

## Numbers 9:17-23

# THE CLOUD THAT GUIDED ISRAEL

1. Its place.

1. The “pillar of a cloud” and ”of fire” was not an ordinary cloud, but extraordinary and miraculous.

1. Pillar is an upright column with its upper portion reaching to heaven and its base spread out as a cloud.

2. It did not change its form from day to night, but it did change its appearance..

- This pillar appeared to Israel as soon as they left Egypt, even before the Red Sea (Exodus 13:21,22).

- Now after the construction of the tabernacle the pillar of cloud/fire settled on it.

1. The cloudy/fiery pillar never left the tabernacle every day they were in the wilderness.

2. Only after they crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan did the pillar disappear.

- Its significance.

1. First and foremost it spoke of Jehovah’s presence WITH His people.

1. It is a more certain and conspicuous sign.

2. “Jehovah went before them” (Ex. 13:21; Num. 12:5; Deut. 1:33; Neh. 9:12).

- This cloud was the visible form of God’s glory and mercy.

1. “The glory of Jehovah appeared in the cloud” (Ex. 16:10; also Num. 16:42).

2. Its very presence was a merciful accommodation of God to their ignorance by giving Himself a visibility.

3. Ex. 14:19 shows that the angel of God (O.T. Jesus) is equated to the pillar.

- The practical activities of the pillar.

1. First, God spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night” (Psalm 105:39).

2. Second, with the pillar God led Israel from place to place when He wanted to do so (Ex. 40:36-38; Deut. 1:33; Ps. 78:14).

1. It was at His “commandment” (18,23), literally “mouth” as an organ of speech.

2. The proper response is that they keep the “charge” (obligation, service, watch).

- Third, the pillar was a source of terror to their enemies.

1. Fire is a figure of God’s wrath (cf. Ex. 14:24,25).

2. The “glory” of the pillar “shall be a defense” (Isaiah 4:5).