

## #18 The Cloud

**1** Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity;(That's confusion and uncertainty, the people not knowing what to do) the sea and the waves roaring; (tidal waves and tsunamis) 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: (people know there are things not right in the solar system, why do you think we have such weird weather and why is there such a thing even as global warming) for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (near)

**2** Anointed ones at end time 65-0725M P:193 Now, I want you to know this is sure. And you that listen to this tape, you might have thought today that I was trying to say that about myself, being that I was packing this Message. I have no more to do with it than nothing, no more than just a voice. And my voice, even against my better judgment... I wanted to be a trapper. But it's the will of my Father that I declare to do, and determined to do. I wasn't the One that appeared down on the river; I was only standing there when He appeared. I'm not the One that performs these things and foretells these things that happens as perfect as they are; I'm only one that's near when He does it. I was only a voice that He used to say it. It wasn't what I knew; it's what I just surrendered myself to, that He spoke through. It isn't me. It wasn't the seventh angel, oh, no; it was a manifestation of the Son of man. It wasn't the angel, his Message; it was the mystery that God unfolded. It's not a man; it's God. The angel was not the Son of man; he was a messenger from the Son of man. The Son of man is Christ. He's the One that you're feeding on. You're not feeding on a man. A man, his words will fail, but you're feeding on the unfailing Body-Word of the Son of man. If you haven't fed fully on every Word to give yourself strength to fly above all these denominations and things of the world, will you at this time do it, while we pray?

**3** Let us pray,...

**4** Now, this morning we will be reading from the next seven paragraphs in brother Branham's sermon the Rising of the Sun (Son) because in these seven paragraphs Brother Branham does not change his thoughts at all, but rather expounds on the cloud that came down over Flagstaff Arizona before the preaching of the Seven Seals.

**5** So we will be examining this Cloud this morning because there are some who have fallen away from the Message and it all began with the Cloud, and their lack of understanding just what took place when that Cloud came.

**6** Now these next few paragraphs all speak of one thing, the appearing of the Lord in a cloud in this hour that brought with it power and great glory as spoken of in Luke 21.  
Let's just read it again.

**7** Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

**8** Notice it does not say with great power, like what took place in Moses day or in the days of Elijah, but "with

power and great Glory". So Jesus placed the emphasis on "the glory" which we know this word he used is the Greek word doxa which speaks of the Opinions, Values and Judgments of God. In other words, the Word of God totally revealed to us in the breaking of the seals which is what brother Branham will tell us as we begin to read from paragraph number 3 of the Rising of the Sun (Son).

**9** Therefore let's pick up where we left off on Wednesday with the paragraph number 3 "Realizing that our time is limited here, especially for those friends who are listening in by this telephone, I would like to call your attention this morning to a picture that some time ago was taken by the camera of a vision that I had here at the Tabernacle of leaving Indiana to Arizona, where I was to meet in the form of a pyramid, seven Angels. Not knowing what would happen, later when I got there, thinking it was the end of my life, that no one could stand the blast... (And I'm sure all of you are acquainted with the story.)

**10** So for those of you who are not familiar with this vision of the Lord, let's go back to December 30th of 1962 close to 5 months before the actual fulfilling of the Vision where brother Branham was explaining the vision in his sermon...

**11** Is this sign of the end sir 62-1230E P:70 Now, in this vision, or as I was speaking, I looked, and I saw a strange thing. Now, it seemed like that my little son Joseph was by my side. I was talking to him. Now, if you'll watch the vision real close, you'll see why Joseph was standing there. And I looked, and there was a big bush. And on this bush in a constellation of birds, little bitty birds, about a half inch long and a half inch high, they were little veterans. Their little feathers was beat down. And there was about two or three on the top limb, six or eight on the next limb, and fifteen or twenty on the next limb, coming down in the shape of the pyramid. And those little fellows, little messengers... And they were pretty well worn out. And they were watching eastward, and I was at Tucson, Arizona, in the vision. For it made it so purpose that He didn't want me to fail to see where it was at, I was picking a sand burr off of me from the desert. And I said, "Now, I know this is a vision, and I know that I'm at Tucson. And I know that them little birds there represent something." And they were watching eastward. And all of sudden they taken a notion to fly, and away they went eastward.

