

The Presence of God

Composite

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Quote

**Christ's crucifixion
is the blazing center
of the glory of God.**

John Piper

The purpose of this class

Where is He?

**To realize that God is ever-Present,
even when we don't feel it.**

God's Promise to be Present is Undeniable!

God will be our God, and we will be His people.

The Great Promises of God

- He is Love (and He Loves us)
- He is Present (and He is with us)
- If we are His, we will be with Him eternally

These promises are undeniable!

The Promises of God are not:

- Solutions to or rescue from all of life's problems (in this life)
- Physical protection from any type of sickness and/or death
- To give us whatever we want or ask for

I want to be on God's Team (for Good)!

Why Does God Want to be With Us?

God wants to be in a relationship with us

I will **take** you as my own people,
and I will be your God.

Exodus 6:7

I will **walk among you** and be your God,
and you will be my people.

Leviticus 26:12

Obey me, and I will be your God
and you will be my people.

Jeremiah 7:23

Obey me and **do everything I command you**,
and you will be my people,
and I will be your God.

Jeremiah 11:4

“So you will be my people,
and I will be your God.”

Jeremiah 30:22

God will be our God, and we will be His people.

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- God's Presence Through the Ages
- How Do We Sense God's Presence?
- Preparation for God's Presence
- What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- The Presence of an Opponent
- The Power of God's Presence
- Our Response to God's Presence
- The Ultimate Presence in Heaven
- Conclusion
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

Study of Miracles

My Categorization

All of Christ's miracles were awesome!

But most of the recorded miracles are "special" or "unusual".

- A) Standard: Jesus responds to a need, or is asked for help**
- B) Specific Lesson: this was included in standard miracles**
- C) Sabbath: a lesson that provoked a response**
- D) Casting out Demons: showing power of Good over Evil**
 - what happened to the demons?
- E) Special Circumstances:**
 - at a distance (centurion's servant)
 - unauthorized touch (woman with an issue of blood)
 - delayed (Lazarus, ten lepers, Jarius' daughter)
 - foreigners (woman of Caanan)
 - odd results: formerly blind man seeing men as trees
 - "stirring" legend: the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda

Consider how the different miracles were initiated

Study of Miracles

A: Standard (1)

A: Jesus changed water into wine (John 2:1-11). **coerced**

A: Jesus healed a leper (Mark 1:40-45). **asked**

A: Jesus raised the widow's son from the dead (Luke 7:11-18).
response

A: Jesus cured the paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8). **response**
put in from the roof

A: Jesus raised the ruler's daughter from the dead (Matthew 9:18-26). **asked**

A: Jesus opened the eyes of two blind men (Matthew 9:27-31).
asked

A: Jesus loosened the tongue of a man who could not speak (Matthew 9:32-33). **response**

A/B: Jesus fed at least five thousand people (Matthew 14:15-21).
response

A: Jesus cured a deaf and mute man (Mark 7:31-37). **begged**

A/B: Jesus fed at least four thousand people (Matthew 15:32-39).
response

Study of Miracles

A: Standard (2)

- A: Jesus cleansed ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). **asked**
- A: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-46). **response**
- A: Jesus opened the eyes of two blind men (Matthew 20:30-34).
asked in a shout
- A: Jesus restored the ear of high priest's servant (Luke 22:50-51).
response

**The miracles recorded are only a small subset
of all those performed.**

**Jesus did not perform a "global healing",
but responded to individual instances.**

These miracles show the need to make contact with (ask) God.

Study of Miracles

B: Special Lessons

B: The great haul of fishes (Luke 5:1-11).

B/A: Jesus stilled the storm (Matthew 8:23-27). [response](#)

**B: Jesus caused the fig tree to wither (Matthew 21:18-22).
[one of the few destructive miracles](#)**

B: Jesus rose from the dead (Luke 24:5-6).

B/A: The second great haul of fishes (John 21:1-14).

Study of Miracles

C: Sabbath

C/D: Jesus cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:23-28). **challenged**

C/A: Jesus cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever (Mark 1:30-31).
response

C/E: Jesus healed an invalid man at the pool called Bethesda (John 5:1-9). **sought him out**

C: Jesus restored a withered hand (Matthew 12:10-13). **challenged**

C/A: Jesus opened the eyes of a man born blind (John 9:1-38)
challenged

C: Jesus cured a woman who had been afflicted eighteen years (Luke 13:10-17). **response**

C: Jesus cured a man of dropsy (Luke 14:1-4). **challenged`**

Study of Miracles

D: Casting out Demons

- C/D: Jesus cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:23-28). challenged**
- D: Jesus cured two demoniacs (Matthew 8:28-34). challenged**
- D: Jesus cured a demon-possessed man (Matthew 12:22).
response**
- D: Jesus cured a boy who was plagued by a demon (Matthew 17:14-21). begged**

**These miracles show that Christ
had power over spiritual things as well as physical things.**

Study of Miracles

Special Circumstances

- E: Jesus cured the nobleman's son (John 4:46-47) **begged?**
- E: Jesus healed the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:5-13). **asked by Jews**
- E: Jesus cured a woman of an issue of blood (Luke 8:43-48). **not asked**
- E/C: Jesus healed an invalid man at the pool called Bethesda (John 5:1-9). **sought him out**
- E: Jesus enabled Peter to walk on water (Matthew 14:22-36); also stilled the storm
- E: Jesus healed a woman of Canaan (Matthew 15:22-28). **asked by a foreigner**
- E: Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man (Mark 8:22-26) – trees walking. **begged**

Miracle Comparison – Two Unique Miracles in John

The man born blind and the invalid at the pool

Comparisons

Both are in the gospel of John (5:1-15 and 9:1-41)

Both men had been infirm for a very long time (from birth and 38 yrs)

Both were associated with a pool (washed and wanted to enter)

The order of events is slightly different for each:

Man born blind

- 1) challenge
- 2) Jesus interacts (mud in eye)
- 3) response (wash in pool)
- 4) separation
- 5) questioning by Pharisees
- 6) man confesses Jesus
- 7) man thrown out of synagogue
- 8) Jesus returns to comfort and teach

Invalid at the Pool

- 1) sought out by Jesus
- 2) Jesus interacts
- 3) response (take bed and walk)
- 4) separation
- 5) questioning by Pharisees
- 6) Jesus returns to comfort and teach
- 7) man confesses Jesus
- 8) man thrown out of synagogue?

One of the Most Interesting Miracles

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Interesting Notes

- 1) Jesus initiated this miracle – he sought the man out
- 2) The man had sought healing in a place of healing (similar to the woman with an issue of blood who had sought the help of doctors)
- 3) The man healed was likely cast out of the synagogue (similar to their reaction the man born blind, and to Lazarus, where a “hit” was considered)
- 4) Jesus gave a personal and private lesson (one on one), having sought out the man after he was questioned and cast out

Why was this miracle so different?

This is one of the most interesting and puzzling episodes in Jesus' life. The curiosity has led me to a deeper meaning. Why all of the uncertainties? Because the point is all about **God's Presence**.

Further study will lead us into our main theme

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Setup

[While in Cana, Jesus healed an official's son – at a distance; this sign was the second that John records]

Some time later,

Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.
[which festival?]

Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool,
which in Aramaic is called Bethesda
and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.

Here a great number of disabled people used to lie -
the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.

John 5:1-3

This is the only unnamed festival in the book of John

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Setup

[Some manuscripts include here, wholly or in part...

- and they waited for the moving of the waters.

From time to time [how often was this supposed to have happened?]

an angel of the Lord

would come down

and stir up the waters.

The first one into the pool

after each such disturbance

would be cured of whatever disease they had.

John 5:3

Does this line really change the impact of this miracle?

For whatever reason,
the man was waiting there to be healed in the pool.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Background on the Pool

Bethesda was a swimming bath (Greek: kolumbethra).

The name of the pool, Beth hesda, means either house of mercy or house of grace. In both Hebrew and Aramaic the word could also mean "shame, disgrace". This dual meaning may have been thought appropriate, since the location was seen as a place of disgrace due to the presence of invalids, and as a place of grace due to the granting of healing.

Until the 19th century, there was no evidence outside of John's Gospel for the existence of this pool; therefore, scholars argued that the gospel was written later, probably by someone without first-hand knowledge of the city of Jerusalem, and that the "pool" had only a metaphorical, rather than historical, significance. In the 19th century, archaeologists discovered the remains of a pool fitting the description in John's Gospel.

Quote

**Reflecting on last week's study of the different ways
in which Jesus was engaged to act (miracles, but lessons, too)**

[When Lazarus died]

**Though Mary and Martha both came to Jesus in the same way,
and with the same complaint,
Jesus chose remarkably different methods
to comfort each of them.**

**With Martha,
Jesus used words.**

With Mary, he chose weeping.

Brian Shipman

**Similarly, Jesus chose two approaches
when Martha asked Jesus to make Mary help her.**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Summary

While in Cana, Jesus healed an official's son – at a distance; this sign was the second that John records.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for a festival.

Many disabled people went to the Pool of Siloam so that they could wait for a healing event.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

What if the healing of the pool was real?

Would God operate in this manner?

Why would He?

It is almost like having a lottery where only the winner is healed.

This is selective healing,

but not that different from the invalid's selective disorder.

What would have been God's purpose in using the pool this way?

To offer hope of God's interaction with the people?

