

Numbers 9:15–23

God with Us to Lead Us and Keep Us [Family Worship lesson in]

Friday, May 3, 2024 ▫ Read Numbers 9:15–23

Questions from the Scripture text: On what day does v15 take place (cf. 7:1; Ex 40:33)? What happened to the tabernacle? What special name does v15 give to the tabernacle? What does the cloud look like, at what times (v15–16)? What would happen on occasion (v17)? What would the children of Israel do, when that happened? What else would happen? And what would the children of Israel do then? How does v18 interpret the lifting or settling of the cloud? What challenged their faith according to v19? And what did they do? What instance does v20 describe? And what did they do? And what instance does v21 describe? And what did they do? How do v22–23 summarize this? By whose hand had YHWH instructed them that this constituted commands.

Why does the Lord describe again, here, the cloud and its role? Numbers 9:15–23 prepares us for the evening sermon on the Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **the promise-keeping Lord leads His people through their callings in this world.**

Keeping of the Lord's promise. The Lord had promised that He would go with the people (Ex 33:14–17, 34:9–11). When Moses first erected the tabernacle in Ex 40:33–34, the Scripture affirmed that this was in keeping with that promise (cf. Ex 40:36–38). Now that the Lord's instruction and action in the book of Leviticus has solved the problem of Ex 40:35, Israel is ready to set out from Sinai. And this passage (v15–23) and the next (10:1–10) are a reminder that the Lord is keeping His promise. He is going with His people. He keeps all His promises; they are all yes, and amen in the Lord Jesus (cf. 2Co 1:20), Who has promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age (cf. Mt 28:20).

Communication of the Lord's presence. The tabernacle is given a wonderful name in v15, the "Tent of the Testimony." This may indicate the particular part of the tabernacle where the glory cloud rests, highlighting to them that the Lord indeed makes the presence of His glory to dwell where the ark of the testimony is. And He communicates this presence day and night, changing its appearance to make it distinctly visible at all times. He Who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, present to them and caring for them, day and night (cf. Ps 121:4–6).

Confidence in the Lord's power. This presence especially reminds Israel of the Lord's power to protect them. When He first appeared to them this way, they had just left Egypt, and He led them day and night (cf. Ex 13:21–22). Almost immediately, Pharaoh pursues them, but the Lord moves and places the display of Himself, as cloud and fire at the same time, between Egypt and Israel. He makes Himself darkness to Egypt and light to Israel (cf. Ex 14:19–20). Now the same Power that confounded mighty Egypt goes with the in the wilderness and into the land. Is that power not with you, dear Christian. God the Son has tabernacled among us (cf. Jn 1:14). And believers are indwelt by God the Spirit (cf. Jn 14:16–18), by Whom the Father and the Son come and make their home with them (cf. Jn 14:23–27).

Call for our perseverance. vv19–23 emphasize how well Israel followed God's lead, staying or moving for however long the cloud indicated to them. But that would not last. It is sobering to know what is coming in the rest of Numbers. Grumbling will overtake contentment. Subordination will overtake submission. Fear and rebellion will overtake faith and obedience. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1Cor 10:1–11)! By the grace of the One Who is present to us and powerful for us, look to Him to keep you in the faith.

How can you be sure that you will make it to where the Lord is sending you? In what ways does He make you to know His presence with you daily in the home and weekly in the assembly? What has He done in history to assure you that these things are perfectly reliable? What potential for unfaithfulness remains in you? What hope is there that you will not succumb to it?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for coming and dwelling among us, first in Your Son, and then in Your Spirit. Grant that by Your grace, we would trust and obey you throughout this life, until You have brought us all the way home, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP46 "God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength" or TPH159 "Abide with Me"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. **PLEASE BE AWARE** of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Numbers 9 verses, 15 through 23. These are God's words. Now, on the day that the Tabernacle was raised up the cloud covered the Tabernacle the tent of the testimony from evening until morning, it was above the Tabernacle like the appearance of fire. So, it was always the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night whenever the cloud was taken up from above the Tabernacle, after that, the children of Israel would Journey.

And in the place where the cloud settled there, the children of Israel would pitch their tents. At the command of Yahweh, the children of Israel will journey. And at the command of Yahweh, they would camp as long as the clouds stayed above the Tabernacle. They remained encamped, even when the cloud continued long, many days above the Tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of Yahweh and did not Journey.

So it was when the cloud was above the Tabernacle a few days, according to the command of Yahweh, they would remain encamped. And according to the command of Yahweh, they would Journey So, it was when the cloud remained only from evening until morning. When the cloud was taken up in the morning they would then they would Journey.

Whether by day or by night whenever the cloud was taken up They would journey. Whether it was two days a month or a year. That the cloud remained above the Tabernacle, the children of Israel would remain encamped and not Journey. But when it was taken up, they would Journey.

At the command of Yahweh, that remained encamped. And at the command of Yahweh, they journeyed, they kept the charge of Yahweh at the command of Yahweh. By the hand. Of Moses. Amen, sends this reading of gods inspired and in Aaron's word. The Lord has already told us. About this before.