71 And as soon as they left, a constellation of larger birds came. They looked like doves, sharp pointed wings, kind of a gray color, a little lighter color than what these first little messengers was. And they were coming eastward swiftly. And no sooner than they got out of my sight, I turned again to look westward, and there it happened. There was a blast that actually shook the whole earth. Now, don't miss this. And you on tape, be sure you get this right. First a blast. And I thought it sounded like a sound barrier, or ever-what you call it when planes cross the sound, and the sound comes back to the earth: just shook like roared, everything: Then it could've been a great clap of thunder and lightning like. I didn't see the lightning. I just heard that great blast that went forth that sounded like it was south from me, towards Mexico.

**12** 72 But it shook the earth, and when it did, I was still looking westward. And way off into eternity I saw a constellation of something coming. It looked like that it might've been little dots. There could've been no less than five, and not more than seven. But they were in the shape of a pyramid, like these messengers coming. And when it did, the power of Almighty God lifted me up to meet them. And I can see it. I... It's never left me. Eight days is gone, and I can't forget it yet. I never had anything to bother me like that has. My family will tell you.

**13** 73 I could see those Angels, those shaped-back wings traveling faster than sound could travel. They come from eternity in a split like a twinkling of an eye, not enough to bat your eye, just a twinkle. They were there. I didn't have time to count. I didn't have time, no more than just look. Mighty ones, great powerful Angels, snow white, wings set in head, and they were "whew wheeew," [Brother Branham illustrates--Ed.] and when it did, I was caught up into this pyramid of constellation. And I thought, "Now, this is it." I was numbed all over, and I said, "Oh, my. This means that there will be a blast that will kill me. I'm at the end of my road now. I mustn't tell my people when this vision leaves. I don't want them to know about it, but the heavenly Father has let me know

now that my time is finished. I won't tell my family so they'll worry about me, because He's fixing to go and these Angels has come for me, and I'll be killed pretty soon now in some kind of an explosion." Then it came to me, while I was in this constellation, "No, that isn't it. If it would've killed you it would've killed Joseph, and I could hear Joseph calling me." Well, then I turned again, and I thought, "Lord God, what does this vision mean?" And I wondered, and then it come to me, not a voice, just come to me. Oh, that is the Angels of the Lord coming to give me my new commission. And when I thought that, I raised up my hands, and I said, "O Lord Jesus, what will You have me do?" And the vision left me. For almost an hour, I couldn't feel.

**14** Now, let's skip to the end of the sermon where he speaks a little bit more about that vision. Is this sign of the end sir 62-1230E P: 128 And those blasting the other morning that shook me plumb till I raised up in the air as high as this building, and that constellation of angels, seven angels, in the form of a pyramid... Is that them thunders that's coming forth? Could it be? This is all interpreted. According to his dream, it's all finished. According to God's Word the seventh messenger will finish--seventh message will be finished. And then the seven thunders, and he saw the capstone rolled over, which many people don't even know there is seven seals to be revealed. I've read many men's books on Revelations, never did hear it talked on. They skip that. But it's been told you that it's there. I don't know what it is. Could that be that? God, be merciful to us. If that is, we're in a serious hour.

**15** 129 Now, just a minute. Look. If that be so, and the mystery's finished that was wrote in these rocks, I'm glad to be setting in a church with godly people, who God can give a dream to. I'm glad to introduce to these men and women that goes to Junior's church, and to this church, to Brother Neville's and them, that there's people setting in this congregation, and the Bible said, "They would dream dreams in the last days." And here it is, and look at it. It's comparing with the Word. Knowing nothing about it, a blast come forth and here come seven angels from eternity. I said, "Lord, what would You have me do?" It wasn't told. I may have to go first to find out. I don't know. Might not even be that; I don't know. I'm just saying, "What if it is?" If it's Scriptural, that sounds very close to it. Don't you think so?

**16** 130 Look, then look, the Capstone was not interpreted. See? "Get west and come back." Or is it this? Is these seven angels in this constellation that came to me... When I meet you at the day of the resurrection, you'll see that I lie not: God my Judge. Or is this that second climax that I talked about the other day. Is there something coming forth for the church? I don't know. I could stay on that a little bit, but I'll move on. Could it be that? The mighty thunder, or the seventh angel in the seven constellation, seventh period constellation, the pyramid made in a form, three on a side, and one on top, and they dropped from eternity. Could it be? Is this the mystery of the thunders that will bring back the Headstone? 131 And you know, the pyramid never was capped. The Headstone's yet to come. It's been rejected. Could it be, brethren, sisters. Or is this that third pull that He told me three or four years ago. The first pull, you remember what happened? I tried to explain it. He said, "Don't do that." The second pull, He said, "Don't try..." And I pulled anyhow. You remember? All of you remember; it's on tape and everything. And then He said, "Now, there's a third pull coming, but don't try to explain it." You see how I approached this tonight? I don't know. But I feel duty bound to my church to say something. You draw your own conclusion.