Mostly a false hope?

God asks us to take care of the helpless.

But this process only allows the fittest to be healed,

contrary to God's principle.

“The first one in was healed”;

does this sound fair?

Would God have this type of lottery for healing?

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Was Anyone Actually Healed at the Pool?

If there was no healing,

why were the disabled and infirm there?

**Was the expectation of healing just a legend, or rumor,
or was this really from God?**

Where there ever any actually healed from the water?

If not, then why would the man have stayed

after seeing the waters stirred and no one healed?

If the stirring worked,

then the strongest was healed –

the ones closest to the edge are the ones being healed.

This is like the Pharisaic Philosophy –

they are close to righteous (healed)

there are “almost there”

and just need a little effort to get there.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Think about the Crowd

**All that were there were excited about the occurrence, the stirring
(for themselves, not to praise God);
they were waiting for it;
they were ready, and eager!**

**Imagine the mad chaotic rush for the water
while it is disturbed!**

**All that were there responded;
think of the false alarms!**

Was this a fair contest?

The one least immobile or infirm would be healed.

This is not consistent with a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33).

**This seemed to be the prototype for television healing shows
(there is never a healing of a missing limb
or dead person in these shows)**

This would probably not be the first instance of “showbiz” healing!

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The “Stirring” or “Troubling” of the Waters (1)

Think of the “stirring” event as a call to action.

What was actually stirred up? It ended up “stirring” up trouble

How did the religious leaders feel about the “stirring”?

Did they advocate it?

Were they there to monitor it?

Perhaps they were only there because they were tracking Jesus

This “stirring” was very impersonal; was this like God?

The man believed in it – it was his only hope

Peaceful Waters: Psalm 23, “He leads me beside still waters”

the pool had to do with stirring something

that was normally very calm

Disturbance in the pool:

would you be worried about a creature in there?

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The “Stirring” or “Troubling” of the Waters (2)

**We are all looking for a “stirring”
to signal the Presence of God...**

... and then we want calm...

**Do we need a signal to attack,
like the sound of marching in the tree tops? (2 Samuel 5:24)
A trumpet call? (Numbers 10:9, 1 Corinthians 4:18)**

**We want a stirring, like the tongues of flame at Pentecost,
or a pillar of fire / cloud, vision, or a sign...**

“A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign!”

Matthew 12:39

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Waiting...

[Imagine:

Did Christ cause a distraction, “troubling the waters” to initiate it?]

This would have helped leave the man alone with Christ.

Think of the image:

**everyone running to the water,
leaving Christ alone with the cripple**

**Consider the confusion of all of those “sick”
splashing fervently in the pool –**

who, if anyone, was actually healed?

Meanwhile, the former invalid quietly walks away.

**The man waited and waited (patiently, it seems)
for the troubling of the waters to respond.**

Think of instances in our lives when we wait for God to Act for us.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Invalid

One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

[how long had he been lying at the pool?]

When Jesus saw him lying there

and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time,

he asked him,

“Do you want to get well?”

John 5:5-6

[What a question! Why else would he be at the pool?]

Dustin commented that the average life span of a person at that time was about 40.

In the eyes of the people, was this a life worth saving since he was so near the end?

[we all have a choice to be saved]

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

"Do you want to get well?"

Jesus knows what we really need:

spiritual healing, not physical healing.

**This is why He connects them so many times –
physical is short term,
spiritual is long term!**

**The man needed to think about his future on this earth –
now he would have to support himself
though he was now retirement age!**

**Jesus' question hints at a much larger picture
to what we should be wanting...**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Invalid

Why did Jesus choose this man to heal?

Was he there at the pool to pick someone?

He knew all about this man.

What was his “back story”?

Apparently Jesus had not healed at the pool before.

“Sir,” the invalid replied,

“I have no one to help me into the pool
when the water is stirred.”

While I am trying to get in, [the “stirring” had happened!]
someone else goes down ahead of me.”

John 5:7

The man believes in the healing powers of the pool;

Jesus makes no comment on the reason that the man is there.

He seeks him out for for a particular reason.

Quote

**Is the cross not something
which became outrageously visible
in complete darkness?**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Summary

While in Cana, Jesus healed an official's son – at a distance; this sign was the second that John records.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for a festival.

Many disabled people went to the Pool of Siloam so that they could wait for a healing event.

A man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

Jesus asked him if he wanted to get well.

The man replied that he could not get into the pool in time.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Invalid's Hope

**What was the real hope of the invalid?
What did he gain by being there?**

- 1) The invalid had to hope that the pool actually had healing powers
This is a common belief, for many people were there**
- 2) He had to hope that there would be a stirring to activate the pool
Perhaps he had seen a few stirrings and healings**
- 3) He had to hope that (somehow) he could be the first in the pool
Hard to believe that if he saw the rush that he had a chance**

**Where did the real power of healing reside?
In the pool, or
in Jesus?**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Invalid

**The man was long-suffering;
perhaps he hoped that everyone else would trip and fall
and he would be able to crawl into the water.**

**The cripple was not able to get himself to the water;
he had nothing else but some type of hope.**

**Think of the friends that must have helped him get there every day;
they could not wait for the stirring of the water.**

**He could never have beaten those with good legs
who jumped in the water, even if he had friends.**

Is this a real example of the last shall be first? (Matthew 19:30, etc.)

**The man was hopeful in an apparently hopeless situation
[have any of us been there?]**

We all need someone to help...

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Arrival of Jesus

**Jesus showed up at the pool,
and he did not mock the tradition of the stirred waters;
the people were not hypocrites,
they just did not know the truth.**

**He doesn't mock us for not knowing –
we all lack understanding...**

**Jesus always went to those who were the worst off,
not those who were the strongest.
He came for sinners, those in need of a doctor.**

**On hearing this, Jesus said to them,
“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.
I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”**

Mark 2:17

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Arrival of Jesus

**There was no stirring of the waters
due to the presence (or action) of Jesus;
what about all of the others that needed healing?**

The New Testament is full of Jesus' healings, but He didn't heal everybody, every time. At the pool of Bethesda where Jesus healed a cripple, the healed man walked out of the place past all the prone bodies of the other invalids.

Light in my Darkest Night, Catherine Marshall

Jesus' mission was to offer the ultimate healing of all! [PDE]

Jesus did not make a big scene and call attention to Himself.

**Jesus is there when needed;
though we may not understand it!
We need to see the bigger picture!**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Stirring of the Waters

**The stirring of the waters
implies an “occasional” Presence of God.**

**Consider the effects of an occasional Presence –
how many of the sick
would stay at the pool
if they had to wait very long?**

**God is always there –
All of the time!**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Healing

**Then Jesus said to him,
“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”**

**At once the man was cured;
he picked up his mat and walked.**

John 5:8-9a

**Jesus healed him,
but not in the manner expected**

**Did anyone get healing from the water?
Not all were able to get into the water in time**

**Where did the healed man go?
Jesus found him later at the temple,
where the man went to worship.**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Healing

**Jesus picks this man out of a crowd
(the guy at the bottom of the heap...
the least able to get help).**

**He slipped in
without disrupting the usual life of the others;
they don't even miss the cripple;
the last shall be first, etc.**

**Seeing Jesus coming to you –
and realizing that you must be
the worst off in the group!**

The man accepted Jesus as a higher authority than the Pharisees.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Reaction, or Response

**Think about all of the others who hoped for healing,
but as they splashed into the water
realized that the healing had occurred elsewhere,
and to someone else.**

**The ex-invalid did not linger at the pool;
he didn't gloat about his healing to those who were not healed.
He went to thank God and worship Him.**

**The man was healed physically –
but he still had a spiritual action to be accomplished
in his effort to grow his relationship to God. [PDE]**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Reaction, or Response

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,
and so the Jewish leaders
said to the man who had been healed,
“It is the Sabbath;
the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

John 5:9b-10

It was not the law,
but the traditions of the Jews
that forbid this menial amount of work.

God's laws were made for the benefit of people.

Consider for instance,
“The Sabbath was made for man,
not man for the Sabbath.”

Mark 2:27

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Reaction, or Response

**The Pharisees jumped on the man immediately,
allowing Jesus to fade away.**

**The “leaders” must have an accusation;
perhaps they carried “accusation” cards or list with them.**

**The leaders had no joy at the healing;
they did not care for individuals (or for God);
they had to find a way to negate
such a wonderful and Good event
that took away from their own preeminence.**

**Were the Pharisee spies there watching for the stirring?
They were definitely not there to help anyone into the water!**

**The “Presence” of the Pharisees,
is certainly not like the Presence of God –
they had no interest in healing people.**

Quote

God is romantic to the core.

John Eldredge

**He seeks us,
He courts us,
He wants a relationship with us**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Summary

While in Cana, Jesus healed an official's son – at a distance; this sign was the second that John records.

Jesus went to Jerusalem for a festival.

Many disabled people went to the Pool of Siloam so that they could wait for a healing event.

A man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

Jesus asked him if he wanted to get well.

The man replied that he could not get into the pool in time.

Jesus healed him and he picked up his mat and walked away.

As this occurred on a Sabbath, the Pharisees were upset.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Reaction, or Response

The Pharisees accused the man of breaking the Sabbath.

But he replied,

**“The man who made me well said to me,
‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”**

John 5:11

Were the Pharisees there at the time of the healing?

