On the Holy Spirit
(Part 4 of 7: The Spirit in the Exodus Journey)

Historic Faith Series on Holy Spirit

X. Holy Spirit Foreshadowed in the Exodus Journey

a. From **Psalm 78:1-3** (designated **Psalm 77** in the LXX):

i. "Give heed, O my people, to my law; Incline your ear to the words of my mouth; I shall open my mouth in parables; I shall speak of hidden things from of old. What things we heard, these we also knew, and our fathers describe them to us." (**Psalm 78:1-3**, designated **Psalm 77:1-3** in LXX; Orthodox Study Bible)

1. Recall that Jesus quotes from this passage in **Matthew 13:34-35**, to explain *why* He spoke to the people in parables (rather than speaking plainly and directly).

ii. Note that this psalm begins by saying "I will open my mouth in parables; I shall speak of things hidden from of old." Then most of the remainder of this psalm is recounting the Exodus journey (which happened hundreds of years before this psalm was written).

1. I see two possibilities regarding the significance of the opening words of this psalm. *EITHER*...

a. The Exodus journey, in addition to being a true, historical event, is also *a parable* with hidden meaning in it, pertaining to the future. (Recall that in Biblical parables, each main element in the story represents something of spiritual significance); *OR*

b. The part of the psalm that follows *is completely disconnected* from the opening statement.

iii. With that in mind, let us *take another look* at the part of the part of that psalm that follows, recounting the Exodus journey:

1. "And they forgot His good deeds and His wonders He showed them in the sight of their fathers, the marvelous things He did in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. He parted the sea and led them through; the waters stood like a dam, and He led them with a cloud by day and all night by the light of a fire. He split the rock in the desert and gave them water to drink as in a great deep; and He brought out water from the rock, and He brought it down like the waters of rivers.

2. "And they still continued to sin against Him; they rebelled against the Most High in a place without water, and they tested God in their hearts by asking food for their souls; and they slandered God and said, 'Why is God able to prepare a table in the desert? Since He struck the rock, and waters flowed, and brooks flooded, is He also unable to give us bread or to prepare a table for His people?'

3. "Therefore, the Lord heard and was enraged, and fire was kindled in Jacob, and wrath arose against Israel, because they did not believe in God, nor put their hope in His salvation.

4. "And He commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven; and He rained manna for them to eat and gave them the bread of heaven; men ate the bread of angels; He sent them food in abundance. He took away the south wind from heaven…" (**Psalm 78:11-26**; designated **Psalm 77:11-26** in the LXX; OSB)

b. With the benefit of the New Testament, we know that the Exodus journey recounted in this psalm is, indeed, *a parable of the spiritual journey we are all on*. This is discussed in three places in the New Testament:

   i. **Hebrews 3:7-4:11**

   ii. **Jude v. 5**

   iii. **1 Corinthians 10:1-13** (Of the three New Testament passages, this provides the *most detailed* explanation of the foreshadowing and parallels.)

c. In the passage from **1 Corinthians 10**, Paul makes the connection between the *cloud* and the *Holy Spirit.* We will read that passage along with the proceeding one, starting at **1 Corinthians 9:24**, to get the context (a warning to Christians to run their spiritual race with intensity, and not become disqualified as happened to most of those on the Exodus journey).

   i. "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

   ii. "Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same

spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted." (**1 Corinthians 9:24–10:6**, NKJV)

1. Paul then continues to warn the Christians in Corinth about four specific sins that the Israelites fell into, in the wilderness, that kept most of them from entering the Promised Land:

    a. Idolatry,

    b. Sexual immorality,

    c. Tempting Christ, and

    d. Complaining (murmuring)

iii. The *Exodus journey* is a foreshadowing of the Christian life.

1. The main point Paul is making in this passage is clear: Christians (who have been baptized and are even "drinking from Christ") can lose their salvation if they are not vigilant and get involved in serious sin.

iv. Paul equates the Israelites crossing of the Red Sea (departing Egypt, the land of bondage) in **Exodus 14** with Christian baptism.