**17** Now, brother Branham in December of 1962 did not know what this vision meant, but here we are reading in The Rising of the Sun(Son), where he does know. So that is what we want to find out.

**18** "And then in Sabino Canyon one morning like this, while in prayer, there had been a sword placed in my hand and said, "This is the Word and the Sword of the Word." Later the Angels appeared as was prophesied. And at the same time, a great cluster of Light left to where I was standing and moved thirty miles high in the air and around the circle, like the wings of the Angels, and drew into the skies a shape of a pyramid in the same constellation of Angels that appeared.

**19** 4 Science took the picture all the way from Mexico as it moved from northern Arizona, where the Holy Spirit said I would be standing (forty miles northeast of Tucson). And it went into the air, and "Life" magazine packed the pictures: a mystic something way in the spheres where there can be no moisture, where there can be no evaporations of anything, thirty miles high and twenty-seven miles across and coming right up from where those Angels were. Now, they asked to know (science); one of them at Tucson wanted to know any significance, but I didn't tell them. You all knew it told beforehand, but it wasn't for them; it was for you.

**20** Notice br. Branham says "it was not for them, it was for you," the believers." And he said Science took the picture, and I have shown to the left the picture shown on the cover of Science Magazine April 19, 1963.

**21** 5 And so there He spoke to me and said, "The Seven Seals will be opened. The seven mysteries, sevenfold mystery of the Bible that's been closed up since the foundation of the world will be revealed." And we, yet a humble little group compared with all the world, we've enjoyed these blessings and hearing those mysteries: Marriage, Divorce, Serpent's Seed. All those different questions has been completely revealed to us, not by man but by God Himself, that's opened those seven mysteries of what the church was, how it was in Christ at the beginning, and how it would be revealed in the last day. And now, as this went up... We have the picture outside on the plaque. But then... I have the picture laying present here, if you notice it as "Life" magazine had it. But I wonder if my audience visible here has ever really looked at the picture (See, see?) in the way it should be?

**22** Now, what is very interesting is that on the reverse page of this picture in life magazine is a picture of a rainbow, but no words on that page. The words are actually on the previous page for an advertizing, but the picture of a rainbow is on the reverse page and if you hold this picture of the cloud up to light you will see the rainbow above his head. God hiding in simplicity.

**23** Revelations 10:1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: 2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, 3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: 7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

**24** Now, I think it not a coincidence that the rainbow was on the reverse page and if you hold up the picture of the cloud, you will see the rainbow above his head. And I think it not coincidence that the name of the magazine is called "Life" magazine, for Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the Life." For this is all about Life to us. And as brother Branham said, this was not taken for them, it was taken for us. "Now, they asked to know (science); one of them at Tucson wanted to know any significance, but I didn't tell them. You all knew it told beforehand, but it wasn't for them; it was for you."

**25** Brother Branham continues, "6 You remember, I was preaching when this vision came, upon the subject of the Book of the Revelations where the old judges, where we seen Jesus in Revelations 1. When we started to open the Seven Seals, or the church ages, rather, just prior to the opening of the Seven Seals, Christ was standing with hair like wool, white; and I described that to you that the old English judges and judges of long ago, when they went to the bench to be sworn in, their supreme authority was given them; they wore a white wig, as it was, over their heads to show their supreme authority.

**26** 7 Well, if you'll turn the picture like this and look (and you can probably see it from the audience), it's Christ. See His eyes looking here just as perfect as it could be, wearing the white wig of supreme Deity and Judge of all heavens and earth? Can you see His eyes, nose, His mouth? Just turn the picture from this (the way they had it), this a-way, the way it's supposed to be. And you... Can you see it? He is supreme Judge; there's none other but Him. And that is a perfect identification again, a vindication that this Message is the truth. It is true. And making Him, not a third person, but the only Person with the white...See, you see the dark, His face, His beard, and His eyes? And notice, He's looking; from Him comes this Light shining on the right-hand side to which He's looking to. And on the cross that's where He looked, to the right, where He pardoned the sinner. In the light of His resurrection we still go forth in His Name.