**I presume that they were there,
and could not accept that
Christ could have
or should have
healed the man.**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Reaction, or Response

So they asked him,

“Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

The man who was healed

had no idea who it was,

for Jesus had slipped away [in the confusion?]

into the crowd that was there.

John 5:12-13

The Pharisees knew who had healed him,

but did not like that it had happened.

**Were the Pharisees searching for Christ
because of the Good that he did?**

**Did they mob Christ after this
and beg for healing for all?**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Reaction, or Response

**The Pharisees knew valued the rules
(which they believed came from God),
but they had lost track
of the real reason behind those rules.
(Sabbath for man, not man for the Sabbath)**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Return of Jesus

Jesus “slipped away”; vs 13

Did the man feel abandoned,
alone (temporarily),
perhaps like Jesus on the Cross...

Later Jesus found him at the temple [coming back theme]
and said to him,
“See, you are well again.
Stop sinning [what could be the sins of a cripple?]
or something worse may happen to you.”

John 5:14

What could be worse than his previous life?
Perhaps complete separation from God!

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Return of Jesus

The man went away
and told the Jewish leaders [who were not in the temple]
that it was Jesus
who had made him well.

John 5:15

The man thought that the Jewish leaders
would want to know who had healed him.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Return of Jesus

[Jesus' question in the KJV]

Wilt thou be made whole?

John 5:6b

**The word “whole” implies
both physical and spiritual healing.**

**When Jesus told the man to stop sinning... [burst his joy bubble?]
He wanted the man to see
that there was more needed
besides his physical healing.**

**The man was running around on new legs,
and Jesus pointed him to another level of his problem**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Return of Jesus

**The ex-invalid went
from the pool to the temple,
from hope to worship.**

**He developed boldness
because of the Presence of Christ.**

**A blanket healing of all those at the pool
would not have been able to present
this more important message.**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Afterword

**Before the man was not able to do good actively,
he could only receive good from others.**

**Afterwards he had to support himself
and do good actively to others.**

**He was now “free”;
perhaps he helped others at the pool (friends he had made?)**

**As long as we are in our physical bodies,
their limitations and constraints compete with
and oftentimes win over our primary focus.**

**In the ultimate healing,
in eternity,
we will be freed of physical constraints
and can focus fully on Him.**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Lesson

This is a lesson about the Presence of God.

**Is it (He) always with us,
or only at the “time of stirring?”**

**We are all looking for a different
indication / vision / manifestation
of God.**

**We try to see the God that is always there.
We are like the invalid in our need for God’s Presence.**

**Jesus/God was there for the man
but in an unexpected way.**

We must adjust our expectations

Many times we look in the wrong direction for a miracle.

But God is always with us.

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Stirring (1)

Consider Pentecost and the other stirrings of the Spirit.

We need a continual stirring within us!

But we need not wait for a sign or a “stirring”!

The Healing at the Pool:

John 5:1- True healing vs false worship / spirituality

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

The Stirring (2)

Christ came back for us –
He meets our true needs.

But we must be careful about possible misdirection:

At that time if anyone says to you,
'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!'
do not believe it.

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear
and perform great signs and wonders to deceive,
if possible, even the elect.

Matthew 24:23-24

The Healing at the Pool:

John 5:1- True healing vs false worship / spirituality

The Sign of God's Presence

The 'stirring' of the Pool of Bethesda

The Lesson

Do we have to have a special sign to sense God's Presence?

Do we need a representation that we can see and feel (an idol)?

**We want a "god" we can put up on our mantle
and sense its "Presence"**

**Is God's Goodness (sending His Son to die for us)
enough of a sign for us?**

**Or do you have to have a special sign
to feel God's presence?**

Quote

**Since you cannot do good to all,
you are to pay special regard to those who,
by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstances,
are brought into closer connection to you.**

Augustine

**Christ could do good to all,
but this was not in God's plan
(and would likely have interfered with it).**

**We (as humans) must do good
where ever we find the need.**

Healing at the Pool

The crippled man healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Summary

Jesus went to Jerusalem for a festival.

Many disabled people went to the Pool of Siloam so that they could wait for a healing event.

A man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years.

Jesus asked him if he wanted to get well.

The man replied that he could not get into the pool in time.

Jesus healed him and he picked up his mat and walked away.

As this occurred on a Sabbath, the Pharisees were upset.

Jesus met the man at the temple, and warned him not to sin.

The man then told the Pharisees that Jesus had healed him.

Jesus gives the personal touch, not the “Sermon at the Pool.”

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- **Preparation for God's Presence**
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- **The Presence of an Opponent**
- **The Power of God's Presence**
- **Our Response to God's Presence**
- **The Ultimate Presence in Heaven**
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Consider the Progression Throughout History

Creation

In the Garden

Out of the Garden

Flood – Global Punishment

Sodom and Gomorrah - Local Punishment

Moses

Exodus

Tabernacle

Temple

Kingdom

Prophets

Jesus

Church

Apocalypse

What sign do most of these periods have in common?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Consider the Progression Throughout History

Creation	Let there be Light!
In the Garden	Walking with God
Out of the Garden	Flaming sword
Flood – Global Punishment	Rainbow (light show?)
Sodom and Gomorrah - Local Punishment	Fire and Brimstone
Moses	Burning Bush
Exodus	Pillar of Fire and Cloud
Tabernacle	Fire and Cloud
Temple	Fire descended on altar
Kingdom	Fire descended on altar
Prophets	Fire descended on altar
Jesus	Baptize with Fire
Church	Tongues of Fire
Apocalypse	Eyes like blazing Fire

What sign do most of these periods have in common? Fire!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Creation

And God said,
“Let there be light,”
and there was light.

**These signs are still there.
God is always Present!**

Genesis 1:3

And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and ... to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights - the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:14-18

Man did not see the creation, but could “see the light.”

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

In the Garden

In the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve walked with God.

He is always there,

but not always "intimate" – so close that we feel Him.

In the garden, God "checked in", or "touched base" with them;
this is a parallel to our worship time in church fellowship.

Was the distance less? Was God closer?

Or was there just increased awareness?

Consider a neighbor who is always there
but not always "in view";

he is more visible at certain times, but he always lives there.

This relationship was seen in normal light –
no need for pyrotechnics!

God gives us space
to allow us to choose.

Think of those walking with Christ on the road to Emmaus;
Christ was there, but the men did not realize it at first.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Out of the Garden

**Note that the Presence of Satan
was without fire, too!**

**He hid his real nature
and his real purpose.**

**He tried to limit man's view
of the Presence of God –
and he was successful!**

**Satan pretends that he is
acting in the best interest
of Adam and Eve.**

**God knew that man had sinned,
and the relationship was significantly altered –
man hid from God.**

**God was still there,
but He cast man out of the Garden,
and the perfect relationship in His Presence.**

**The act of “hiding”
involves separation.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Out of the Garden

God had limited the spiritual bounds of man,
not allowing him to eat of
the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil.
When man disobeyed,
God kept him from the tree of life as well.

So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden
to work the ground from which he had been taken.

After he drove the man out,
he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden
cherubim and a **flaming** sword flashing back and forth
to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:23-24

How much was man capable of understanding, anyway?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Outcasts

Adam and Eve (and the rest of mankind)
were cast out of the Garden.

The man born blind
was cast out of the synagogue.

Jesus came back
to be **Present**
in each case.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

During the Patriarch Age, God spoke directly with Man

Adam (no recorded contact after being cast out of the Garden)

Cain and Abel (discussed worthy sacrifices)

Enoch (walked with God and was taken up in a chariot)

Noah (told to build an ark and gather the animals for the flood)
(covenant rainbow)

Abram (told to leave his home for a promised land)
(told that God would destroy **Sodom and Gomorrah**)
(told he would have a son and made a covenant with him)
(told to sacrifice his son)

Jacob (**stairway to heaven at Bethel**)
(wrestling with an angel)

Laban (leave Jacob alone)

Joseph (dreams and interpretation of dreams)

Quote

**Because Jesus got the tree of death,
we can have the tree of life.**

**... Jesus turned the cross
into a tree of life for us,
at infinite cost to himself.**

Tim Keller

Parallel Processing

- **Jesus** is the true and better **Adam**, who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us (1 Corinthians 15).
- **Jesus** is the true and better **Abel**, who, though innocently slain, has blood that cries out for our acquittal, not our condemnation (Hebrews 12:24).
- **Jesus** is the true and better **Abraham**, who answered the call of God to leave the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void “not knowing whither he went” to create a new people of God.
- **Jesus** is the true and better **Isaac**, who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us all.
- **Jesus** is the true and better **Jacob**, who wrestled with God and took the blow of justice we deserved so that we, like Jacob, receive only the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.
- **Jesus** is the true and better **Joseph**, who at the right hand of the King forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.
- **Jesus** is the true and better **Moses**, who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant (Hebrews 3).

Tim Keller

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

During the Patriarch Age, God spoke directly with Man

Adam (no recorded contact after being cast out of the Garden)

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God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Noah and the Covenant Rainbow

I have set my rainbow in the clouds,
and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

Whenever I bring clouds over the earth
and the rainbow appears in the clouds,
I will remember my covenant between me and you
and all living creatures of every kind.

Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life.

Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds,
I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant
between God and all living creatures of every kind
on the earth.”