1. The Red Sea crossing represents Christian *baptism* (in water).

2. The pillar of cloud and fire represents the *Holy Spirit*.

    a. "Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born <u>of water and the Spirit</u>, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" (**John 3:5**, NKJV)

    b. Early Christian writers understood this famous statement by Jesus in **John 3** as referring to water baptism (**Matthew 28:18-20**), where we are spiritually reborn through water and the Holy Spirit (also see **Acts 2:38, Romans 6:1-14** and **Titus 3:5**).

    c. For early Christian understanding of the Scriptures related to baptism, see *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, ed. David Bercot, article on 'Baptism'. Also see audio lesson by David Bercot, *What the Early Christians Believed about Baptism*, accessible through Historic Faith website or from Scroll Publishing.

3. Elements of this allegory/parable:

    a. Promised Land = heaven

    b. Red Sea = baptism, start of the journey

    c. 40 years in Wilderness = the Christian life, a time of testing and temptation (recall Jesus was in the wilderness being tested and tempted for *40 days*).

    d. Spiritual food and drink = Lord's supper, which sustains Christians on their journey

    e. Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335-395 AD), a bishop in the church in Cappadocia, commented on other aspects of this allegorical foreshadowing that Paul did not mention (Exodus journey representing the Christian life):

        i. Land of Egypt (in slavery, darkness in 9th plague) = life before one becomes a Christian (in *spiritual darkness*, and in *bondage* to sin)

        ii. Pharaoh (ruler of kingdom of darkness, who does not want to "let his people go") = Satan (ruler of his own kingdom, who does not want to release his subjects from their slavery).

        iii. Army of Pharaoh (destroyed in the Sea) = forces of sin and evil that are defeated in baptism.

        iv. Pillar of cloud and fire = Holy Spirit (led them out of the land of slavery to and through the water; then served as a guide to lead them all the way through the Wilderness).

            1. "In this crossing the cloud served as a guide. Those before us [*Christians before the time of Gregory*] interpreted the cloud well as the grace of the Holy Spirit, who guides toward the good those who are worthy. Whoever follows him passes through the water, since the guide makes a way through it for him. In this way he is safely led to freedom, and the one who pursues him to bring him into bondage is destroyed in the water."

            2. (Source: Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*, Paulist Press, Mahwah NJ, pp. 82-83)

v. I work as an engineer, designing water and wastewater infrastructure. Early in my career I worked on the design of part of the wastewater treatment complex for Boston Harbor (you can see the large white egg-shaped anaerobic digesters when flying into Boston's Logan airport).

1. After working on the design drawings for this for many months, our firm was not involved in the construction of the facility. Many (10-15) years later a homeschool group my daughter was part of was going on a field trip to this facility (that I had worked on the design of). Of course, I asked to go along.

2. Walking through the full-scale facility, with all the concrete tunnels, pipes and mechanical equipment was an eerie experience. Although this was my first time at the facility, I felt like I had been there before. Somehow, I knew where everything would be when I turned around or walked down a corridor.

3. It was because I had known very well the model (2-D drawings) that the plant was based on. So I naturally recognized the real facility when I entered it!

4. One of the reasons it is important for Christians to study the Exodus journey, principally found in **Exodus**, **Numbers** and **Deuteronomy,** is that it *provides a scale model of the Christian life*. If we know the details of the earlier story well, it can provide wonderful knowledge and insight to help us in our own journey. It was written for that purpose, in the form of a true story that also serves as a hidden parable *for us*!

a. I can learn from those who were successful in making it to the Promised Land (Joshua and Caleb).

b. I also can learn (things to avoid) by studying the sins of those who fell in the wilderness.

c. This story also is a sobering reminder that many who begin the journey will not make it. So I am not shocked when others fall (even those who have led and taught me in the past).

d. This Christian life is *a time of testing* and overcoming temptation. Recall that *even Jesus* had to undergo a time of testing and temptation in the wilderness, after He was baptized.

i. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for a time of testing of *40 days*; just as the Israelites were led by the cloud/pillar into the wilderness for a time of testing of *40 years*.

ii. Jesus showed us the way by blazing the trail ahead of us, with His own life.

d. Let's take another look at the *pillar of cloud and fire*, from the story of the Exodus journey (since it represents the Holy Spirit), to see what we can learn about the Spirit related to our own spiritual journey. Passages that describe the pillar of cloud and fire:

i. **Question:** *When* does the pillar of cloud and fire first appear?

1. **Answer:** It first appears in **Exodus 13**, right *after the Passover event*s.