**27** 8 I wish, this morning, that I had just, much time to spend upon these phenomenon, that's beyond any shadow of doubt been proven for the past thirty years, or thirty-five years right here at this church, since down on the river when that same Light came down here in Jeffersonville in 1933 and spoke those words: "As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Christ, your Message will forerun the second." We're at the end time. And we see it. We wonder sometimes why it hasn't spread over the earth; maybe sometime we'll have a chance to explain that, if God willing.

**28** Before we continue, I want to read the scientific report or at least some of it because it is seven pages, which I think that number in itself holds some significance, but let me post up the official report on the cloud because there are some who left the message over this cloud. They say brother Branham lied about it, but listen, he told us the vision he had of it at least 4 months before the actual cloud showed up. And what took place was exactly what was in the vision. And we've already read that vision to you at the beginning of this sermon, so let's read the official report, or the part that I want to make a special point of interest concerning it. I will leave the entire report in my notes but to save time, we will skip through much detail to show you the area of importance because this is the part the make-believers point to but just like they do with Scriptures, they only read just what they want to read, and then they leave off that which makes it clear. And it does make it very clear, but they missed it. I will leave his words in Brown because I do not wish to confuse them with my own which are in black or brother Branham's which are in blue.

**29** Dr. James E. McDonald Supplement

May 31, 1963

Institute of Atmospheric Physics,

University of Arizona

Tucson, Arizona

STATUS OF INVESTIGATION OF THE NORTHERN ARIZONA

STRATOSPHERIC CLOUD OF FEBRUARY 28, 1963

James E. McDonald

**30** I. General

This report on the continuing study of the unusual ring-cloud that was observed over Flagstaff area near sunset on February 28 has been prepared for the information of the many persons who have assisted in this investigation. I had hoped that a fairly complete summary of the work might have become possible some weeks back, but new questions have arisen that are not settled even yet.

**31** Nevertheless, a summary of recent findings will be made here. Approximately 175 letters have now been received from persons who observed the stratospheric cloud. Correspondence with those who indicated that they had taken photos has led to a present total of 85 photographs from 35 different localities in Arizona and New Mexico.

**32** In addition, two short movies have been received, though little cloud motion is apparent on either of them. A preliminary scientific report on the cloud has recently appeared in *Science*, Vol. 140, No. 3564 (19 April 1963), under the title, "Stratospheric Cloud over Northern Arizona." The cover photo of that issue is a shot of the cloud taken by C. E. Peterson of Bremerton, Washington. A photo taken in Springerville, Ariz., by I. E. Daniels accompanies the text.

**33** A set of four photos of the cloud will be found in the May 17, 1963 issue of *Life*, along with a brief discussion and plea for further photos.

**34** The *Science* article, and still more the *Life* article, have led to a new surge of correspondence on the cloud and on certain observations of other seemingly similar clouds to be discussed below. In the latter category are about 75 letters, with more coming in daily at the time of this writing. So far, only a few good photos have been turned up as a direct result of the *Life* appeal; but one of those (taken by F. H. Carver of Page, Ariz.) is of such quality as to repay all of the effort that went into getting the plea for more photos into *Life*.

### **35** II. Photo-site survey.

I made a trip through central and northern Arizona in the period April 2-7 to make detailed triangulation observations of the foreground features and distant check-points that appeared in each of about fifteen photos. This trip proved quite successful, and I take this opportunity to thank once more the many persons who cooperated in those surveys.

**36** On April 20, I went to Lordsburg, N. M., to survey the site of a series of six photos taken by H. J. McSpadden. These six were of special value to the study because they were taken over a period of approximately one-half hour, at recorded times. (The unknown time factor in most of the photos remains a serious difficulty in photogrammetric analysis of the entire set of 85 photos.)

### **37** III. Present estimate of height, and related details.

**38** A. Height. The survey work and the interviews in and around Flagstaff have revealed that the southern tip of the cloud lay about ten miles north of Flagstaff at about 1840 MST. (Mountain Standard time) This implies that the range of the cloud from Tucson was greater than the initially assumed 190 miles. Using the revised range plus the angles of elevation previously computed from the four photos taken in Tucson gives an altitude of 43 km, which equals about 140,000 ft. or almost 27 miles.