Genesis 9:13-16

The rainbow was to be a sign of the Presence of God,
but it was to remind Him of His Promise to us.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Abram and Lot and the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

Then the Lord rained down

burning sulfur

on Sodom and Gomorrah

- from the Lord out of the heavens.

Genesis 19:24

What a sight this must have been!

(Though God said not to look!)

Lot's wife couldn't resist looking (with longing).

What an indication of the Presence of God!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jacob and the Stairway to Heaven (1)

[Jacob running for his life away from Esau,
with nothing after “stealing” the birthright and blessing]

When he reached a certain place,
he stopped for the night because the sun had set.

Taking one of the stones there,
he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.

He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth,
with its top reaching to heaven,
and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

There above it stood the Lord, and he said:

“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham
and the God of Isaac.

Genesis 28:11-12

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jacob and the Stairway to Heaven (2)

I will give you and your descendants
the land on which you are lying.

Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth,
and you will spread out to the west and to the east,
to the north and to the south.

All peoples on earth will be blessed
through you and your offspring.

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go,
and I will bring you back to this land.

I will not leave you
until I have done what I have promised you.”

Genesis 28:13-15

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jacob and the Stairway to Heaven (3)

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought,

**“Surely the Lord is in this place,
and I was not aware of it.”**

He was afraid and said,

**“How awesome is this place!
This is none other than the house of God;
this is the gate of heaven.”**

Genesis 28:11-17

**Another awesome sight,
even though it is in a dream!
Jacob felt it to be real.**

**God is always Present;
we must make ourselves be aware of it.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Exodus – Pillar of Fire and Cloud

By day the Lord went ahead of them
in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way
and by night in a pillar of **fire** to give them light,
so that they could travel by day or night.

Neither the pillar of cloud by day
nor the pillar of **fire** by night
left its place in front of the people.

Exodus 13:21-22

**The Presence of God: All of the time!
Think how awesome this must have been!
(and yet the people still drifted off track...)**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Tabernacle – Pillar of Fire and Cloud

So the cloud of the Lord was over the tabernacle by day,
and **fire** was in the cloud by night,
[like lightning or an atomic blast?]
in the sight of all the Israelites
during all their travels.

Exodus 40:38

One the day the tabernacle,
the tent of the covenant law,
was set up,
the cloud covered it.

From evening till morning
the cloud above the tabernacle
looked like **fire**.

Exodus 40:38

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Glory in the Cloud

[The Israelites grumbled about the food...]

Then Moses told Aaron, “

Say to the entire Israelite community,

‘Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.’”

While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community,
they looked toward the desert,

and there was the **glory of the Lord** appearing in the cloud.

The Lord said to Moses,

“I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites.

Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat,

and in the morning you will be filled with bread.

Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

Exodus 16:9-12

God punished them with a plague...

Quote

**There is no Christianity without the cross,
the cross that carries us
and the cross that we carry.**

John Bunyan

Parallel Processing

**[John] Robinson pointed out that
‘the gospels ascribe to Jesus
no consciousness of sin or guilt’,
in striking contrast to that consciousness of sinfulness
that has characterized the great Christian saints
from Paul onwards
(see, for example, Romans 7:21-24).**

J.C. Polkinghorne

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

During the Patriarch Age, God spoke directly with Man

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(wrestling with an angel)

Laban (leave Jacob alone)

Joseph (dreams and interpretation of dreams)

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses recaps the giving of the law and Israel's response

Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you.

Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you...

Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

What other nation is so great

as to have their gods **near** them

the way the Lord our God is **near** us

whenever we pray to him?

And what other nation is so great

as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Deuteronomy 4:4-8

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses recaps the giving of the law and Israel's response

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them **fade** from your heart as long as you live.

Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb... You came near and stood at the foot of **the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens**, with black clouds and **deep darkness**.

Then **the Lord spoke to you out of the fire**. You heard the sound of words but **saw no form**; there was only a voice.

He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets.

Deuteronomy 4:9-13

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses recaps the Presence of God and His Word (1)

... for the Lord your God is a consuming **fire**, a jealous God
Deuteronomy 4:7

Ask now about the former days, long before your time...
ask from one end of the heavens to the other.

Has anything so great as this ever happened,
or has anything like it ever been heard of?

Has any other people heard the voice of God
speaking out of **fire**, as you have,
and lived?

Deuteronomy 4:32-33

Up until this time, this was the Greatest Story Ever Heard;
But this was superceded by the gospel.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses recaps the Presence of God and His Word (2)

You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his **voice** to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great **fire**, and **you heard his words from out of the fire**. Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his **Presence** and his great strength...

Deuteronomy 4:35-37

Think of the parallel:

In the beginning Moses heard the voice of God in a burning bush that was not consumed.

Now, Moses and the people heard the voice of God in a burning mountain that was not consumed!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The people's response to the Presence of God and His commands (1)

These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed
in a **loud voice** to your whole assembly there on the mountain
from **out of the fire**, the **cloud** and the **deep darkness**;
and he added nothing more.

Then he wrote them on two stone tablets
and gave them to me.

Deuteronomy 5:22

**What a contrast: fire, cloud, and deep darkness!
God's Full Truth has many dimensions**

Contrast the loud voice to God's whisper in 1 Kings 19:12

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The people's response to the Presence of God and His commands (2)

When you heard the **voice out of the darkness**, while the mountain was **ablaze with fire**, all the leaders of your tribes and your elders came to me.

And you said, "The Lord our God has shown us his **glory** and his majesty, and we have heard his **voice from the fire**. Today we have seen that a person can live even if God speaks with them.

But now, why should we die? **This great fire will consume us**, and we will die if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer. For what mortal has ever heard the voice of the living God **speaking out of fire**, as we have, and survived?

Go near and listen to all that the Lord our God says.

Then tell us whatever the Lord our God tells you.

We will listen and obey."

Deuteronomy 5:22-27

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Parallel between Moses and Christ

The people of Israel needed a mediator, or go-between, because they could not stand the Full Goodness of God.

**Christ is our mediator, for being in very nature God,
He gives us the ability to get close to God.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

After the Rebellion and the Creation of the Golden Calf Idol

Then the Lord said to Moses,
“Leave this place,
you and the people you brought up out of Egypt,
and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham...

I will send an angel before you
and drive out the Canaanites...

Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey.

But **I will not go with you,**
because you are a stiff-necked people
and I might destroy you on the way.”

Exodus 33:1-3

God threatens to not be Present with His rebellious people

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The People repented and take off their ornaments

[The pillar of cloud would settle by the Tent of Meeting, where God would meet Moses "face to face"]

The Lord replied,

"My **Presence** will go with you,
and I will give you rest."

Then Moses said to him,

"If your **Presence** does not go with us,
do not send us up from here..."

And the Lord said to Moses,

"I will do the very thing you have asked,
because I am pleased with you
and I know you by name."

Exodus 33:14-18

God responds to the people's repentance and offers His Presence

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses asks for a sign of God's Glory (Presence)

Then Moses said,

“Now show me your glory.”

And the Lord said,

“I will cause **all my goodness**
to pass in front of you,
and I will proclaim my name,
the Lord,
in your presence...”

But,” he said,

“you cannot see my face,
for no one may see me
and live.”

**God's Full Nature is more
than we can stand, like
staring into the noon sun**

Exodus 33:18-20

God limits the demonstration of His Presence

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses asks for a sign of God's Glory (Presence)

Then the Lord said,
“There is a place near me
where you may stand on a rock.

When my glory passes by,
I will put you in a cleft in the rock
and cover you with my hand
until I have passed by.

Then I will remove my hand
and you will see my back;
but my face must not be seen.”

Exodus 33:21-23

**God gives us His Presence,
but protects us from being overpowered by it.
We can see him through the filter of Christ.**

Quote

**Your worship
must engage your spirit
in the pursuit of truth.**

[... worship in spirit and in truth...]

Eugene Peterson (The Message – John 4:24)

**We must fully “engage” with the truth –
Think about God watching what we do
with what he has given us...
like a child with a new toy!**

Parallel Processing

Recap from last week's lesson

In its time, the story of God's Presence during the Exodus was the Greatest Story Ever Heard.

But this was superceded by the Good News of the Gospel.

In the beginning Moses heard the voice of God in a burning bush that was not consumed.

Now, Moses and the people heard the voice of God in a burning mountain that was not consumed!

The people of Israel needed a mediator, or go-between (Moses), because they could not stand the Full Goodness of God.

Christ is our mediator, for being in very nature God, He gives us the ability to get close to God.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Exodus – Fire on the Mountain

Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in **fire**.

The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.

[like a combination of the fiery furnace and a volcano]

As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder,
Moses spoke
and the voice of God answered him.

Exodus 19:17-19

The Presence of God on the Mountain
was an awesome display of fire and smoke and thunder.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Moses recaps the giving of the law and Israel's response

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not **forget** the things your eyes have seen or let them **fade** from your heart as long as you live.

Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb... You came near and stood at the foot of **the mountain while it blazed with fire to the very heavens**, with black clouds and **deep darkness**.
[God is very complex]

Then **the Lord spoke to you out of the fire**. You heard the sound of words but **saw no form**; there was only a voice.

He declared to you his covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he commanded you to follow and then wrote them on two stone tablets.

Deuteronomy 4:9-13

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The Rebellion of the People (1)

And the Lord said to me, “I have seen this people, and they are a stiff-necked people indeed!

