

His Strength

is in

the Clouds

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from messages preached by Pastor Stevens.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

Chapter 1

DEDICATED TO GOD 7

Chapter 2

LED BY THE CLOUD 11

Chapter 3

HE IS PRESENT TO HEAL 15

Chapter 4

THE LORD WILL BE WITH THEE 19

CONCLUSION 23

INTRODUCTION

“Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds” (Psalm 68:34).

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1).

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

What do the clouds mean in the Bible? So often we see a cloud as an obstruction that prevents the light from dispelling the darkness in our circumstances. In this message we will see clouds as the manifestation of God’s presence filling His people.

Moses finished the work on the tabernacle according to the pattern given by God (Hebrews

8:5). "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40:34).

This is a beautiful story. The cloud came upon the tabernacle and, as a result, Moses was not able to enter into the house of God to minister because it was filled with the glory of the Lord.

If the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle Moses built, it is much more important today that the glory of the Lord fill us. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 tells us that we are God's tabernacle: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy [Spirit] which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

God wants so much to fill His people, whom He has made, in the same way He filled the tabernacle, which Moses made. I want every reader of this booklet to understand the doctrine of God's clouds and to experience His presence as never before.

Chapter One
DEDICATED TO GOD

“Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD’S house. And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever” (2 Chronicles 7:1-2).

In his dedication of the temple, Solomon offered 22,000 of the best oxen and 120,000 of the best sheep. Picture it — 142,000 sacrifices. That’s a lot of offerings! The temple was complete. The fire of God came down from heaven when Solo-

mon dedicated the temple, and the glory of the Lord filled it completely. This is a picture of us — believers with an understanding of the doctrine of the clouds — dedicating our bodies as God’s temples. We see that we are not our own; we are bought with a price, and therefore we glorify God in our bodies, “which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20*d*).

“And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD” (1 Kings 8:10-11).

The Unveiling of His Character

The fire of God came down and consumed all of the sacrifices, then His glory filled the temple so that the priests could not enter in to minister *because of the cloud*. When God unveils His glory, as He did at the dedication of the temple, it means that He demonstrates His integrity, His essence and His characteristics.

The cloud today means the unveiling of the character of God in our bodies. His cloud comes in and keeps us out. It puts God in control and keeps us from controlling our lives. With our

consent, God fills us and we allow Him to take over our lives.

However, there are many times when we try to enter back into the place of God's cloud to minister in our bodies. We try to control our conversations, our goodness and badness. We always try to use reason to control our lives. We keep meddling with change. But the Word of God says we are to keep our eyes on the cloud. When His cloud moves, we move. When His cloud stops, we stop. We must be led by the cloud, the unveiling of the very presence of God inside our bodies.

The Awesome Place of God

I am asking God, day by day, to help me implement the cloud principle in my life. Consider this, "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:16-17). In the original Hebrew text, this verse speaks of the awesomeness of the place of God. Not only is it an awesome place, it is also the gateway to heaven.

God's temple today — my body and your

body — is an awesome place. Could you come to appreciate your body as an awesome place of God? Your body can be an awesome place and a gateway to Heaven for others, too.

In 2 Chronicles 29:16, everything that cluttered up the holy place of God had to be taken out: “And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took it, to carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron.”

Everything relating to the flesh has to be brought out of our temples so that the cloud of God can come in to make each one of us an awesome place.

Chapter Two
LED BY THE CLOUD

“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 fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (Exodus 40:36-38).

Can you picture 2.5 million Israelites in a place they didn't know anything about? They were confused and perplexed; all looking in the direction of the cloud. At night, the cloud became a pillar of fire. When the cloud was taken up, Israel moved.

“And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a 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). Every day they were led by the cloud. They could count on the cloud. We, too, can depend on the cloud; we can depend on the fire at night.