**39** Now, this is important because brother Branham was very precise that he was in Tucson in the vision and He saw the cloud moving from the west toward the east. Flagstaff is actually north and West of Tucson. And since the cloud moved from Flagstaff towards new Mexico it was moving in an easterly direction in the vision and in the actual.

**40** This revised altitude takes the cloud still further above the height-interval of even Arctic nacreous clouds, and puts it disconcertingly near the base of an "exclusion region" of the mesosphere in which the temperatures are so high (due to ozone absorption of solar ultraviolet radiation) that the saturation vapor pressure of water (or ice) exceeds the total ambient air pressure. In that exclusion region (typically from about 42 km to about 65 km), no water drops or ice particles can exist. Water can be present there only in vapor form. The indicated altitude of the Flagstaff cloud is slightly above the mean base of this exclusion layer, adding further interest to the entire phenomenon.

**41** B. Motion. Although precise photo-grammetry has not been worked out to yield final motion estimates, preliminary analysis of the McSpadden photos from Lordsburg indicate an eastward cloud drift speed of 95 mph

for the upper limit, and 77 mph for the lower limit, the uncertainty being due to the unfortunate fact that, on the very first shot of this series, the time was uncertain to two minutes. An estimate of angular velocity of the cloud over Flagstaff has been made by Robert A. Schley (using subsequently-checked times of two long-distance phone calls to obtain very close time-checks on his observations, made between the calls). His angular velocity, along with the present height estimate, gives an apparent speed of 110 mph.

**42** There have been only a few reports of early sightings of the cloud (or one like it); but these have not fitted into any consistent pattern. The motion remains a rather uncertain feature, all in all. As will be seen below, this is unfortunate, for the cloud's motion enters critically into a test of one hypothesis as to its origin. It is hoped that the ultimate photogrammetric analysis will shed further light on this point.

**43** C. Some distant sightings. Queries have been sent out to about twenty-five small town papers in Arizona and surrounding states, and an A. P. wire story has gone much farther, asking for observational details. No sightings seem to have been made in California or Nevada, but some distant observations were reported from localities to the east. Evidently many saw it in central New Mexico, reports coming from Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Alamogordo, Truth and Consequences, and Las Cruces. It was reliably reported by a woman in Center, Colorado. But the most distant sighting reliably checked was made in Juarez, Mexico, by J. H. Buels, of El Paso, Texas. Mr. Buel's location was approximately 380 miles from the cloud!

**44** Now this is an important piece of information because brother Branham mentioned concerning his vision that took place 4 months before the appearance of this cloud that the cloud of angels moved in a blast towards Mexico.

**45** IV. Some excluded hypotheses

**46** The true nature of the cloud cannot yet be regarded as known; but a few hypotheses have been definitely ruled out.

**47** So we will list those hypotheses that have been ruled out as of this writing.

**48** A. Contrail? Although this cloud initially seemed to many, including myself, much like a high jet condensation trail, it lay far too high to fit that simple hypothesis. Under the upper-air temperature conditions prevailing on the 28th, as shown by the Winslow, Arizona, radiosonde records, jet contrails could not have formed above approximately 24 km (78,000 ft). Furthermore, no operational aircraft can maintain steady horizontal flight at that altitude. Since the entire ring had a circumference of the order of 150 miles, and was essentially in a horizontal plane, it is quite out of the question to attribute this cloud to any kind of jet effect.

**49** B. X-15? One American aircraft can fly well above 140,000 ft. That is the X-15 e-search aircraft. An analysis of the thermodynamics of combustion of the fuel used in the liquid-rocket-motors of this aircraft (liquid oxygen and ammonia) showed that it would produce contrails to a higher altitude than could a turbojet engine, but only by a few kilometers. The upper limit to X-15 contrail formation under conditions prevailing on the 28th was about 27 km, far too low to fit the cloud. Furthermore, subsequent correspondence with officials at Edwards AFB, the home field of the X-15's, and with North American Aviation Co., wholly excluded the X-15 hypothesis, since no X-15 had been in the air for weeks prior to and for a number of days following the Flagstaff cloud appearance on the 28th.

**50** C. Nevada Test Site atomic explosion?

The cloud lay only about 250 miles east of the Nevada AEC test Site, and westerly winds might conceivably have carried in some aftermath of an atmospheric test of some sort. However, officials of the Test Site reported no test

activity of any sort occurring on that base that might have had any connection with the cloud.

