

Christ Coming in the Clouds

In Learning Activity #48 we studied the "coming" and "seeing" aspects of Matthew 24:30. In this Learning Activity we are going to look at an additional aspect of the above verse, in specific the phrase "*coming in the clouds.*" If we look at the use of this phrase in the Bible it will help us to understand its use in Matthew 24:30. To do this study we are going to look at passages in the Old Testament and then apply that understanding to similar uses of that phrase in the New Testament.

1. Exodus 16:10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.
2. In the verse above, what is it that the children of Israel saw in the cloud? The glory of the Lord.
3. Exodus 19:9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."
4. In the verse above, what was it that the "cloud" provided for the children of Israel? The thick cloud allowed the people to hear the Lord speaking to Moses.
5. Read Leviticus 16:2 and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.
6. In the verse above, what was the "cloud" used for? To signify the appearance of the Lord.
7. Read Numbers 11:25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again.
8. In the verse above, what was the significance of "the cloud?" The Lord came down in the cloud.
9. Psalms 104:3 He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, who makes the clouds His chariot, who walks on the wings of the wind,
10. In the verse above, what is the significance of "the clouds?" The clouds are portrayed as the "chariot" of the Lord.
11. Read Isaiah 19:1 The burden against Egypt. Behold, the LORD rides on a swift cloud, and will come into Egypt; The idols of Egypt will totter at His presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.
12. In the verse above, what is the significance of clouds? The Lord is portrayed as riding upon a swift cloud.
13. Daniel 7:13 I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man,

Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

14. In the verse above, what is the significance of "the clouds?" The Son of man (Christ or the Messiah) came with the clouds of heaven.

15. Read Joel 2:1–2 Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, for it is at hand: A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains. a people *come*, great and strong, the like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any *such* after them, even for many successive generations.

16. In the verse above, what is the significance of clouds?" The Day of the Lord (See Learning Activity #37) was to come on a day of clouds. This same language is repeated in Zephaniah 1:14–15.

When we look at the previous passages we can conclude that to "*come in the clouds*" is a phrase that is NOT used literally in the Bible, but rather is figurative language depicting an event associated with God.

Now that the use of this phrase has been established, let's look at some of its uses in the New Testament.

"...and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds...." (Matt.24:30).

"...and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt.26:64).

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory" (Mark 13:26).

"...and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:62).

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27).

"Behold, he is coming with clouds...." (Rev. 1:7).

Note: In the last verse above, the verse continues with "*...and every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him....*" Two comments are in order about this part of the verse. Notice that those who pierced him [were involved in His death] are mentioned. In addition, the greek word for "eye" is "*ophthalmos*" which can be taken either literally or figuratively (See Strongs Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek word #3788). It is clear from the material we have been studying in both this and Learning Activity #48 that this word is meant to be taken figuratively. Thus the intent here agrees with all of the other applications of the Lord coming in the clouds where He would be perceived to be present, understood to be present, and they would be aware of His presence through the specifics of the event being described.