

Week Three: Crossing the Red Sea Teacher Information

Exodus 13:18,21; Exodus 14:5-31

Background Information for Teachers

1. **New Church Vineyard online magazine (www.newchurchvineyard.org)**
 - For more materials on crossing the Red Sea, see the issue called “Trusting in the Lord” at <http://www.newchurch.org/resources/vineyard/2005may>
 - For materials on how angels protect us, see the issue on “Our Guardian Angels” at <http://www.newchurch.org/resources/vineyard/2005apr>
2. ***Bible Study Notes, Volume Two* by Anita S. Dole**, pp. 62-76. This may be available in your church or school library or can be purchased through the General Church Book Store. Visit <http://store.newchurch.org/home.php> or call (USA) 267-502-4980.
3. ***Bible Stories and Their Inner Meaning: A Family Study Guide* by W. L. Worcester (the “Sower Notes”)**. These may be available in your church or school library. They are also available online at www.swedenborgdigitallibrary.org. Lesson 40 discusses the crossing of the Red Sea. Lesson 48 discusses the pillar of cloud and fire.

Background Information for Teachers

The pillar of fire and cloud is the Word in its letter with the Lord Himself within it. This leads us in our spiritual days (states of confidence and trust) and our spiritual nights (states of doubt and discouragement).

In the Word, clouds stand for Divine truth clothed in expressions adapted to our human understanding. A cloud is made up of tiny drops of water, and water represents truth. The pillar of cloud and fire mean the literal sense of the Word in which the Lord’s love glows even though it is partly concealed. The pillar of fire represents the truth as it really is, as it comes from His Divine love.

We now know that the pillar was actually a group of angels with the Lord in the middle of them. Angels are messengers of truth who guide and protect us on our journey of life.

In times of difficulty and danger, we need to trust that the Lord will help us, but we also need to do our part—we cannot just stand with our hands hanging down. If we take action which we believe is following the Lord’s will, then He can work with us for success.

It appears that the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Many things in the Bible are expressed in a way that people can understand—the way things appear. The truth is, we harden our own hearts when we turn away from the Lord and do not wish to serve others.

Water in a good sense stands for truth, but in a bad sense it means the opposite of truth—falsity. This is the meaning of the destroying flood in the story of Noah and it is the meaning of the Red Sea in this story.

Quotations from the Writings

The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire represent the Lord's unceasing presence (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8110).

Seas, depths, and abysses mean the hells where the falsities of evil are (see *Apocalypse Explained* 538:2).

The Lord provides protection against all evils and falsities, which come from the hells. For the Lord alone fights on behalf of a person and protects him when he is under attacks from the hells (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8273).

“Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah” means that salvation is from the Lord alone. The person who believes when he is tempted that he has strength of his own with which he can offer resistance goes under. But the person who believes that the Lord alone offers resistance to temptations is victorious, for he is guided by the truth (see *Arcana Coelestia* 8172).

That the pillar of cloud during the daytime and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people means the Lord's presence was unceasing (*Arcana Coelestia* 8110).

Through the Lord's presence those governed by good and therefore guided by truth are given light. Also through the Lord's presence those who are to be raised into heaven are brought out of damnation, for they are held back from evil and maintained in good by the Lord, and with great force (*Arcana Coelestia* 7989).

God's truth coming from the Lord appears before angels' eyes as light. But it cannot appear as light to those steeped in falsities arising from evil, only as thick darkness, since falsity is the opposite of truth and snuffs it out. This is why the pillar, which was the Lord's presence, brought cloud and darkness to the Egyptians, “the Egyptians” meaning those steeped in falsities arising from evil, and lit up the night among the children of Israel, “the children of Israel” meaning those guided by truth springing from good. The Lord appears to each of us in a way suited to the kind of person we are (*Arcana Coelestia* 8197).