2. Recall the events of the Passover evening, from **Exodus 12**:

a. the Passover lamb was slain;

b. a special meal consisting of that lamb was eaten by God's people, yet none of bones of that lamb were to be broken (foreshadowing **John 19:30-37**);

c. the blood of the slain lamb was placed on the doorpost of each Jewish house where the meal was eaten;

d. the Jews were protected by blood of the lamb, while death came upon firstborn in each household of the Egyptians (foreshadowing Jesus, our Passover Lamb, as noted in **1 Corinthians 5:7**); and then

e. the Jews started to depart Egypt in haste at night, with unleavened bread.

3. Read **Exodus 13:17-22**

a. "Thus when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, 'Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.' So God led the people around by way of the desert to the Red Sea, and in the fifth generation the children of Israel went up from the land of Egypt.

b. "Now Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, 'God will surely visit you and you shall carry out

my bones from here with you.' So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham by the desert.

c. "Moreover, God led them by day in a pillar of cloud to show them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire. Thus the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before all the people." (**Exodus 13:17-22**, LXX, OSB)

d. Things we notice from **Exodus 13** regarding the Holy Spirit:

i. The pillar of cloud and fire (representing the Holy Spirit) appears *after the Passover Lamb is slain*.

1. Recall the night before Jesus died, He told his disciples that He had to depart from them before the Holy Spirit could come to them.

2. Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper [= *the Holy Spirit*] will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." (**John 16:7**, NKJV)

ii. God led them on the way out of Egypt with a pillar of cloud (by day) and fire (by night).

iii. The Spirit led the people *to the water*.

1. I believe the Holy Spirit is involved in the conversion of people, before they are baptized. The Spirit, through the prophecies (and also by convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgement, as Jesus said in **John 16:8**), leads people to Christ.

2. Recall also that in **Acts 2**, the Holy Spirit came down as tongues of fire, and was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost. The Spirit led the people to the apostles, to a message that pointed them to liberation from spiritual slavery through baptism. (**Acts 2:38**)

ii. Read **Exodus 14:19-25**.

1. The pillar of cloud and the Angel of the Lord both relocated from leading the people, to follow behind them.

2. The pillar of cloud cast a dreadful, thick darkness upon the Egyptians; but it cast light upon God's people. It separated God's people from their enemies and protected them. It led them out of slavery, then continued to lead them for 40 years all the way to the Promised Land.

3. It says in **Exodus 14:24** that the Lord "looked down upon the army of the Egyptians *through* the pillar of fire and cloud".

iii. Read **Exodus 14:26-31**.

iv. Read from the *Song of Moses*, **Exodus 15:8-10**.

1. "By the Spirit of your anger the waters were gathered together; the waves stood upright in the midst of the sea; the depths congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoils; I will satisfy my soul; I will destroy with my sword; my hand shall have dominion.' You sent forth Your Spirit; the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters." (**Exodus 15:8-10**, LXX, OSB)

2. We see in this passage the water and Spirit involved in the deliverance of God's people.

v. After the tabernacle is completed and set up, the cloud descends upon it. Read **Exodus 40:28-32**.

1. The pillar of cloud (by day) and fire (by night) remained over the tabernacle (around which the 12 tribes were camped, see **Numbers 2**) throughout the time that God's people were in the Wilderness.

2. If it ascended, the people packed up and prepared to depart, following wherever it led. If it did not, they remained where they were.

vi. The pillar of cloud and fire guides Israel through the wilderness. Read **Numbers 9:15-23**.

1. God's people did exactly what God told them to do. They packed up to depart when the cloud rose up; and stayed encamped in a location for as long as the cloud remained there.

2. The Lord provided the Holy Spirit to act like a modern GPS guidance system, to navigate for the nation of Israel while they were traveling through the Wilderness.

3. The Spirit told them not only what route to take, but also how long to remain in each place where they camped (whether for just one day, for many months, or even longer).

4. After the people passed through the Red Sea, Moses did *NOT* say, "You're on your own; I hope you make it to the Promised Land!".

    a. The Spirit led them all the way through the Wilderness, their entire journey.

    b. This kept all of them together. It was the center of their camp (3 of the 12 tribes encamped each along the N, S, E and W side of the cloud).

    c. It guided them with light at night and protected them. The cloud provided them with shade from the desert sun during the day.