Let me alone, so that I may destroy them and blot out their name from under heaven. And I will make you into a nation stronger and more numerous than they.” [God offers Moses an upgrade]

So I turned and went down from the mountain

while it was ablaze with fire. [Think about this fearsome image!]

And the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands.

Deuteronomy 9:13-15

Have you ever had a stiff neck?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The Rebellion of the People (2)

When I looked, I saw that you had sinned against the Lord your God; you had made for yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf.

You had turned aside quickly from the way that the Lord had commanded you.

So I took the two tablets and threw them out of my hands, breaking them to pieces before your eyes.

Deuteronomy 9:13-17

Consider the symbolism with Moses breaking the tablets (corresponding to the Israelites breaking faith).

Why else break them,
and have to have them made all over again?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Tabernacle – Radiant Face (1)

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai
with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands,
he was not aware that his face was **radiant**
because he had spoken with the Lord.

When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses,
his face was **radiant**,
and they were afraid to come near him.

But Moses called to them;
so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him,
and he spoke to them.

Afterward all the Israelites came **near** him,
and he gave them all the commands
the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

Exodus 34:29-32

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Tabernacle – Radiant Face (2)

When Moses finished speaking to them,
he put a **veil** over his face.

But whenever he entered the Lord's presence
to speak with him,
he removed the **veil** until he came out.

And when he came out and told the Israelites
what he had been commanded,
they saw that his face was **radiant**.

Then Moses would put the **veil** back over his face
until he went in to speak with the Lord.

Exodus 34:33-35

**The fire from the Presence of God was contagious!
We must not quench the Spirit! (1 Thessalonians 5:19)**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Sometimes in Darkness as a Contrast

The Lord said to Moses,

“I am going to come to you in a **dense cloud**,
so that the people will hear me speaking with you
and will always put their trust in you.” [really?]

Then Moses told the Lord what the people had said.

[like our prayers, when God knows what we need]

Exodus 19:9

The people remained at a distance,

while Moses approached the **thick darkness**
where God was.

Exodus 20:21

The people demanded Moses to be their go-between or mediator.

We can have confidence through Christ
to approach the throne of God (Hebrews 4:16).

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Temple / Tabernacle – Fire on the Altar

Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting.

When they came out,
they blessed the people;
and the **glory** of the Lord
appeared to all the people.

Fire came out from the **presence** of the Lord
and consumed the burnt offering
and the fat portions on the altar.

And when all the people saw it,
they shouted for joy
and fell facedown.

[picture this humble celebration]

Leviticus 9:23-24

God showed His Presence
by lighting the fire on the altar.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Temple / Tabernacle – Fire on the Altar

**The fire must be kept burning on the altar
continuously;
it must not go out.**

Leviticus 6:13

**The original fire on the altar was not to go out,
even though in the tabernacle era
the Levites had to pack it up and move it every day.
This involves a tremendous commitment.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Fire as Indication of God's Anger

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers,
put **fire** in them and added incense;
and they offered unauthorized **fire** before the Lord,
contrary to his command.

[perhaps they just could not understand, here in the beginning]

So **fire** came out from the presence of the Lord
and consumed them,
and they died before the Lord.

Leviticus 10:1-2

God fought fire with fire!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Fire as Indication of God's Anger

Now the people complained about their hardships
in the hearing of the Lord,
and when he heard them his anger was aroused.

Then **fire** from the Lord burned among them
and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.

When the people cried out to Moses, [always the people's mediator]
he prayed to the Lord
and the **fire** died down.

Numbers 11:1-2

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Fire as Indication of God's Anger

[The Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and others]

As soon as he finished saying all this,
the ground under them split apart
and the earth opened its mouth
and swallowed them and their households,
and all those associated with Korah,
together with their possessions.

They went down alive into the realm of the dead,
with everything they owned;
the earth closed over them,
and they perished ...

And **fire** came out from the Lord
and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

Numbers 11:1-2

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The refining fire

See, I have **refined** you, though not as silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

Isaiah 48:10

See, I will **refine** and test them,
for what else can I do because of the sin of my people?

Jeremiah 9:7

Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be **refined**,
purified and made spotless until the time of the end ...

Daniel 11:35

... I will **refine** them like silver and test them like gold.
They will call on my name and I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are my people,'
and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'"

Zechariah 13:9

Quote

**Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with Thy fire divine!**

Edwin Hatch (Song # 418 in Songs of Faith and Praise)

Parallel Processing

The Furnace

... the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting **furnace**, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance...

Deuteronomy 4:20 (1 Kings 8:51, Jeremiah 11:4)

... “Look! I see four men walking around in the **fire**, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.”

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the **blazing furnace** and shouted, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!” ... the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Daniel 3

Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a **furnace**, and the whole mountain trembled violently. Exodus 19:18

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The refining fire

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Daniel 11:35

... I will **refine** them like silver and **test** them like gold.
They will call on my name and I will answer them;

I will say, 'They are my people,' [chief concept!]
and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'"

Zechariah 13:9

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Fire on Gideon's Altar

[Gideon is asked to lead the Israelites in battle...]

The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth..."

Then the angel of the Lord touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. **Fire flared from the rock**, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the Lord disappeared.

When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the Lord, he exclaimed, "... Sovereign Lord! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!"

["face to face": this expresses the personal Presence of God]

The Lord said ..., "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

So Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord Is Peace.

Judges 6:20-24

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Kingdom – David Felt the Presence of God as a Shepherd

But David said to Saul,

“Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep.

**When a lion or a bear came and carried off
a sheep from the flock,**

I went after it,

struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth.

When it turned on me,

I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear;

this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them,

because he has defied the armies of the living God.

The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion

and the paw of the bear

will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.”

1 Samuel 17:34-37

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Kingdom – David Felt the Presence of God (1)

**The Lord gave David victory
wherever he went.**

2 Samuel 8:14, 2 Samuel 22:51

David said about him:

**“I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.”**

Acts 2:25

**Face to Face: God is not a vague, ethereal Presence –
He deals with us one-on-one!**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Kingdom – David Felt the Presence of God (2)

**He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever.**

2 Samuel 22:51

**For this is what the Lord says:
'David will never fail
to have a man
to sit on the throne of Israel,**

Jeremiah 33:17

God's Presence is not Conditional, either!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Temple – Fire on the Altar

[The Dedication of the Temple]

When Solomon finished praying,

fire came down from heaven

and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices,

and **the glory of the Lord filled the temple.**

The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord
because the glory of the Lord filled it.

When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down

and the glory of the Lord **above** the temple, [filled and above]

they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground,

and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying,

“He is good;

his love endures forever.”

2 Chronicles 7:1-3

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Temple – The Presence and Name of God

May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day,
this place of which you said,
'My Name shall be there,'
so that you will hear the prayer
your servant prays toward this place.

1 Kings 8:29

I have chosen
and consecrated this temple
so that my Name may be there forever.

My eyes and my heart
will always be there.

2 Chronicles 7:16

The temple was to be a home for the Presence of God's Name.

Quote

**Christ did not die for an idea.
He died for a person,
and that person is you.**

John Eldredge

**God is not a vague, formless Presence - it is Personal!
The form is not a physical form, but is manifested in the physical.**

Parallel Processing

The Garden

We want life to be just so, to return to a version of the garden that appeals to our immediate interests. But God has closed and locked the gate to the garden, blocking the way...

But all is not lost.

God is cultivating a different kind of garden; and that garden is you and me – the relationship we have with God, the persons we are becoming, the life we live, the good we accomplish.

Surely Paul had something like that in mind when he described Christians as emitting the “aroma of Christ,” the fragrance of the garden (2 Corinthians 2:15). What he implies is that God is making us into his garden. He intends to use the beauty, aroma, and fruitfulness of our lives as a sign of and witness to his redemptive work in the world.

Jerry Sittser

God likened his people to a luxuriant grapevine, too!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Quote

The Temple [or church] was never supposed to be
a retreat away from the world,
a safe holy place where one might stay secure
in God's **presence**,
shut off from the wickedness outside.

The Temple was an advance sign
of what God intended to do with and for the whole creation.

When God filled the house with his presence,
that was a sign and a foretaste of his ultimate intention,
which was to flood the whole world
with his glory, presence, and love.

N. T. Wright

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Mountaintop – A dramatic show of God's Presence

**[Elijah was in a contest with the priests of Baal about the True God.
He let the opposition go first for their god to light the altar.]**

At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: “Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord, answer me, so these people will know that you, Lord, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again.”

Then the **fire of the Lord fell and burned up the sacrifice,
the wood, the stones and the soil,
and also licked up the water in the trench.**

**When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried,
“The Lord - he is God! The Lord - he is God!”**

1 Kings 18:36-39

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Fire on the Altar: Summary

God dropped fire on the His people's altar:

During the Exodus; Leviticus 9:23-24 [temporary tabernacle]

**In Solomon's time at the dedication of the "permanent" temple;
2 Chronicles 7:1-3**

**At the great contest with Baal; 1 Kings 18:36-39
[Mt. Carmel – a new mountain; consider John 4]**

He also sent an angel to light Gideon's altar; Judges 6:21

**He caused fire to come up from Manoah's (Samson's father) altar;
Judges 13:20**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Mountaintop – An Opportunity to Meet God

[Elijah was low in spirit and running for his life after his great victory]

The Lord said,

“Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord,
for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind
tore the mountains apart
and shattered the rocks before the Lord,
but the Lord was not in the wind.