Faith Rest in a Finished Work

The Bible says in Exodus 40:33b, "So Moses finished the work." Keep that word *finished* in focus. When the work was finished, the cloud gathered over the tent of the tabernacle. Sometimes, a cloud prevents you from sight. If you look up and there is a thick cloud, you can't see what is behind it. Here, the cloud speaks of faith.

"As long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle [Israel] rested in their tents," (Numbers 9:18). Are you getting this? There it was, 1500 B.C. — that portable tabernacle in the wilderness, and the glory of God filled it! What is the glory of the Lord? It is a manifestation of the presence of God being permitted to work because of our obedience. The children of Israel "kept the charge of the LORD," journeying only when the cloud moved, sometimes in the same day or waiting as long as a year.

What God is after today is that we walk by

the cloud, according to faith. Sometimes it is a suffering faith, but it is faith. Psalm 89 says that there is strength in the clouds. There is strength when you go from faith to faith in suffering, where the righteousness of God is revealed more and more (Romans 1:17). That means some new aspect of His character is revealed to your human spirit, and your soul magnifies the Lord.

So now, according to Romans 12:1-2, you present your body, by the mercies of God, to have your mind renewed, transforming your soul, proving what is the perfect will of God as you rest by faith in Christ's finished work. Thank God for His cloud!

Let No Man Glory

Psalm 119:133 says that we are to have our steps ordered by the Word of God. If the cloud leads us, then we are led by the presence of God's Word through the Spirit. His presence is there to do wonderful things. It's there to love, forgive, reinforce mercy, and impart wisdom.

Is it any wonder that Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this,

that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”

We try so hard to minister to the Lord. We go on for hours instead of letting the Lord minister to us in our bodies. God desires for us to enter into a life of allowing Him to minister to us as we just say, “Thank you.”

Getting into your car and coming to church shouldn't be just a fleshly habit, even though it's not bad. God's wants His cloud to lead us beyond all of that. I want you to know that Christianity is real; the life of God in you is real. It is living, active, powerful, and ongoing.

Don't consider how you're going to minister to the Lord. Your body is God's tabernacle. It's filled with His cloud, His presence. He doesn't want your flesh to enter into it. He wants to fill our bodies and unveil His character and glory so that no flesh will be able to stand in His presence (1 Corinthians 1:29).

Chapter Three

HE IS PRESENT TO HEAL

Luke 5:17 speaks of a certain day when the Pharisees and the doctors of the law were seated, listening to Jesus teach. They came out from every town in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem. God's presence was there to heal each one who came from Galilee, each one who came from Judea, and each one who came from Jerusalem.

The purpose of God's presence is to heal even the Pharisees and the doctors of the law. God's purpose that day was to heal every single person in the assembly. But only one man was healed that day — the one "taken with a palsy" who was brought down through the roof (Luke 5:19). He was brought before Jesus by men, and he was healed and saved. "And when [Jesus] saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee."

Only one was healed that day, but God's presence was there to heal them all, not just the one. When Jesus and His disciples went to Jericho, in Mark 10:46-52, the presence of God was there to heal. But only blind Bartimaeus was healed. The presence of the Lord was there to heal all who wanted to be healed, but only one received a healing.

God's Delights

God says to us, "Don't be fearful of what's going on in your life. I am lovingkindness. I am righteousness. I delight in giving you my lovingkindness and my righteousness. I delight in giving you my presence. And I delight in having you be the fulfillment of my purpose and the application of my presence."

God delights to be present in you to do something about your condition. He joys in being the doctor of your body and the surgeon for your physical organs and ills. He enjoys counseling you with His mind from His Word which is Light. God delights to bless you beyond measure. He desires to do it, and He is present to do it.

"I am present in your body," the Lord is telling us. "It's my desire to fulfill every single measure of your being, to expand your capacity

with myself. It's my desire to heal every individual of something."

Fullness of Joy

In God's presence, there is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11). Enter into His presence with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise (Psalm 95:2; Psalm 100:4). Here's the principle: the presence of God — through His Word and the Spirit — becomes so strong that my flesh cannot stand.