5. This provides a beautiful picture of the important intended role of the Holy Spirit in leading Christians and the church today:

    a. Leading, unifying, protecting and guiding us all the way to the end of our journey.

    b. As the Comforter, a comforting presence of God to be with us so that we are not alone.

    c. We need guidance on the many decisions we have to make on our own spiritual journeys. Let us keep our spiritual eyes on the Spirit, to lead us.

vii. Later, after the Captivity in Babylon, Nehemiah looked back upon the time of the Exodus journey. Nehemiah said:

1. "You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry by the Red Sea. And in Egypt You showed signs against Pharaoh, against all his servants, and against all the people of his land. For You knew that they acted proudly against them. So, You made a name for Yourself as it is this day. And you divided the sea before them, so they went through the midst of the sea on dry land; and their persecutors You threw into the deep, as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover, You led them by day with a cloudy pillar, and by night with the pillar of

fire, to give them lights on the road which they should travel." (**Nehemiah 9:9-12**, LXX, OSB)

a. Note that the Lord led them by the pillar of fire, to provide a light so that they could see where they were going, in the dark.

2. "Even when they made a molded calf for themselves and said, 'these are the gods that brought us up out of Egypt', and worked great provocations, yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud did not depart from them by day to lead them on the road; nor the pillar of fire by night to show them light and the way they should go. <u>You gave Your good Spirit</u> to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst. Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell." (**Nehemiah 9:18-21**, LXX, OSB)

a. God led people all the way through the wilderness by His Spirit.

b. This passage directly connects the Spirit with the guidance they had in the wilderness.

viii. Later in the chapter, Nehemiah recounted how the Lord testified against the people by His Spirit, through the prophets.

1. "…But they stubbornly turned their backs, stiffened their necks, and would not hear. Yet for many years You had patience with them and <u>testified against them by Your Spirit in Your prophets</u>. Yet they would not listen…" (from **Nehemiah 9:29-30**, LXX, OSB)

a. God spoke through the prophets by His Spirit, to warn the people and to call them back to following Him.

ix. Read **Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-19**, where the author is speaking of how the wisdom of God worked in the past, here during the Exodus journey.

1. (Note: **Wisdom of Solomon** was in the original 1611 King James Version of the Bible and remained in the KJV well into the 1800's. It also is included in the Old Testament of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. There is much in this book about Israel's journey through the wilderness. This book was highly respected by early Christian writers, and can provide insights to us as well, whether or not one considers it to be inspired Scripture.)

2. "She (wisdom) delivered a holy people and a blameless seed from a nation of oppressors. She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord and opposed fearful kings with signs and wonders. She gave to holy men the reward of their labors. She guided them in a marvelous way and became for them a shelter by day and a flame of stars by night. She carried them across the Red Sea and led them through deep water; but she drowned the enemies and cast them up from the depth of the abyss." (**Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-19**, LXX, OSB)

    a. In a hot desert, a cloud is a welcome shelter from the burning heat of the desert sun.

    b. This pillar "guided them in a marvelous way".

x. Read **Wisdom of Solomon 18:3**.

1. "…You provided a flaming pillar of fire as a guide for their unknown journey, and a harmless sun for their glorious exile." (**Wisdom of Solomon 18:3**, LXX, OSB)

    a. He guided His people on their unknown journey with "a harmless sun", to give them light at all times.

e. **Question:** Where do we see *Jesus* in the story of the Exodus?

i. **Answer:** Actually, we can see Jesus in *multiple places* in this narrative!

1. We see Jesus in the *Passover Lamb* that is slain (**1 Corinthians 5:7**), after which the journey out of Egypt to the Promised Land begins.

2. *Moses himself* also foreshadowed Jesus.

    a. In **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**, Moses says that in the future the Lord will raise up a prophet "like him" from among their brothers, and when he comes, they must do what he says. Peter explains in **Acts 3:22** that this prophecy referred to Jesus. Jesus was "the prophet like Moses".

    b. If we look at the life of Moses carefully, we can see dozens of parallels between Moses and Jesus.

        i. The one man raised up by God to deliver God's people out of slavery.

        ii. Evil king tries to have him killed

        iii. He brought in the Passover sacrifice.

iv. Similarities in the first public miracle performed (water to blood, compared to water to wine transformation; even the stone vessels are mentioned).

v. Jews unable to locate his body after he dies.

vi. …and there are *so many more parallels*!

