of the Testimony or Ark of the Covenant. Inside of this box, under this mercy seat were three things: the two tables of the Law covenant, the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. Again, these three items represent something of the Lord Jesus. He is the Righteousness of God (1Co.1.30), the living Bread which came down from Heaven (Jn.6.48, 50), and Eternal Life (1Jn.5.20). The cloud was situated over this place, over this mercy seat and the ark of the testimony. **First**, the cloud is a type for the Holy Spirit.

*Nu.11.16 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. 17 And I will come down and talk with thee there (at the tabernacle of the congregation): and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.*

...

*24 ¶ And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle.*

*25 And the LORD came down in a cloud (to them as it was already resting over the holiest of all while they were encamped), and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.*

*rested, נָח, nuach, to rest, to be quiet, to remain, to leave, to set down; unlike Nu.9.18, 23, חָנָּה, cha-nah, to pitch, abide, encamp (found 6 times in this 9<sup>th</sup> chapter.)*

The Son of God, during his earthly ministry, gave Himself over to be wholly directed by the Spirit of God. He wasn't working His own will when He came among men (Jn.5.30, *I can of my own self do nothing*; cf. Jn.6.38), but

the will of Him that sent Him, and that will was communicated to Him by the Spirit of the LORD.

- At the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God came upon Him at the baptism of John. (Jn.1.32)
- The Lord Jesus received the Spirit without measure. (Jn.3.34)
- Christ was *led of the Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. (Mt.4.1)
- He returned from the wilderness *in the power of the Spirit*. (Lk.4.14)
- He cast out devils by the Spirit of God. (Mt.12.28)
- He came to the temple by the Spirit of God. (Lk.2.27)
- The Spirit of the Lord was upon him and anointed Him to preach the gospel to the poor; to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Lk.4.18, 19)

Though God, He came into humanity, took up the *likeness* of sinful flesh with its weaknesses, and trusted in God as His people are to do. The Lord Jesus exercised faith. So we see that while His flesh recoiled at the prospect of death, yet He believed in God through it.

*Mt 26:39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

*Mt 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

It wasn't that our Lord Jesus ever doubted God. But He was *made a little lower than the angels* for the suffering of death to take our place as if He were a sinner before God. But as a man He trusted God to lead Him through all of the experiences of life, even unto death, and to the other side of it in the human experience (Remember, God can't die).

*Ps.96.10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

He believed the OT Scriptures, the word of God, and we are to have the same kind of faith as He. Brethren, as His faith and obedience showed Him to be the Son of God, so our faith and obedience shows us to be the sons of God.

**Second**, as the cloud points to the mercy seat, so the Spirit of God reveals Christ to us and those things related to Him.

*Lk.9.34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.*

*35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

*Jo.1.32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.*

*33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

*34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

*Jn.16.12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.*

*13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

*14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

*15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. (The Spirit guides us into the truths of Christ and shows us things to come. He teaches us to think like Him; to do like Him; to believe the things He believed; to hope as He hoped.)*

**16 So it was alway:**

The cloud was always directly over this part of the tabernacle where the mercy seat was placed. But when the tabernacle, or for that matter, the temple, was taken down (which is a type for the death of Christ [Jn.2.19, 20; 2Co.5.1; 2Pe.1.14]) the cloud set forward for the people of God, but it always stood over the place of mercy.

The LXX orders the verses a little differently, i.e., 33, 35, 36, 34.

*Nu.10.33 And they (the Israelites) 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.*

*34 And the cloud of the LORD was upon them (those that had gone before the Israelites; the four Kohathites which bore the mercy seat upon their shoulders) by day, when they went out of the camp.*

*35 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.*

*36 And when it rested, he said, Return, O LORD, unto the many thousands of Israel.*

So, the Holy Spirit shows to the children of God the enduring, timeless, everlasting mercy of God by Jesus Christ.

*Ps 100:5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*

*Ps 136:16 To him (the LORD) which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

*Lu 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.*

***the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.***

***17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle,***





*abode*, Qal fut. of שָׁכַן, sha-kan; v.17, 18, Qal fut., *abode*; v.22, Qal inf., *remaining*; also tss. *to rest, to dwell, to continue, to inhabit, to place, to set up*.