After the wind there was an earthquake,
but the Lord was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake came a **fire**,
but the Lord was not in the **fire**.

And after the **fire** came a gentle whisper.

[God is twisting Elijah's expectations]

1 Kings 19:11-12

Quote

**... and when we are in our temples,
who will hear the voice
crying in the wilderness?**

Chet Ramos

**Think about perceiving God out in the world,
not just the church building.**

Parallel Processing

Prodigal Sons

Compare Jacob,
who left home under the stigma of a being a double thief,
taking from his brother,
staying away for years
and then returning home again,
to the Prodigal Son.

Similarities: a brother who left home
an older brother who felt cheated
both headed home uncertain as to their welcome
both prepared how they would greet their family

Differences: Jacob sought his fortune,
while the Prodigal Son lost his inheritance
Jacob was accepted by Esau,
while the elder brother refused to greet the
Prodigal Son

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

God Shows Different Aspects of Himself at Different Times

Elijah:

- a great and powerful wind that tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks
- an earthquake
- a fire
- a gentle whisper

Think of all of the other representations of God recorded.

Think about the blind man describing an elephant...

[Christ is the full representation...]

The Son is the **radiance of God's glory**
and the **exact representation of his being,**
sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Hebrews 1:3a

[... was blind, but now I see...]

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

God Uses Blindness to Reveal and Disguise

Aram was at war with Israel; whenever he set up his camp, Elisha informed the king of Israel to warn him.

This enraged the king of Aram, who asked who was the spy. He was told that Elisha was responsible. The king ordered that Elisha be found and captured. When he was found in Dothan, the king's army surrounded the city.

When Elisha's servant got up the next morning and saw the army, he was very afraid.

Elisha told him, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them," and then prayed for God to allow him to see (at the higher level).

Then as the enemy came down to get him, Elisha prayed to the Lord to strike them with blindness. He then led them into capture.

2 Kings 6

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the Day of the Lord]

In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel.

Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem.

The Lord will ... cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a **spirit of fire**.

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a **cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night**; over everything the **glory** will be a canopy.

It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 4:2-6

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the world – The Prophecy]

“The virgin will conceive
and give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel”
(which means “**God with us**”).

Matthew 1:23

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Simeon was Promised a Visit

[Jesus Presented in the Temple when the time for purification came]

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon,
who was righteous and devout.

He was waiting for the consolation of Israel,
and the Holy Spirit was on him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit
that **he would not die**
before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.
[waiting day after day]

When the parents brought in the child Jesus
to do for him what the custom of the Law required,
Simeon took him in his arms
and praised God...

Luke 2:22-28

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Simeon "Got It"; He was able to see the Big Picture

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of **all nations**:

a **light** for revelation to the **Gentiles**,
and the **glory** of your people Israel."

Luke 2:29-32

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the world – The Word Became Flesh]

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life,
and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:1-13

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the world – The Word Became Flesh]

**The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us.**

**We have seen his glory,
the glory of the one and only Son,
who came from the Father,
full of grace and truth.**

John 1:14

Quote

**You must be something
like a clear glass
through which people can see
a broken
but gospel-changed soul
in such a way
that they want it for themselves.**

Timothy Keller

Parallel Processing

Dying of Thirst

Now you know why God can come near undeserving sinners:
because years later there was another little boy,
born to a poor woman,
who lived a life of rejection
and at the end of his life was abandoned by his father.
He also was dying of thirst,
and he cried out and God did not answer.
Do you know why God did not answer?

Though Hagar and Abraham and Sarah
deserved abandonment and not blessing,
on the cross Jesus Christ got the abandonment we deserve,
so that we could get the blessing that he deserved.
He cried out and nobody answered,
so that when we cry out,
even though we don't deserve to be answered,
we will be answered.

Timothy Keller

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The Many Representations of God

God has shown Himself in different forms, as was discussed with Moses and Elijah and others.

Consider also that God employed different methods to accomplish different miracles:

Moses: strike the rock or speak to it

(Exodus 17:6, Numbers 20:8);

Jesus: muddy spit on eyes, speak to heal the blind,

healing from distance, a coin in a fish's mouth

other miracles from God: destruction of the walls of Jericho,

sound of marching in the trees

military victory through a lengthened day and hail

...

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

His face shining on us is what we really need...

[God gave instructions for the Priestly Blessing]

The Lord bless you
and keep you;
the Lord make his **face shine** on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his **face** toward you
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:22-26

For God, who said,
“Let **light shine** out of darkness,”
made his **light shine** in our hearts
to give us the **light** of the knowledge of God's glory
displayed in the **face** of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Simeon was Promised a Visit

[Jesus Presented in the Temple when the time for purification came]

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon,
who was righteous and devout.

He was waiting for the consolation of Israel,
and the Holy Spirit was on him.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit
that **he would not die**
before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.
[waiting day after day]

When the parents brought in the child Jesus
to do for him what the custom of the Law required,
Simeon took him in his arms
and praised God...

Luke 2:22-28

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Simeon "Got It"; He was able to see the Big Picture

"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of **all nations**:

a **light** for revelation to the **Gentiles**, [unusual perspective of Simeon]
and the **glory** of your people Israel."

Luke 2:29-32

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the world – Seeing the Father through the Son]

Philip said,

“Lord, show us the Father
and that will be enough for us.” [enough?]

Jesus answered:

“Don't you know me, Philip,
even after I have been among you such a long time?

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

Don't you believe that I am in the Father,
and that the Father is in me?

The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority.

Rather, it is the Father, living in me,
who is doing his work.

John 14:8-10

Quote

Maturity begins

**when we're content to feel we're right about something
without feeling the necessity
to prove someone else wrong.**

Sydney J. Harris

Parallel Processing

The King's Clothes

**Because Jesus
was stripped naked on the cross (Matthew 27:28 and 35)
we can be clothed
in a robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10).**

Timothy Keller

**Whether Christ was completely or only partially naked,
the humiliation of the crucifixion was complete.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the World – and On the Cross]

For God so **loved** the world
that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him
shall not perish
but have eternal life.

John 3:16

This was a tough love,
not a fuzzy happiness (like a warm puppy).

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: As a man He endured temporary separation from God

About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”

(which means

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).

Matthew 27:46

**Christ shared (temporarily) the separation of man from God.
He was tempted (suffered) in all points as we are (Hebrews 4:15)**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ
is **born of God**, [this could mean to become God-like]
and everyone who loves the father
loves his child as well.

This is how we know that we love the children of God:
by loving God and carrying out his commands.

In fact, this is love for God:
to keep his commands.

And his commands are not burdensome,
for everyone **born of God** overcomes the world.

1 John 5:4b-10

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Rules or Relationship?

**We must not let the “rules” hide from us
what God really wants.**

**Perfect knowledge of God
is not the same as being God-like.**

**The rules are given to us
to make our lives better.**

**Read the operating manual
to avoid disaster!**

... knowledge puffs up while love builds up.

1 Corinthians 8:1

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Immanuel - God with Us

[In the World - Look unto Jesus]

Therefore,

since we are surrounded by such a great **cloud** of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,
fixing our eyes on Jesus, [God with us]
the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

For the **joy** set before him he **endured** the cross, [joy of love for us]
scorning its shame,
and sat down
at the right hand of the throne of God.

Hebrews 12:1-2

God loves a cheerful giver, 2 Corinthians 9:7b (as was Christ)

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Baptize with Fire

[John the Baptist]

"I baptize you with water for repentance.

But after me comes one

who is more powerful than I, [infinitely so]

whose sandals I am not worthy to carry.

He will baptize you

with the Holy Spirit

and **fire**.

Matthew 3:11

This points to Pentecost

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Bringing Fire to Ignite the World

[Not Peace but Division]

I have come to bring **fire** on the earth,
and how I wish it were already **kindled!**

Luke 12:49

Think of how the teachings of the entire Old Testament had pointed to the Messiah's coming. Some, like Simeon in Luke 2, had a fire kindled in them looking for the Messiah. But many Jewish leaders did not.

PDE

This also points to Pentecost

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Transfiguration

About eight days after Jesus said this,
he took Peter, John and James with him
and went up onto a mountain to pray.

As he was praying,
the appearance of his face changed, [the glory of God leaked out]
and his clothes became as **bright as a flash of lightning**.

Two men, Moses and Elijah,
appeared in **glorious splendor**, [proof of the resurrection]
talking with Jesus.

Luke 9:28-30

These all shared critical moments on a (the?) mountain top.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: Transfiguration

While he [Peter] was speaking,
a cloud appeared and covered them,
and they were afraid as they entered the **cloud**.

A voice came from the **cloud**, saying, [God again Present in a cloud]
“This is my Son,
whom I have chosen; [with whom I am well pleased]
listen to him.”

Luke 9:31-35

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: The Fire of God

The Son is the **radiance** of God's glory
and the exact representation of his being,
sustaining all things
by his powerful word.

Hebrews 1:3a

Quote

What is the difference between “I like you” and “I love you”?

[This was] Beautifully answered by Buddha:

“When you **like a flower,
you just pluck it.**

But when you **love a flower,
you water it daily.”**

One who understands this, understands life...