3. Christ was foreshadowed by *the rock that produced water*, from which the people drank in the wilderness.

   a. Paul said, "…they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (**1 Corinthians 10:4**, NKJV)

   b. Recall that Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well in **John 4:10-18** that if she knew who He was, *she would ask Him* for water. He explains that the water He gives "will become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life".

   c. In **John 7**, we learn more about this extraordinary "water" that Jesus would give.

      i. "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (**John 7:37–39**, NKJV)

   d. Recall that in the story of the Exodus journey, the rock that Paul says somehow "followed them" was the source of abundant rivers of water. It sustained their lives in the desert.

   e. Recall also that Moses was told to strike the rock *only once*. If Christ was represented by the rock, and the wooden staff that struck the rock represented the cross, perhaps this foreshadowed the fact that Christ was to be crucified only once.

      i. Christians who fall away (who cannot be brought back to repentance) to be renewed again, they

that in effect would be *crucifying Christ a second time* (**Hebrews 6:4-6**).

f. The Holy Spirit also was foreshadowed in the instructions for the tabernacle that were given to Moses in the wilderness (at Mount Sinai).

i. The plans and instructions for the tabernacle and its ministry were given to Moses at Mount Sinai (**Hebrews 8:1-6**).

ii. We know from **Hebrews 9-10** that:

1. The High Priest, who entered the Most Holy Place with blood once a year, represented Christ.

2. The blood the High Priest brought foreshadowed the blood of Jesus.

3. The curtain or veil that at the entrance to the Most Holy Place (which was torn in two when Christ died, in **Matthew 27:51**) represented the body of Christ.

iii. Therefore, in the arrangement of the tabernacle we see the Father (Who is represented as residing in the Most Holy Place) and Son (High Priest, blood, curtain) represented.

iv. **Question:** Where is the Holy Spirit in this picture?

1. Irenaeus provides an answer to this question. Writing about the Holy Spirit, Irenaeus added:

a. "For after this pattern Moses received the seven-branched candlestick always burning in the sanctuary; since it was on the pattern of the heavens that he received the liturgy, as the Word says to him: 'Thou shalt do according to all the pattern of what thou hast seen on the mount.'"

i. (Source: Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, chapter 9)

b. Note that the lampstand had three branches with lamps on each side, plus one in the middle (for a total of *seven* lamps/lights); and it burned always before the Lord. (**Exodus 27:20-21**, **38:13-17**)

i. This "*seven*" also reminds me of the seven lamps, seven Spirits, and seven eyes of the Lamb in **Revelation** associated with the Spirit of God, as we discussed earlier.

ii. Again, we see light and fire associated with the Holy Spirit.

g. What we learn about the Holy Spirit from all of these passages, related to the Exodus journey:

i. The Spirit was always there; but was made manifest in a guiding role <u>shortly after</u> the Passover Lamb (foreshadowing Jesus) was slain.

ii. The Spirit showed them the way to get out of the land of bondage, leading them to the water.

1. The Holy Spirit coming down at Pentecost in tongues of fire was a sign to the people of a new direction. The Passover Lamb (Christ) had been slain, and the Spirit pointed the way out, to baptism (**Acts 2:38**), to the Jews.

2. Later, the Holy Spirit points the same way to the Gentiles, in the conversion of Cornelius' household in **Acts 10**.

a. "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit *just as we have*?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days." (**Acts 10:44–48**, NKJV)

b. Peter later recounts how the Spirit had shown him that uncircumcised Gentiles could become Christians. (**Acts 11:12-18** and **Acts 15:6-11**)

c. Here we see how the Holy Spirit played an active role in leading both Jews and Gentiles to baptism.

3. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would *convict <u>the world</u>* of sin, righteousness and judgment (**John 16:8**). I believe the Holy Spirit today is involved in converting unbelievers and leading them out of spiritual slavery.

iii. The Holy Spirit can overshadow and protect us like a cloud, if we stay under its cover.

iv. The Holy Spirit is the wonderful guide to lead us all the way to the Promised Land. He leads day and night, 24/7, 365 days per year, all

the way to the end. He will tell us when and where to stop, and when to pick up and start moving.

v. We must follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, who alone is able to *guide us in the best way*, to our ultimate goal.

vi. The cloud over the tabernacle which was at the center of the community in the Wilderness. **Numbers 2** explains how three tribes camped on each of the four sides of the tabernacle: on the north, south, east and west. Similarly, the Holy Spirit should be *at the center* of the church, as the presence of God with us, who is both *leading* and *unifying* us.