

In the Cloud

Shalom Everyone,

This week's Torah reading from **Number 8:1—12:16** relates an awesome picture of the perpetual grace of God manifested in the fact that He was always with and watching over His people. We recall that a pillar of a cloud led the people of Israel by day while they were in the desert, and at night they were given light by a pillar of fire. Certainly, it must have been, not only comforting, but also a powerful and outstanding reminder to them of God's continual presence in their midst.

Numbers 9:15 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.

Numbers 9:16 So it was alway: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.

Numbers 9:17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.

*Numbers 9:18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: **as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in their tents.***

Numbers 9:19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.

Numbers 9:20 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, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.

Numbers 9:21 And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, 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.

*Numbers 9:22 **Or whether it were two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the children of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up, they journeyed.***

Numbers 9:23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in the tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

We seem to live today where people are either going someplace, or getting prepared to do something. There always seems to be too much to be done for the time allotted. The question we need to ask is, is everything we are doing directed of the Lord, or have we become prisoners to our own plans and purposes? Much of the activity that I, personally, have participated in through much of my life has been entered into without the leading of the Holy Spirit. Looking back, it seems that I was just carried along with circumstances into things, that although they were not sinful, nevertheless, neither were they fruitful. We are often pressed to join into what is going on around us or the activity of other people or groups, and fail to be sensitive to what the inner man

of the spirit is hearing and seeing. I am really becoming aware of the importance of hearing and seeing with the Father, seeking His face, and following the direction of His Spirit. I believe a central instruction of this Torah portion is to direct us to do nothing without the Father, and to listen and look closely for what He is saying and doing. This cannot be accomplished with a casual attitude that seems to imply, “God is welcome to use me, if it fits in with my plans, and He can get my attention in the midst of my busy schedule.” Yeshua, on the other hand, lets us know that everything He did was what He saw His Father doing, and He makes it clear that our fruitfulness is dependent upon our abiding in Him.

John 5:19 (TLV) ¹⁹ Therefore Yeshua answered them, "Amen, amen I tell you, the Son cannot do anything by Himself. He can do only what He sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.

John 15:5 (TLV) ⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing.

The idea of being still for a purpose is a foreign concept to most of us, and yet I believe that is exactly what the Lord is leading us to, even as He directed the Children of Israel to remain in their tents as long as the cloud remained on the tabernacle. We have a strange idea that we are supposed to be in charge of our own lives, to be making a living, taking care of business, and doing something all the time, even if it makes us miserable and unhappy. Even our days off and our vacations turn into such wild times of “having fun” that we need to rest when they come to an end. One of the most common statements we hear from our children, and even from adults, during times of stillness and rest is, “I’m bored.” No wonder they, and we, feel bored, for we have not learned that there is a place of rest and restoration in simply being still in the presence of the Lord. It is in this place that the Father has ordained that we should hear and see with Him to be instructed in the way that we should go.

Genesis 25:27 And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

When we read this verse about Jacob and Esau, we may think that Esau was a man’s man, and Jacob was a momma’s boy, but the Hebrew understanding of “**dwelling in tents**” carries the thought of studying Torah, that is **communicating with God concerning His teaching and instruction**. In fact, we read in the book of Hebrews that Esau, who was “**a man of the field**” was really a worldly man, and was described by Scripture as immoral and godless.

There is a place where we can escape the hectic busy schedules that we have allowed to dictate the pace of our lives, **a place in the tent where we can be shut in with God in His secret place**. It is only in this place where we can receive instruction directly from our very own *Abba* to carry out those things that really matter and will last for eternity. So while the cloud of His presence that is now settled upon the tabernacle of your own heart beckons you, **don’t feel guilty to be inactive**, but know that it is in this place where He will reveal His heart to you. Don’t allow the voices of this world to distract you from the only thing that really matters. Make a decision

today to begin to enter in to His place of quiet and shalom. **He will teach you all things, guide you into all truth, and show you things to come.** This will require us to make some changes that seem foreign to our normal activity cycles, but let's lay aside our own doing and saying, and just as Jesus taught us, act with Him and speak with Him. It is the way of abundant life.

Psalms 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

One of the ways God has appointed for us to come apart and rest is as we come together in congregational meeting to hear instruction from the Word of God. Join us on Thursdays at 6:30pm in Granby to receive the Word, and take our authority in Him.

Still, in Him,
Terry