

Move on with the cloud

The Israelites had a cloud by day and a fiery pillar by night to guide and protect them. Salvation doesn't add up to much if there's no guidance. To continue in the Word, to continue steadfastly in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, to go on to perfection are New Testament exhortations for us. God guides a moving object. You have to recognise the move of God in your day and keep moving with it. God starts a movement, and only man makes it a monument. There is motion only where the Holy Ghost is working. The Lord Jesus is saying to the church today: "Move on with the cloud!"

God has a door of opportunity for you. Your gift can bring you before great men as you are faithful and grow what God has given you. 2 Kings 2:1-18 is very instructive about moving on with the cloud of glory. Elijah was the movement of God in his day. His total concern was the will of God. A man of like passions as we are, was certain of origin and future because he heard and obeyed the living Word from God.

Valedictory was vital. Ministries die, but God doesn't. He prepares the successors. Elijah had to be translated for Elisha to be transformed. God was acting in heaven by sending a chariot of fire and was working on the earth by exchanging the mantle. Elisha made his daring request: he wanted a double portion of the Spirit's power. God was glad to do it. Elisha had to fulfil two conditions:

- (a) desire the will of God and nothing else;
- (b) concentrate on the essential in order to discern the moment of exit.

A wholehearted desire to do the whole will of God is a precious thing in the sight of God, angels and demons. Apostles and prophets are an open theatre or spectacle before the unseen world. There are many side-tracks for the diligent disciple. The enemy waits to distract and divert. Our concentration on the will of God may waver in three ways:

1. Wrong relationship

Look at Samson whose choice failed to have a holy valuation. The Lord left him because of Delilah. The choice was on the surface and had no depth. Anyone who diminishes our love for God is a wrong relationship. The sensual superceded the spiritual and Samson's vision of God was obscured. The enemy still seeks to prostitute desire so we lust after things for our own benefit. Then we cannot move on with the cloud, but like Samson, face impending disaster. Is the relationship increasing the spiritual life?

2. Materialism

Sacrifice has been almost eliminated from the Christian vocabulary. The "Jesus has done it all, I don't have to sacrifice and take up a cross" teaching has brought an avalanche of apathy and passivity upon the church. Take just the issue of money. Tithing is obligatory: we give the tenth to God. Real giving begins at that point with our nine-tenths. Many of God's children are robbing God and fail the test of stewardship.

3. Living by Feelings

Easy roads to spiritual success are a lie. High emotions at conference tend to deceive. We live by acting on the facts of the Word. Beware triumphal, exultant feelings because the devil

usually strikes when you are riding high. Living by feelings will produce a yo-yo Christian, unstable and unusable. We need to come to the point of spiritual recognition. Elisha got the essential mantle because he saw the chariot of fire take Elijah away. Elisha did not want to miss anything. We should be like that with God's will. There is a concentration on the essential that comes through prayer. What is the thing God is getting through to you about? Perhaps it is something to do with the spiritual geography Elijah takes through Elisha. The will of God is a progressive journey for us, symbolically from Gilgal to Jordan.

THEY BEGAN AT GILGAL

That was where the dirt of the world rolled away. A place of renunciation of sin. Many believers stay with salvation and never move on. They get stuck with evangelicalism, daily reading notes, the creed, disputing Calvinism or Arminianism, and remain babes in Christ, largely under the law, full of division, strife and envy. They may go to a conference or two, but remain unchanged. Born again believers who don't move on can be a serious blockage in church life. You cannot have fellowship with some carnal babes in Christ.

ELISHA WENT ON TO BETHEL

It means house of God, and was the place where Jacob had the outstanding open communication with heaven. The place of revelation provided him with the dream of reality. The baptism of the Holy Spirit can be like that. We see the great potential of a life, surrounded by power and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Like Jacob we have to move on to Peniel, where the dream of reality became the reality of the dream. The cycle of self-will has to be broken. No doubt Elisha had received a cross-centred training for the prophetic office. Do we stay with gifts or move on to the Giver? We must do the revelation if we want to move on with the cloud.

THEY WENT ON TO JERICHO

This represents victory and warfare. The walls were 30 feet thick! Obedience, worship and order won the day. You've got to fight for the victory: it is never automatic. Everything that God was to Joshua, David, Abraham, Elijah, Peter and Paul HE IS TO YOU TODAY. He cannot change, lie or fail. If we do not believe in victory we diminish the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. Last year's victory is no use for today. Today is a new battle and a new victory. What Jericho faces you? Determine to be more than conqueror. Don't be lazy and quote Exodus 14:13, thinking you only have to wait for God to intervene. In the covenant God has given us weapons of spiritual warfare: the blood, the Word, the Name, the gifts, praise His holy name! To win at Jericho is never automatic - we have to fight for it!

THEY WENT ON TO JORDAN

Jordan was the door to inheritance and the land of promises. It was also a place of fire (Deuteronomy 9:3). It also signifies Romans 6:6 - death to the old life so the new may emerge. Jordan was the threshold of the new anointing, and the prophets knew that fire was the most important adjunct to the work of the Holy Spirit. Without fire we consume the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on our lusts. Luke 3:16 properly understood will put most believers at a distance. We see in England today, many congregations keep at a distance from what God wants to do. A withdrawing spirit prevents the new obedience. Few believers have experienced the fire. May we, like Elisha, concentrate on the essential aspect of Holy Ghost ministry. God wants to burn out all that in us would appease the enemy. He desires a new zeal

in the church. The sons of the prophets stood at a distance (2 Kings 2:7). Do we?

To feel a keen need for more of God and a move of God, to desire an increase of the anointing, is what God wants for us. There is a stillness in worship where knowledge and revelation flow. The sons of the prophets didn't see the exchange of power; they looked for Elijah; they failed to discern the point of recognition. Let's cry out for insight, discernment and wisdom in the purposes of God. Only then can we move on with the cloud.

Elisha carried on the work of God; the movement of the Holy Spirit. He believed on the God of Elijah and the miracles flowed.

On 29th July at 5.00 am in 1985, God spoke audibly to my spirit these words, "don't entangle yourself with less than I want to give you." He is a big, big God and wants to raise our faith level to His own.

We so easily settle for less than our unlimited God wants. Blinkers of unbelief need to be cast off. His purposes for anointed ministry are far reaching. We have such a small doctrinal, local vision. We fail to see the great forest of eternal truths in the Word of God. We fail to see the masses without Christ.

Keep free to do the will of God. Preserve your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ at all costs. Progress in the vision God has given you. Be daring and concentrate on the will of God, like Elisha.

Beware an enemy who seeks to pervert desire so we lust after things for our benefit. Allow the training of the Holy Spirit to curb wrong ambitions and ego satisfying impulses. Don't lose the prayer life. Continue in earnest prayer, knowing as you pray for others it will accomplish much. The essence of our strength is obedience to God, and being and living in His Word. Have a big vision: a WORLD-WIDE VISION. Begin to give to foreign missions. Get acquainted with them and pray for missionaries and evangelists. As you are faithful God will open your door of opportunity.

Confess your sins and weights that so easily hinder you in the race. Experience the foolproof perogative of Jesus' holy blood. Know the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with fire. Live in the Bible. Covet the anointing of the Spirit. Do the revelations.

Step out from Gilgal and Bethel to Jordan and Jericho. Concentrate on the essential: fulfilling life's most exciting adventure: the will of God.