*they pitched & they rested in their tents*, of חָנְּהוּ, cha-nah, and tss. Nu.9.17, 18 *to pitch*; Nu.9.18, 23, *to rest in their tents*; Nu.9.20, 22, *to abide in their tents*; also tss. in other places *to pitch the tent, to abide, to dwell, to camp, to encamp, to abide in the camp, to rest in the camp*.

The action of the cloud, whether being taken up or resting, is understood by the children of Israel as the commandment of the LORD. The cloud has the same authority as the voice of God in the mount. So the Scriptures we have by inspiration of the Holy Spirit has have the same authority as the words of the Father and the Son.

**19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days,**  
prolonged, deferred  
(from rising)

*and when ... tarried long*, וַיִּבְהַאֲרֵהוּ, oov-ha-<sup>a</sup>-ree-k<sup>e</sup>, Hiphil (causative active) inf. of אָרַךְ, a-rak, v.22, **tarried**; tss. *to be long, to be prolonged, to be lengthened, to be drawn out and to be deferred*.

**then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.**  
observed ordinance (or obeyed by ... journeying not.)  
observance

*kept*, וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ, v<sup>e</sup>-sham-roo, 3ppl. Qal pret. of שָׁמַר, sha-mar, tss. *to keep, observe, heed, wait, watch, mark, preserve* and is synonymous to the Gr. τηρέω, tēreō; note, the appearance of the long vowel identifies the Gr. vowels η, eta and ω, omega, and should be confused with the sign for long vowels in English; **the charge is a noun form of this ...**

*the charge*, אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת, eth-mish-me-reth, אֶת, marks the direct object of a verb; the verb is מִשְׁמֶרֶת, a fem. sing. noun tss. *a charge, an ordinance, a ward, a watch*, and appears as a verb by the word *keeping* (meaning, it shall be to you *for keeping*, cf. Ex.12.6); **this noun is found more often in the book of Numbers than in other book of the OT.**

**20 And so it was, when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents,**  
encamped

*according to the commandment of*, עַל־פִּי, [g]al-pee; **8 times in this chapter, 17, and when; 18, twice, 23, thrice, the commandment of, 20, twice, according to the commandment of.**

*they abode in their tents*, of חָנָּה, cha-nah, and tss. Nu.9.17, 18 to *pitch*; Nu.9.18, 23, to *rest in their tents*; Nu.9.20, 22, to *abide in their tents*; also tss. in other places to *pitch the tent, to abide, to dwell, to camp, to encamp, to abide in the camp, to rest in the camp.*

**and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.**  
went forward

If the cloud was only a few days upon the tabernacle, then they encamped; and [if the cloud was taken up] according to the commandment , then they journeyed.

**21 And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning,**  
as a fiery pillar

*abode*, יָהָיָה, Qal fut. 3ps. masc., of the verb root יָהָיָה, ha-yah, a *be* verb; and so was.

**and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.**

Moses cites an example how this worked, say, if we began from a camped position. When the cloud rises, then they were to set forward on their journey.

**22 Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year (days), that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon,**

*or a year, או־יָמִים, יוֹם, yohm, is a day, and יָמִים, is days; v.18, as long as (lit. all the days); 19, 20 days, 22, או־יָמִים, two days, או־יָמִים, a year.*

*tarried, וּבָקְעָרִיקָה, oov-ha<sup>a</sup>-ree-k<sup>e</sup>, Hiphil (causative active) inf. of אָרַךְ, a-rak, **v.19, and when ... tarried long**; tss. *to be long, to be prolonged, to be lengthened, to be drawn out and to be deferred.**

*remaining, Qal inf. of שָׁכַן, sha-kan; v.17, 18, Qal fut., abode; v.22, Qal inf., remaining; also tss. *to rest, to dwell, to continue, to inhabit, to place, to set up.**

**the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not:**  
  encamped                          did not set forth

*abode in their tents, יָחֵנוּ, ya-ch<sup>a</sup>-nu, Qal fut. 3pplm. of חָנָה, and tss. Nu.9.17, 18 to pitch; Nu.9.18, 23, to rest in their tents; Nu.9.20, 22, to abide in their tents; also tss. in other places to pitch the tent, to abide, to dwell, to camp, to encamp, to abide in the camp, to rest in the camp.*

**but when it was taken up, they journeyed.**  
  ascended                          departed, set forth

*was taken up, עָלְתָהּ, Niphal (simple pass.) inf. w/ 3ps suff., the verb root עָלָה, tss. *to arise, to break (the day), to ascend, to go up;* Nu.9.21, twice, was taken up.*

*and journeyed, יָסְעוּ, yis-sa-[g]u, Qal fut. 3pplm. of נָסַע, na-sa[g]; tss. *to journey, to depart, to set forward, to go forward, to take a journey,**

to remove, to go forth, to go a way; this verb is most often used in the book of Numbers it is *to remove* or *depart* and especially the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter.