Uh, it's repeated many times the reading itself. Is fairly repetitive, but this takes us back to Exodus chapter 40. In the day that Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle, just as Uh, verse 15 begins here. Now, on the day that the Tabernacle was raised up and so forth, and so this identifies, Uh, the date for our passage, as being the same.

As the beginning of chapter seven, we're still a month before the censuses. Uh, that were in the earlier part of the Book of Numbers. And it's the day that was in. Exodus chapter 40 when Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle. So verse 33 of Exodus, 40 says and he raised up the court, all around the Tabernacle and the altar and hung up the screen of the court gate.

So Moses finished the work, then the cloud covered the Tabernacle of meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the Tabernacle and Moses was not able to enter the Tabernacle of meeting because the cloud rested above it. And the glory of Yahweh filled the Tabernacle Ever the cloud was taken up from the above, the Tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their Journeys, but if the cloud was not taken up then they did not Journey to the cloud till the day that it was taken up.

For the cloud of Yahweh was above the Tabernacle by day and fire was over it by night in the site. In the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their Journeys. Pretty sure it's Mom and Carissa John.

Okay, so What we had at the very end of the Book of Leviticus was the cloud resting upon the Tabernacle. And then the same thing that we have in our nine verses here about when the cloud rested upon it, they stayed. And if the cloud lifted up, They would Journey.

So the Lord has already told us all of this before. The one thing that is missing from numbers 9, verse 15, through 23 is Moses being unable to enter. And the reason that's missing of course is because we now know that Moses can enter He was not able to enter on the day that the Tabernacle was raised up.

And so by telling this again, telling us this again, we remember that the Lord is faithful to his promise. The Lord is faithful to his promise, to reveal himself, to his people and dwell among them. Remember in all of those? Sacrifices and offerings by which they were able to come near in the Book of Leviticus.

He solved the problem. Of Moses being unable to enter because the glory of Yahweh was filling the Tabernacle so that has been solved. But this is also fulfilling the promise at the end of Exodus 33 and beginning of Exodus 34. You remember in the wake of The golden calf incident.

The Lord had told Moses. That he should just lead the people into Canaan but God would not go up in their midst. According to the design that was given, but he has, As Moses asked and as the Lord promised in Exodus 33 verses 14 through 17 and And then Moses asks, For the favor of being able.

To see the glory of Yahweh. And the Lord shows him his glory. And, And then after that, after Moses has seen the glory of Yahweh. Uh, he asks again in Exodus 34 verses 9 through 11, that the Lord would go with them and the Lord promised he would go with them.

He would go with them. And so now, this is a reminder, the Lord is going with them. The Lord is leading them. In fact, they would each know their exact place. At any time. Because as the censuses earlier in the book of numbers have told us The camp was arranged around the Tabernacle.

And as the censuses have also told us even the order of March is conditioned. Uh, by who goes in front of the Tabernacle and who goes behind it. So, when the cloud settles down, you know, where the Tabernacle is going to go, And you know which way the Tabernacle faces it faces to the East and you know who camps on the East who camps on the south and who camps on the west and who camps on the North indeed.

The Lord is keeping his promise to go with them. Uh, and the Lord.

Keeps all of his promises there. All. Yes, and amen in the Lord. Jesus, who is the Tabernacle? And so not only is the Lord keeping uh, His promise here. He also communicates his presence. The Tabernacle, of course, is dwelling in the midst of the people. But the cloud and the fire.

The cloud by day and the Fire by night. Communicate, the presence of the Lord and not just the presence of the Lord, generally by the cloud and the fire, not just the presence of the Lord, a little bit more specifically with the Tabernacle itself. But notice what it's called in verse 15 is very unique name for it, the tent of the testimony Which I think indicates that this pillar of cloud that went up was very specifically over where the holy of holies goes because there is where the Arc of the testimony is and it would be the tent of the testimony because the great thing about the tent is not even the signing of of God's favor represented by the lampstand and the sharing of God's favor represented by the show bread.

But the presence of the Lord sitting enthroned as it were above the cherubim, who sit Did of the testimony. And so the Lord is communicating his presence. He's communicating to Israel here. What he tells us about in Psalm 121 verses 4 through 6 That he who keeps Israel. Neither Slumbers nor sleeps the sun will not strike them by day, nor the moon strike them by night.

Because the Lord keeps them day and night and even as We prayed when we were coming to worship, he tells us that every good gift and every perfect gift. Uh, comes down from our father of lights that the one who created the greater light to govern the day and the Lesser light to govern the night and the Stars, also, he is unto us, the father of lights, plural.

Not just that he dwells and unapproachable light, which of course, is true. But he calls himself the father of lights to remind us that there is no shifting or change due to Shadow. Although the shadow of night under the Moonlight covers the Earth or the Starlight May cover the At night or where we are on the Earth at night.

Yet, no, Shadow ever even glances across the continual goodness of God to us. And so communication of the Lord's presence and therefore, also communication of the Lord's power. Even as we heard in Psalm 121, the psalm will not strike them by day or the Moon by night. But you remember, When the cloud.