Parallel Processing

David and the Philistines: Friends or Enemies?

Consider the time that David marched with the Philistines and made as if he would attack Saul's armies of Israel (1 Samuel 29). The king, Achish had to send him back home (who would David have fought against?).

Consider also that there was a contingent of 600 Philistines (from Gath, 2 Samuel 15:18-22, 18:2) that fought with David; he trusted them to protect him.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Backtrack to Hagar and Ishmael

[God speaks to Hagar about what kind of man Ishmael would be]

She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her:

“You are the God who sees me,”

for she said, “I have now seen [the back of? (like Elijah)]
the One who sees me.”

That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi

[well of the Living One who sees me]

it is still there,

between Kadesh and Bered.

Genesis 16:13-14

We can see only a part of God,
but He continually sees us!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: The Fire of God

The Son is the **radiance** of God's glory
and the exact representation of his being,
sustaining all things
by his powerful word.

Hebrews 1:3a

**As Christ is the exact representation of God (to mankind),
then all who believe in Him have seen God.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Knowing Jesus, Knowing God

No one has ever **seen** God,
but the one and only Son,
who is himself God
and is in closest relationship with the Father,
has made him known.

John 1:18

No one has **seen** the Father
except the one who is from God;
only he has **seen** the Father.

John 6:46

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Knowing Love and Good, Knowing God

No one has ever **seen** God;
but if we love one another,
God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 John 4:12

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar.
For whoever does not love their brother and sister,
whom they have **seen**,
cannot love God,
whom they have not **seen**.

1 John 4:20

Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good.
Anyone who does what is good is from God.
Anyone who does what is evil has not **seen** God.

3 John 1:11

[this is about God's family]

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Knowing the Universe, Knowing God

For since the creation of the world God's **invisible** qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly **seen**, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Romans 1:20

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: The Fire of God

[The Supremacy of the Son of God]

The Son is the **image** of the **invisible** God,
the firstborn over all creation.

For in him all things were created:
things in heaven and on earth,
visible and invisible,
whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;
all things have been created
through him and for him.

He is before all things,
and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:15-17

God showed us what was important about Himself;
He is about relationship more than creating universes.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: The Fire of God

[The Supremacy of the Son of God]

And he is the head of the body, the church;
he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead,
so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

For God was pleased to have
all his fullness dwell in him, [all His Goodness]
and through him to reconcile to himself all things,
whether things on earth or things in heaven,
by making peace through his blood,
shed on the cross.

Colossians 1:18-20

Quote

**God is near
and the universe
is brimming with goodness.**

Dallas Willard

Parallel Processing

Hagar

Trible expounds ...‘This conception and birth make her an extraordinary figure in the story of faith: the first woman to hear an annunciation, the only one to receive a divine promise of descendants, and the first to weep for her dying child. Truly Hagar the Egyptian is the prototype of not only special but all mothers in Israel.’

Poor and insignificant though she was, she deserves to be given stature in biblical faith, for she “foreshadows Israel’s pilgrimage of faith through contrast” as she flees from suffering and bondage through the desert. The Israelites many generations later would likewise flee from their bondage into the desert. At closer look we can glean from her story several images of faith.

Judette A. Gallares

**Also, Hagar “forsook” Ishmael for a while,
like God temporarily “forsook” Christ on the cross**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Links to Knowing God

**As Christ is the exact representation of God (to mankind),
then all who believe in Him have seen God.**

- **If we know Christ, then we can know God.
They are in the closest relationship
All of God's Goodness dwells in Him**
- **If we know Goodness or Love, then we can know God.
This concerns the family of God**
- **If we know the universe, then we can know God.
We are without excuse**

**God showed us what was important about Himself;
He is about relationships more than creating universes.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus: The Fire of God

Christ's crucifixion
is the blazing center
of the glory of God.

John Piper



[Not a bad logo...]

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Igniting the Church

[The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost]

When the day of Pentecost came,
they were all together in one place.

Suddenly a sound
like the blowing of a violent wind
came from heaven
and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be **tongues of fire**
that separated
and came to rest on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in other tongues
as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:2-4

Quote

**I keep on praying
because I believe God is good.**

Scot McKnight

Parallel Processing

Two Woman in Elijah's Life

**Jezebel's hatred for Elijah was murderous,
while the widow's hospitality and generosity were life-giving.**

**A rich queen would go down to her death fighting God,
while a poor widow would come back to health and plenty
because she believed in God.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Igniting the Church

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and began to speak in other tongues
as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2:2-4

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus is the Light

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said,
“I am the **light** of the world.
Whoever follows me
will never walk in darkness,
but will have the **light** of life.”

John 8:12

While I am in the world,
I am the **light** of the world.”

John 9:5

I have come into the world as a **light**,
so that no one who believes in me
should stay in darkness.

John 12:46

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus is the Light of the World

Jesus' statement

“I am the **light** of the world” in John 8
can be understood best
when we see that in John 7
he was making this claim during the Festival of Tabernacles,
commemorating God's **glory cloud**
leading Israel through the wilderness.

Jesus is, therefore,
not speaking about some general power of **illumination**.

He is identifying himself as the **glory** of Israel,
the God of Moses,
who has become a human being.

Timothy Keller

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Igniting the Church

[The Light of the World]

You are the **light** of the world.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people **light** a **lamp**
and put it under a bowl.

Instead they put it on its stand, [a messenger to the world]
and it gives **light** to everyone in the house.

In the same way, let your **light** shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds
and **glorify** your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

Where is the **fire** now?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Quote

We have spread so many ashes
over the historical Jesus
that we scarcely feel
the **glow** of His presence anymore.

Brennan Manning

What happens when the fire burns out?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Do we need the visible flame anymore?

**We should not need
a special visible sign
of God's Presence
anymore!**

**Then he said to Thomas,
“Put your finger here; see my hands.
Reach out your hand and put it into my side.
Stop doubting and believe.”**

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

**Then Jesus told him,
“Because you have seen me,
you have believed;
blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have believed.”**

John 20:27-29

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Quote

Every morning

I lay out the pieces of my life

on your altar

and watch for fire to descend.

Eugene Peterson

from The Message, Psalm 5:3

This is a figurative viewing, of course...

Quote

**People bond more deeply
over shared brokenness
than they do
over shared beliefs.**

Rachel Hold Evans

Parallel Processing

Awesome Deeds

**Moses performed awesome deeds before Israel,
Deuteronomy 34:10-12.**

**So also did Christ
(John, the books would not hold... John 21:25)**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus is the Light

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In the same way, let your **light** shine before others,
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and **glorify** your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

We must be the **fire** now

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Quote

For anyone who really saw Mabel –
who was willing to “turn aside” –
a hospital bed became a **burning bush**;
a place where this ordinary and pain-filled world
was visited by the **presence** of God.
When others saw the life in that hospital bed,
they wanted to take off their shoes.
The lid was off the terrarium.
Then the turn came,
with a catch of the breath,
and a beating of the heart,
and tears.
They were standing on holy ground.

John Ortberg

[God working through us, as in Matthew 25; we must be the sign]

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Waiting for the Dawn

[Jesus Begins to Preach]

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison ...

he went and lived in Capernaum [Galilee]...

to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,

the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles

the people living in **darkness**

have seen a **great light**;

on those living in the land

of the **shadow of death**

light has dawned.” [have you ever waited...]

From that time on Jesus began to preach,

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Matthew 4:12-1

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Comfort Light

Do you have (or have you ever had) a “comfort light”?

**Wall socket Night Light
Moving Train Lamp
Small flashlight
Christmas decoration lights**

**We need some light to get around at night,
But sometimes we just fear total darkness.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Jesus is the Light

Jesus is the **light** of the world.

John 8:12

Jesus brings that **light** to a people in the shadow of death,
awaiting the dawn.

Matthew 4:12-16

Unbelievers demand a **sign**, but Jesus is enough of a **sign**.

Matthew 12:38-39

John the Baptist witnessed the **sign** of the Holy Spirit descending on
Jesus like a dove.

John 1:29, 32-35

Jesus' absence from the grave was **proof** of His Presence.

Matthew 28:5-6

It is our purpose now
to be the **light** of the world,
and reflect / transmit His **light**.

Matthew 5:14-16

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Looking for a Sign

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him,
“Teacher, we want
to see a **sign** from you.”

He answered,
“A wicked and adulterous generation
asks for a **sign**!
But none will be given it
except the **sign**
of the prophet Jonah.

Matthew 12:38-39

In their search for God,
What people are looking for?
What do they expect?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Come and See

Philip found Nathanael and told him,

“We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law,
and about whom the prophets also wrote –
Jesus of Nazareth,
the son of Joseph.”

“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”

Nathanael asked.

“**Come and see,**” said Philip.

John 1:45-47

The “people of the land” were seriously looking for the Messiah.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Behold the Lamb of God – God's Chosen One

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said,
“**Look**, the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sin of the world!

Then John gave this testimony:

“I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove
and remain on him.

And I myself did not know him,

but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me,

‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain
is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’

I have seen and I testify
that this is God's Chosen One.”

John 1:29, 32-35

Quote

**My mother once said,
‘There must be **light**
in the valley of the shadow of death,
otherwise,
there wouldn’t be a shadow.**

Jesus will be our **light there.**

Corrie ten Boom

Parallel Processing

Murder with the Sword of Another Nation

Saul tried to kill David with the sword of the Philistines.

