

Clouds

In scientific terms, there are ten recognized types of clouds. Most of us acknowledge only three types, the white, fluffy ones that look beautiful against the blue sky, Grey and dark clouds that bring rain, and the turbulent black ones that bring storms. All clouds look alike or at least have similar features when viewed from above. They are all water, either liquid, vapor, or ice, and God uses them to spread water across the earth. They are the part of God's Grace that brings an essential ingredient to life on this earth.

The first mention of clouds in the Bible is: *"God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth" (Genesis 9:12-13).* The final mention of a cloud is in Revelation 14. Most often, the clouds mentioned in the Bible appear as being with God or directed by God, to support or defend His people.

When Israel departed from Egypt, Pharaoh went after them. God placed a cloud and fire between Pharaoh's chariots and Israel at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:19-20). The cloud that led Israel during the wilderness wanderings stayed in one place when they were to camp in that place. But they moved when the cloud moved. *"If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out" (Numbers 9:21).* At Mount Sinai, God spoke from a thick cloud so that people could hear but not see Him (Exodus 20:21; Luke 9:34-35). To protect the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, Aaron was to burn incense to fill the Most Holy place with a cloud (Leviticus 16:12-13), for God said, **"I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat"** (Leviticus 16:2).

About 450 years later, the Temple built by Solomon was sanctified, and a cloud showed God's presence. *"There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the sons of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, 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 filled the house of the LORD" (1 Kings 8:9-11).*

Nearly 950 years later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain where He was transfigured before them. In a manner similar to God speaking to Israel at Sinai, *"a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!'" (Mark 9:2-7).*

When Jesus comes again, He will be with the clouds. *"Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27) And "He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).*

These instances help us understand how the clouds will signal Christ coming at the end of time. *"Then they will see the **Son of Man coming in the clouds** with great power and glory. And then He will*

*send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven" (Mark 13:26-27). "Behold, **He is coming with clouds**, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:7-8).*

There will come a day when a message will come from the Father to the Son. The age of time will end, and eternity will continue. A very brief image of that instant is given to us by the Spirit through John. *"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:14-16).*

Are you ready for the clouds to roll back and reveal The Son?