**51** D. Naval Ordnance Test Station activity? Looking still further upwind for a possible artificial source, one might consider the Naval Ordnance Test Station at China lake, Calif. Inquiries, however, turned up no activity there on the afternoon of the 28th, striking out that possibility.

**52** Ok, now we are going to get to the hang up for those make-believers who left the Message. But let's start with what Dr. McDonald says is a possible explanation, but then he goes on to say although it is a possible explanation there are too many things that makes us to not consider this theory.

**53** V. A possible explanation - a Vandenberg AFB rocket explosion.

**54** A. Thor booster explosion. A search of West Coast newspapers for the 28th disclosed a brief note on a intentional destruction of a military-satellite launch booster sometime on the 28th. Further information was found in the March 11, 1963, issue of Missiles and Rockets, which contained the following item: "The Air Force deliberately destroyed a secret satellite, believed to be of the Discoverer series, after launching it aboard the 'souped up' Thor Feb. 28 from Vandenberg AFB. All four motors were ignited at launch, but deviation from the programmed trajectory forced safety officials to destroy the booster before payload separation. The thrust-augmented Thor (TAT) is a liquid-fueled Thor with three Thiokol solid rockets spaced around the Thor case.

**55** This was the combination's first test. It became essential to find the time of this detonation and to explore further details bearing on the cloud, so both by direct inquiry and by inquiry through the Office of Naval Research in Pasadena, further information was sought. Mr. E. E. Clary, Chief Scientist at Vandenberg, has very kindly provided unclassified information on this flight. The booster was destroyed at an altitude of 146,000 ft, almost directly overhead (but a bit south) of Vandenberg AFB at 1352 PST. As soon as this information was received, it appeared to offer the first solid clue as to the Flagstaff cloud's origin. The altitude at detonation was close to the photogrammetrically estimated cloud altitude, and the time of detonation made it necessary to consider very seriously the possibility that the Flagstaff cloud was some aftermath of the detonation. A crucial question was whether the time interval between the detonation over Vandenberg and the passage of the cloud over Flagstaff would match photogrammetrically estimated cloud-drift speed and/or other independent wind-speed observations. Taking 1840 MST as the time of passage over Flagstaff, the 1452 MST (= 1352 PST) detonation time implies a hypothetical drift-time of 3 hours and 48 minutes. The airline distance to Vandenberg from Flagstaff is 510 miles, so the minimum mean drift speed required to associate these two events is very nearly 135 mph. This required drift speed is substantially larger than Schley's roughly estimated 110 mph, and even further from the 77-95 mph estimated from the Lordsburg photos.

**56** Thus the agreement with respect to drift speed seemed rather poor, even though the height agreement between detonation and cloud seemed very encouraging. It was clearly necessary to seek further wind data, so inquiry was made concerning possible observational data from the Meteorological Rocket Network.

**57** B. Rocket wind-data. The two nearest rocket-wind observation points happen to be rather well located to indicate winds along the trajectory that might have carried some explosion aftermath from Vandenberg to Flagstaff: One station is at Pt. Mugu, Calif., and the next nearest one is at White Sands, N. M. Queries were sent to both stations. White Sands sent a Judi sounding rocket up at 0800MST on 28 February, about 10 hours before the Flagstaff passage. At 140,000 ft. the winds were 109 mph from WSW; at 150,000 ft. the winds were 97 mph from WSW. The following day, March 1, at 1215 MST, White Sands launched a Loki II sounding rocket that indicated winds of just over 90 mph from WSW at both 140,000 and 150,000 ft. No sounding was available from Pt. Mugu on the 28th; but an Arcas launched at 0800 PST on March 1 indicated winds of 127 mph from the west



at 140,000 ft. and 112 mph from the west at 150,000 at that time.

**58** The rocket-sounding winds come tantalizingly close to fitting the hypothesis that the Flagstaff cloud was some byproduct of the Vandenberg detonation; yet the agreement is not quite close enough to be conclusive. The White Sands winds of the morning of the 28th seem significantly too low to match the required drift speed of 135 mph; but they agree rather well with the maximum cloud-drift speed estimated from the Lordsburg photos. It is regrettable that no Pt. Mugu winds were measured on the 28th. They would have shown whether the winds at that upwind location were enough higher than those at White Sands to imply a mean drift speed of around 135 mph. (A

**59** West Coast speed of something like 160 mph would be needed to yield the required mean of 135 mph, if we take the White Sands 0800 speed of 109 mph as typical of the stratosphere over Flagstaff near 140,000 to 150,000 ft. at 1840 MST on the 28th.)

