

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NUMBERS

"Cloud and Fire"

Numbers 9:15-23

DON'T FORGET

1. The opening verses of this chapter (vv. 1-14) relate to the Passover. It is a feast of the Lord which must be celebrated.
2. The Passover was:
 - a. Dated (vv. 1, 3)
 - b. Timed (v. 3)
 - c. With rites (v. 3)
 - d. With ceremonies (v. 3)
 - e. Commanded (vv. 4, 5)
3. Even when the Passover celebration caused a problem, Scripture notes
 - a. No allowances vv. 10, 11a
 - b. No deviations vv. 11b, 12
 - c. No compromises v. 13
 - d. No exceptions v. 14

Note: What is recorded about the Passover is applicable to the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7). It also is commanded by God (1 Cor. 11:23-34).

4. Following the Passover comes the cloud and fire (vv. 15-23 cf. Ex. 13:21, 22). Consider the significance of these supernatural phenomena:

1. GUIDANCE vv. 15-18

Here is a new form of guidance which was not apparent until the tabernacle was set up (cf. Ex. 40:34-38). There was no journey to be undertaken without the cloud moving first.

2. COVERING v. 15

The tabernacle is referred to as the "tent of the testimony." It is so called one time in Exodus (38:21), but eight times in Numbers. Now, the cloud covers what is complete in itself, committed into the hands of men, and what is sanctioned by God. God's testimony is protected!

3. MOVEMENT v. 17

The unity of Israel in moving is accented. The tent is moved and the people moved--everything moved together. Here is an example of divine unity (cf. Psa. 133). Note the unity is in relation to the tent of testimony. The testimony never changes, but the people view it in various settings. Growth, maturity, and advancement are all inherent here. All believers (as all Israel then) should realize more and more about the Lord. Mark it, if one does not move with the cloud, he

will look with suspicion at those who do.

4. CHARGE v. 19

When the cloud did not move, Israel was occupied with the "charge of the Lord." There is never a time for doing nothing! Alertness, readiness, and daily dependence upon the Lord is evident.

NOW WHAT?

Are there ways and means which God has today for believers to experience the cloud? What about guidance, covering, movement, charge today? All is obviously separate from the tabernacle, visible cloud/fire, and specific charge. Yet God's people, redeemed by blood, still are able and called upon to do things after God and not self! We too are passing through a trackless desert. We must keep our eyes on the Lord and admit "all my springs are in Thee" (Psa. 87:7). Hence, His promise to guide (Psa. 32:8). To seek our own way will only reap bitter fruits (cf. Jonah who found himself in "the belly of hell" and "the weeds . . . wrapped around his head" (2:1, 5). Israel responded "at the commandment of the Lord" (7 times, vv. 18, 20, 23). So be it for us!

HOW?

Here are some basics for moving with God at His command:

1. Be willing Rom. 12:1, 2.
2. Be Spirit-directed Acts 16:6, 7.
3. Be Scriptural 2 Tim. 3:16, 17.
4. Be prayerful 1 Thess. 5:17.
5. Be cooperative Acts 16:2.
6. Be sensitive Acts 16:10.

GO FOR IT

To the glory of God, do what you have learned today.