**23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents,**  
mouth encamped

at the commandment of, עַל־פִּי, [g]al-pee; עַל, [g]al, at or upon; פִּי, pee, masc. sing. noun, construct state, cf. פָּה, **8 times in this chapter, 17, and when; 18, twice, 23, thrice, the commandment of, 20, twice, according to the commandment of.**

they rested in their tents, of חֲנֹךְ, cha-nah, and tss. Nu.9.17, 18 to pitch; Nu.9.18, 23, to rest in their tents; Nu.9.20, 22, to abide in their tents; also tss. in other places to pitch the tent, to abide, to dwell, to camp, to encamp, to abide in the camp, to rest in the camp.

**and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept (observed) the charge (observance) of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.**

Whatever the cloud commanded they obeyed whether they pitch their tents or set out on their sojourn. Wherever the cloud was, there the children of Israel were. But the cloud never left them during their sojourn. None but the children of Israel has God's presence with them. This was an earnest of the presence of God with the natural seed of Abraham; and so the Spirit is an earnest for the spiritual seed of Abraham.

'This was an evident token of God's special presence with and providence over them.' *Matthew Poole's Commentary on the Holy Bible*, vol.1, p.279

*Ps.139.7 ¶ Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?*

*8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

*9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;*

*10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

*11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.*

*12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.*

*Jn.14.16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*

*17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

*18 ¶ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

The earnest of the Spirit

*2Co.1.21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;*

*22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

...

*5.5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.*

*Eph.1.13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

*14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

Like this cloud with national Israel, there is no question that the Spirit of the Lord is with each and every one of God's elect. He knew me when as yet I had no substance. (Ps.139.16) Since God foreknew me, predestined me, called me, justified me and glorified me, certainly He is always with me because I am His. Is there anything that He doesn't know about me? No, nothing. Is there any place that I can go that He is not there? No, nowhere.

And yet knowing what I know now about me since Christ was revealed to my heart by the grace of God, the marvel of it all is that He loves me. You could say the same thing. What a wonder of the love of God that He sent His Son to die for me; what a wonder of love that He'd bestow on me the grace of life; what wonder of love that he'd give me his Holy Spirit; that He'd seal me and plant me into a congregation of brothers and sisters in Christ, and give me gifts for service, and an understanding of the doctrine of Christ so that I might be conformed to the image of Christ until the day of His appearing. Some of you know what I'm talking about. There's no doubt in our minds that this is true: He's always with us; He never leaves us. Never will!

*Mt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

All of God's dealings with His people is based on His mercy through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. With Jacob of old we say ... *Ge 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant ...* And with David,

*Ps.105.1 ¶ « A Psalm of David. » Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.  
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:  
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;  
4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;  
5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ...*

As the cloud always stood over the mercy seat to reveal to the children of Israel the place of God's mercy, so the Spirit of God reveals to all the elect that Jesus Christ is their propitiation. He is the Mercy Seat.

*1Jo 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

*propitiation, ἱλασμόν, acc. sing. of ἱλασμός, hilasmos, only twice in the NT, propitiation (1Jo.2.2; 4.10); the noun ἱλαστήριον, tss. propitiation, mercyseat (Ro.3.25; He.9.5); the verb ἱλάσκομαι, tss. to be merciful, to make reconciliation (Lk.18.13; He.2.17)*

By the death of God's Son, the guilt and the punishment due for sin has been put away to all of the elect of God. God is merciful to them. Is Christ your mercy seat? Do you know that He died for you? There's no mercy with God apart from Christ's death in your place. The Spirit directs sinners to Jesus Christ, who is the mercy seat. Every soul that dies without Christ dies without mercy and shall suffer eternal punishment for sins before God. Sins are either punished in the sinner or in His Son. Look to Christ and live! Will you come to Christ?

*Re 22:17 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.*