**60** Although Mr. Willis Webb of the White Sands missile Range emphasized, in phone conversation on the problem, that variations above or below measured winds at times between observations might well approach 20 per cent of the measured values at these levels, it remains uncertain whether one may concluded that the Flagstaff cloud was due to the detonation at Vandenberg. It is necessary to seek still further crosschecks.

**61** So Dr. McDonald tells us here that the tests they did were not conclusive in making any positive assertion that the cloud was from the rocket destructive blast. This next section is where we come to the heart of the problem. Dr. McDonal speaks of two clouds, one possibly from the exploded missile and then the original which they could not scientifically find out its origin. Notice the title of this paragraph.

**62** C. Unsettled questions. At this writing, further inquiries are being sent to the Chief Scientist of the Pacific Missile Range, to whom I have been directed by Vandenberg AFB for further information. It is hoped that phototheodolite movie records of the detonation may exist and may yield data on the initial drift speed and drift direction of the explosion cloud. Also, the initial configuration of the explosion cloud will be sought, along with information on possible presence of a side-explosion to the west of the main explosion. The latter item bears on the interesting problem of the "secondary cloud" west of the main one at Flagstaff. Many photos and still more letter descriptions establish the presence of a smaller, roughly similar cloud some twenty miles west of the main ring. This cloud was definitely seen to form and to dissipate during the period of prominent visibility of the "main cloud".

**63** Photos show it to have a more pear-shaped form than the main ring; and a short fish-tail formation existed at its northern extremity. It is difficult to see how a single detonation over Vandenberg could have also led to this secondary cloud. Mr. Clary, at Vandenberg, was fairly certain that no side explosions occurred; but this will be checked further.

**64** In addition, information will be sought concerning the weight of liquid propellant still unburnt in the Thor at instant of detonation. This item of information will permit quantitative estimates to be made of the total water of combustion released in the explosion, as well as the heat release (for use in estimating buoyant circulation generation). These points, if they can be cleared up, may finally settle the question of whether the Flagstaff cloud can plausibly be identified as an aftermath of the Thor detonation over the California coast.

**65** In this next paragraph Dr. McDonald tells us of the frustration they are having because of all the impersonation reports that are coming in.

**66** VI. Other observations. A wholly unanticipated result of the now numerous appeals through press, radio,

TV, and both scientific and popular magazines for more photos of the Flagstaff cloud has been the receipt of a very substantial number of reports (and a very few photos) of other roughly similar cloud phenomena. At first, these were confined to the Southwest and to the time period following immediately after the Flagstaff cloud appearance. But more recently, these reports have come in from other parts of the country, including now some seventeen reports for a night-luminous ring cloud seen in the central Atlantic seaboard area around 2100 EDT on May 23rd (possibly a Wallops Island tracer experiment - queries will shortly be made concerning this hypothesis). In addition, perhaps a dozen of the inevitable crackpot letters have been received as a result of Life's wide circulation; but there is little difficulty in distinguishing these letters from the far more numerous, straightforward letters reporting rather peculiar cloud sightings. Finally a few of the recent letters are obviously reports of persons who have seen either solar haloes, lunar coronae, or iridescent lenticular altocumulus clouds. The legitimate reports are under study.

**67** VII. Concluding comments. The final objective of this study is to prepare a detailed scientific report for publication. The immediate task ahead is the photogrammetry. The decision as to how detailed a photogrammetric analysis to undertake on the 85 photos available for the Flagstaff stratospheric cloud will be made only after information can be obtained from the Pacific Missile Range. If it appears nearly certain that the cloud cannot be associated with the Vandenberg detonation, then the unprecedented height and configuration of the cloud will justify rather extensive photogrammetry. If it appears likely, on the other hand, that it was some side-effect of that detonation, it is still of considerable meteorological interest as a ready-made tracer experiment and as a telltale clue too certain interesting characteristics of the atmosphere in the little-known region of the stratopause, and hence will justify further analysis - but not as much analysis as if it is not attributable to the Thor-boosters explosion.

**68** In either event, the many persons who have assisted in the study and who may be wondering what is developing, should be informed that there will now be no further informal dittoed status reports of this sort. When a published report or reprint becomes available, copies will be sent to each person who has cooperated; but this may not occur now for a good many months. Hence, I want again to say thank you for your generous help in the study of this very interesting and unusual cloud.