Every week I talk to people who have no understanding of His presence in their lives. In Job 2:7, Satan had to flee from the presence of God. Job was troubled at the presence of God (Job 23:15). David had lost the realization of the presence of the Lord and, in Psalm 51:11, he wrote, "Cast me not away from thy presence." David had been inspired to write many psalms and yet he was asking that God not take His presence away from him.

A Living God, a Living Faith

If we can grasp this principle of the clouds, then we will understand the meaning of being filled with God's presence, being overwhelmed with His purpose and being saturated with His

lovingkindness. We must understand that God's presence is here to heal! God is here; He's alive and ready to heal. The cloud means I have a living, active faith, because God is present and He will always reward this kind of faith. Being filled with the cloud means that I can go out every day in His presence and purpose. This is the meaning of "strength in the clouds."

Think of how Jesus constantly walked in the presence of God. At the grave of Lazarus, He said, "Father, I know you're listening; but for the people's sake I say thank you for Lazarus, and thank you that you're going to bring him back to life."

Jesus knew that the presence of God could make five loaves and two fishes feed 5,000. He knew that the Father and the Spirit were present in His humanity to minister to the needs of the people. Jesus knew the Father's presence would feed the hungry, heal the sick, and cast out the demons from the oppressed. It's still that way. He's still the Great Physician — the same yesterday, today and forever — and His strength is in the clouds.

Chapter Four

THE LORD WILL BE WITH THEE

“And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD” (1 Chronicles 28:20).

This is a marvelous verse. In the original language, God is saying He will see to it that everything we do will be finished accurately. It tells us not to be frightened at the task because of its size. God will not forsake us; He will not leave us. Don't be afraid of the task!

Don't be frightened by the need. The job isn't too big. The body of the believer is an awesome place. God will be with each of us. He will never forsake us. He will see that the work in our bodies is finished correctly, just as the work

on Solomon's temple was finished exactly as God intended.

Meeting Him in the Clouds

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

Where are we going to meet Jesus Christ? In the clouds. Revelation 1:7 says this: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.” The angel said in Acts 1:11*b*, “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” He went up into the clouds.

Why will Jesus take us up in the clouds? Because we will have glorified bodies. In the wink of an eye, 11 one-hundredths of a second, He will take us up to be with Him. We shall be like Him and we will see Him as He is (1 John

3:2). In our glorified bodies, we will be with Him forever. We are to comfort each other with these sayings. His strength is in the clouds.

When we return to earth with Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 19:14), we will come back in the clouds, in all the power of His omniscience, omnipotence, veracity, righteousness, justice and mercy. We will come back in the power of all of these attributes; that's what the cloud represents.

The River and the Tree of Life

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1-2).

In the eternal city of God, there is a river and in the midst thereof is a tree — the Tree of Life, the old, rugged cross of Calvary. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. The river has a purpose in its application for today. It means the river of the Holy Spirit runs through the world and glorifies Jesus Christ. And the

tree, the cross of Christ, is for the healing of all peoples. The one side of the river speaks of the past; the other side refers to the future; the middle speaks of now. God is saying that for the past, present and future there is a river, and on either side is the Tree of Life. The presence of God, represented by that river, is also in His beautiful cloud, and His strength is in the clouds.

CONCLUSION

We need to have a fresh understanding of the reality of God's presence. The fire of God came down when the temple was dedicated. In Leviticus 9, the fire came down when the burnt offerings were made. Today, our burnt offering is to present our bodies to Him by the mercies of God (Romans 12:1). After this dedication, the fire of God will come down and the strength of His cloud will fill us.

Let us dedicate our bodies to him, and let God's fire and His cloud fill us. Let us dedicate our minds and have them sanctified, set apart to think only His thoughts. The presence of God will be there for the purpose of these dedications, and no part of our flesh will be able stand and minister in His presence. God is saying to us today, "If you come to dedicate your bodies to me, I come to bless." He will come in His strength, which is in the clouds.