And, Appeared to them. It was when they were just leaving Egypt. And they left with uplifted arm. With the Lord going in front of them. But something very scary happened. Almost. As soon as they had left Egypt, Pharaoh decided that that wasn't a good idea after all. And he came after them with his army.

Now the pillar of cloud and fire went and stopped by piha. He Roth in the most indefensible place, possible with the nation of Israel, backed up to the Sea And surely Pharaoh thought I have them. Now here, they were in the least defensible place against the most formidable military in the world and what happened?

The pillar of cloud and fire moved from in front of the children of Israel on the shore of the sea. To behind the children of Israel. Between them and the Egyptians. And he even showed preferential treatment like starting with the plague of the Flies that the plagues came only upon the Egyptians and not upon the Israelites.

Well, the pillar of cloud was Darkness unto the Egyptians, so there was the supernatural Darkness upon their enemies, but was light for the Israelites by night. And so they had security light as it were by night and the Lord put himself between them And Egypt and so he is communicating to them, the greatness of his power to protect them.

So we see here, the keeping of the Lord's promise, the communication of the Lord's presence the confidence that they could therefore have in the Lord's power, which we also, of course, have because not only did the word become flesh and dwell Among Us He tells us at the beginning of the gospel and John 1 14, but also, the end of the Gospel, Jesus says all authority in Heaven and Earth has been given unto me.

And then he says, and surely, I will be with, you always even to the end of the Age that the same Yahweh who created the Heaven and the Earth. The same Yahweh who made a appearance display of his glory and presence and protection, and faithfulness to his people when they were leaving exit, when they were leaving, Egypt, and at Sinai, and through the Wilderness, This same y'all right now, has become flesh and he is with us because He is the Living.

God, the one who died for us. Uh, has added to himself a human nature so that he might die and dries again. But he is God and he is always always with us. With us, not only to keep us protected, but with us to help us Uh, obey him.

For. He says to go and make disciples. Uh, baptizing them and teaching them to keep all that. He has commanded. And this is what we need him. Most for to be with us, always even to the end of the Age is so that we might be obedient. Because the last thing that we see here is a call for our perseverance.

One of the things that is emphasized by much repetition here. Is how obedient they were? How obedient they were to follow all that. Yahweh had commanded and

particularly for the when to move Uh, and when not to move. And that would be true until The Lord had spies sent into Canaan.

He didn't need to do that, did he? It was a test for the people of Israel. If they would have just kept obeying. And, The cloud lifted up one day and crossed into Canaan, they would have to cross into my head. Because they were following him. But the sending of the spies tests them to see whether they're they will persevere in their obedience, whether they will persist.

There are many things in our lives That so test us. And so, this is a reminder that we need to persevere in the faith. Praise God. If he has given us Faith, praise God. If he has helped us to come to some measure of obedience, praise God that he brought Israel to this measure of obedience that we have given here by such repetition in this place.

They fell in the wilderness in First Corinthians, 10 1-11 talks about. They all were under the cloud and they all passed through the water and so forth. But eventually, they grumbled, they complained, they sinned against God in the wilderness even committing. Great immorality. Not that it isn't great to morality to complain against God, but great marital type immorality or unmarital type immorality.

They did those things. And so, Uh, in verses 10 and 11 of First Corinthians 10. It says, these things Came Upon them but they were written down for our instruction upon whom the edge ends of the ages have come. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take heed, lest he fall.

And that's a reminder here. When we read According to the command of y'all, according to the command of Yahweh, at the command of Yahweh, they did this at the command of yahweh did that, they did that. They kept the charge of Yahweh multiple times. It says here. And yet, we know.

What we're about to read in the rest of the book of numbers. And so it's a reminder to us. That we need perseverance in the faith and we need it by the grace. Of The God Who is always with us. We need it by the grace of our Lord.

Jesus Christ who Tabernacled Among Us. And who is with us, always even to the end of the age or else perhaps. We will find ourselves. Only to have been externally, pressured. By the common operations of the spirit and not regenerated by the resurrecting. Redemptive operation of the spirit. The contentment of the people would be overtaken by grumbling.

The submission of the people would be taken up by insubordination. The faith and Obedience of the people would be taken overtaken. By fear and Rebellion. And the scripture tells us very plainly that we should take. Lest we also fall. In a similar way. Let's pray that the Lord would bless to us as part of his word.

Dark Gracious. God in our heavenly father, we thank you. Uh, making your dwelling place with man. Not only in the display of that in the Tabernacle. And already in the Incarnation of Christ. But we do look forward to that last Declaration that your dwelling is made with man, and we don't even need the Because you and the lamb are the light of the place.

Uh, we praise you because you are faithful to keep your promises help us to trust you and not to forget your faithfulness. We thank you for communicating your presence to us. Forgive us and help us because Uh, or forgetful both. Even to obey and enjoy you. And then also, By way of Anxiety.

As well, grant that we would not be forgetful of your presence. We thank you and praise you for your power. Help us to persevere and trusting you. Uh, we ask all these things in Jesus name, amen.