**69** It is very clear to me after researching this report that there were two clouds that day on February 28th. Twins. The main cloud he speaks of I believe to be the one God showed William Branham in a vision 4 months before it occurred and then the second cloud, the twin which Satan sent via a missile blown up to create chaos, uncertainty and unbelief.

**70** Wednesday we will continue with our study on the significance of this cloud. I have also copied the Science magazine article below for any who would wish to study this out further.

**71** Let's bow our heads in prayer.

1

Science Magazine

19 April 1963 Vol. 140 No. 3564

Cover:

Ring-shaped cloud seen at sunset on 28 February 1963 in northern Arizona and areas of nearby states. The height, as estimated from four photographs made in Tucson, Arizona, about 190 miles to the south of the cloud (which appeared overhead near Flagstaff), is about 35 kilometers. This photo was taken by Clarence E. Peterson of Bremerton, Washington, while he was looking almost due north from near Camp Verde, Arizona. The unusual

nature of the cloud was evident to observers who noted its striking luminosity long after the sun had set at ground level. It was at least 11 kilometers higher than the upper limit of possible jet contrail formation, and was at least 5 kilometers higher than previously reported nacreous clouds of the arctic type. Its true nature is still unknown; more photos are being sought for triangulation purposes. See page 292.

#### Stratospheric Cloud over Northern Arizona

**72** Abstract. An unusual ring-shaped cloud was widely observed over northern Arizona near sunset on 28 February 1963. From a large number of observers' reports it is known to have appeared overhead near Flagstaff, Arizona. From initial computations based on four photos taken in Tucson, 190 miles south of the cloud, its altitude was approximately 35 kilometers. The most distant observation reported was made 280 miles from the cloud. The cloud remained sunlit for 28 minutes after local sunset. Iridescence was noted by many observers. Tentatively, the cloud may be regarded as similar to a nacreous cloud; but its unusually great height and unusually low altitude, plus its remarkable shape, suggest that it was a cloud of previously unrecorded type.

**73** Near sunset, on 28 February 1963, a cloud of unusual configuration and coloration was observed in widely scattered localities in Arizona and some surrounding states. The cloud took the form of a large oval ring (clear in the middle) with the long axis running north and south (Fig. 1 and cover photograph, this issue). It remained brightly illuminated well after the sun had set on high cirrus clouds to the west. From Tucson, 190 miles to the south, its angular elevation appeared to be about 6 degrees. A rough computation of its height, based on sunset geometry, (1) made immediately after the cloud entered the earth's shadow, led me to appeal by press and radio for confirmatory reports in order to establish the approximate location and to secure descriptions from the largest possible number of other observers.

**74** From approximately 150 reports, many communicated by persons well aware that they had seen a type of cloud unprecedented in years of skywatching, it was quickly established that the cloud lay overhead in the vicinity of Flagstaff, Arizona, that it exhibited iridescence of the sort associated with stratospheric nacreous clouds in the arctic (2,3), and that its internal structure was very peculiar.

2

To observers nearly underneath, the colors green and blue were visible, and a pinkish cast was noted at times. A fibrous texture, described by several independent observers as resembling a "wood grain" appearance, was present over much of its northern extent, but its southern end was denser and more cumuliform. Its overall shape was compared by some (ranchers) to a horseshoe or a horse collar if it was viewed from south; from the north it appeared as a closed loop with a long thin trail that could be seen extending northward, from the oval, and several observers in that sector compared its shape with that of a "hangman's noose." The cloud was seen from distances as great as 280 miles (near Douglas, Arizona and Albuquerque, New Mexico, respectively).

**75** Many observers reported a second cloud off to the northwest of the main cloud, with shape very much like that of the main cloud, but only about a quarter as large. Correctness of these reports has been established from some of the first photographs that have come in from northern Arizona. The cloud was evidently moving generally south-eastward, though visual reports are in some conflict on this point; this point can only be resolved from further studies by triangulation.

**76** By fortunate coincidence, the cloud appeared within a few tens of miles of the U.S. Weather Bureau radiosonde station at Winslow, Arizona, and a high-altitude sounding had been completed there only an hour before the appearance of the cloud. A jet stream lay almost directly under the cloud and over Flagstaff, and there were peak winds of 98 knots from the northwest occurring over Winslow at an altitude of about 11 kilometers.

3