1 Samuel 19:17ff

David did kill Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites,

2 Samuel 12:9

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

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I have seen and I testify
that this is God's Chosen One.”

John 1:29, 32-35

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Behold the Lamb of God – God's Chosen One (1)

John's disciples told him about all these things.

Calling two of them,

he sent them to the Lord to ask,

“Are you the one who is to come,
or should we expect someone else?”

Luke 7:18-19

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Behold the Lamb of God – God's Chosen One (2)

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases,
sicknesses and evil spirits,
and gave sight to many who were blind.

So he replied to the messengers,

“Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard:

The blind receive sight,

the lame walk,

those who have leprosy are cleansed,

the deaf hear,

the dead are raised,

and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

Blessed is anyone

who does not stumble on account of me.”

Luke 7:20-23

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Behold the Lamb of God – God's Chosen One (3)

After John's messengers left,

Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John:

“What did you go out into the wilderness to see?

A reed swayed by the wind? [a gentle, easy approach?]

If not, what did you go out to see?

A man dressed in fine clothes? [led by important, rich people?]

No, those who wear expensive clothes
and indulge in luxury are in palaces.

But what did you go out to see?

A prophet?

Yes, I tell you,

and more than a prophet. [he was the precursor of Christ]

Luke 7:24-26

We must carefully guide our expectations!

Quote

**Christians are not called to tolerance:
Christians are called to love.
Toleration condescends;
Love honors.**

Scot McKnight

Parallel Processing

Christ as the Second Adam or Second Moses

**Is Jesus' temptation
the reliving of Adam and Eve's experience in Eden?
(Jesus is then cast as the Second Adam,
only this time perfectly obedient,
and thereby the pioneer of a new Adamic line.)**

**Or, which is more probable,
is Jesus' temptation by Satan
the reliving of Israel's wilderness testings?
(Jesus is then recast as the second Moses
leading his people to a new Promised Land.)**

**Scot McKnight, from
The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Come and See – That He is Risen!

The angel said to the women,
“Do not be afraid,
for I know that you are looking for Jesus,
who was crucified.

He is not here;
he has risen,
just as he said.

Come and see
the place
where he lay.

Matthew 28:5-6

God showed His Presence – through His Absence!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is God's Goodness Enough of a Sign?

Jesus struggled diligently on this earth to try to convince mankind that he was the Son of God.

When the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked for a sign, Christ was disgusted with this kind of attitude.

The Pharisees had already made up their minds about him, and they refused to believe that he had anything to do with God.

They could not recognize His Goodness.

Jesus did not meet expectations by announcing that He was the Son of God or using physical force to free Himself.

We should no longer need a special visible sign of God's Presence!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is God's Goodness Enough of a Sign?

**In an incident just prior to this (Matthew 12:9-14),
the Pharisees watched Christ heal a man with a withered hand,
and they immediately went out and plotted to kill him.**

**Their definition of good lay solely in their own interpretations,
the way they wanted Good to be.**

**To them good was obeying their tradition concerning the Sabbath,
but to heal a man of his suffering was the ultimate evil,
associated with Satan himself.**

How could they be so far off?

**The Pharisees tried again and again to trap Jesus,
hoping that He would fail,
and thus lose face (and His following)**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is God's Goodness Enough of a Sign?

We see that Christ refuses to accommodate them with a sign.

**Christ connected the awesome power of God
with his ultimate goodness for a reason;
he was not running a medicine show.**

**Christ knew that these people would not believe him
no matter what he did;
they just wanted him to slip up, to fail.**

But here I see Christ saying,

**'If you can't accept me on the basis of the good that I represent,
then a miracle or a sign will not do you any good.**

I am enough of a sign for you.'

**We must constantly check to ensure
that our attitude is not the same as the Pharisees!
We have the same potential!**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is God's Goodness Enough of a Sign?

**Are His life and character enough of a sign for us?
I certainly hope so.**

**We hear much about the use of miraculous signs today;
but I don't think we understand this point.**

**All other arguments aside,
we simply do not need the signs.**

**We now have recorded the life and teachings of Christ;
what more do we need in terms of evidence
that he is the Son of God?**

Do we see the Presence of God in the Life of Jesus?

He is the Sign!

Quote

**We humans keep looking
for a religion
that will give us access to God
without having to bother with people.**

Eugene Peterson

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is God's Goodness Enough of a Sign?

We should be able to see that Christ is the son of God through his Goodness. [We need to adjust our expectations]

Remember that Thomas needed direct contact with the hands and side of Christ before he would believe. [He needed a sign...]

In John 20.29 Jesus says, [the value of faith] **'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.'**

We must believe and draw near to God through the power of God as shown in the scriptures.

Why do we follow him?

Beyond just loving God because he has saved our souls, we must love the power of good that is the basis behind that tremendous gift.

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is God's Goodness Enough of a Sign?

**The Goodness of God
and His sacrificial love for us
must be enough of a sign for us!**

This is the ultimate sign!

**What is the core of the gospel?
Can we give it while we stand on one leg?**

**For I resolved to know nothing
while I was with you
except Jesus Christ
and him crucified.**

1 Corinthians 2:2

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

What do we expect (or want) to see?

For the time will come
when people will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires,
they will gather around them
a great number of teachers
to say

what their itching ears [can you resist an itch?]
want to hear. [We want a “yes” man]

2 Timothy 4:3

But seek first his kingdom
and his righteousness,
and all these things
will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:33

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

What do we expect (or want) to see?

**[The rich man, wanting Lazarus to warn his brothers]
[he wanted a sign]**

...for I have five brothers.

**Let him warn them,
so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'**

**“Abraham replied,
'They have Moses and the Prophets;
let them listen to them.'**

Luke 16:28-31

Moses and the Prophets were enough of a sign!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

What do we choose to believe?

The coming of the lawless one
will be in accordance with how Satan works.

He will use all sorts of displays of power
through **signs and wonders**
that serve the lie,
and all the ways that wickedness
deceives those who are perishing.

They perish
because they refused to love the truth
and so be saved.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-11

If you refuse to believe the truth, all that's left is a lie!

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

What do we expect (or want) to see?

**I would like to buy \$3 worth of God please,
not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep,
but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk
or a snooze in the sunshine.**

**I don't want enough of him to make me love a black man
or pick beets with a migrant.**

**I want ecstasy, not transformation;
I want the warmth of the womb, not a new birth.
I want a pound of the eternal in a paper sack.**

I would like to buy \$3 dollars worth of God please.

Wilbur Rees

Are we ready to fully embrace the completeness of God?

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The Four Phases of Spiritual Motivation (HSL)

- 1) Fear – of Hell**
(very little understanding of Grace)
- 2) Guilt – for sins**
(more understanding of Grace; but trying to make up for our sins)
- 3) Reward – streets of gold, no pain or tears, etc.**
(selfish)
- 4) For Love and Goodness**
(finally getting the real meaning)

Why do you want to go to Heaven?

Is God's Goodness Enough?

Would we be glad to just be a doorkeeper there? Psalm 84:10

Quote

**It remains a startling story
to those who never understand
that the men and women
who are truly filled with light
are those who have gazed deeply
into the darkness
of their imperfect existence.**

Brennan Manning

**We need to see ourselves as empty
before we can truly be filled.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

What do we choose to believe?

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands.

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything.

Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.

God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

Acts 17:24-27

**God is not aloof or at a distance, and wants us to reach out to Him.
He is within easy reach.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

The Four Phases of Spiritual Motivation (HSL)

- 1) Fear – of Hell**
(very little understanding of Grace)
- 2) Guilt – for sins**
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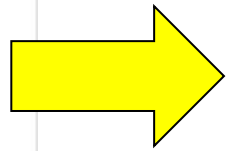
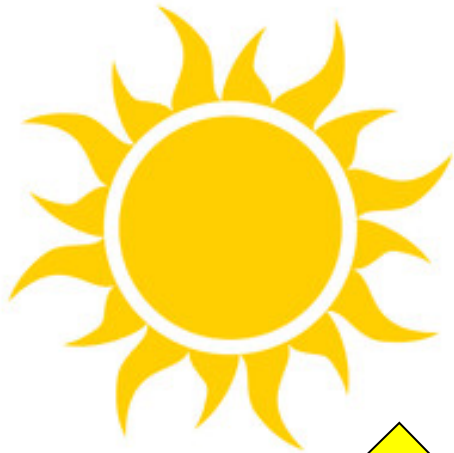
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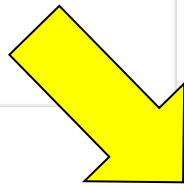
God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Absorption and Emission of Good



Phosphorescence:
absorption,
then delayed re-emission
(many seconds)



Fluorescence:
absorption,
then almost immediate re-emission
at a longer wavelength



We must absorb God's Goodness and Re-emit it in the World

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Absorption and Emission of Good

You are the **light** of the world.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a **lamp**
and put it under a bowl.

Instead they put it on its stand,
and it gives **light** to everyone in the house.

Matthew 5:14-15

We must absorb God's Goodness and Re-emit it in the World

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Soaked in Goodness

Have you ever been soaked?

For instance, after running through the rain?

Living by the gospel of grace

leads us into what Teilhard de Chardin called ...
a God-filled, Christ-soaked universe.

Brennan Manning

Make atonement for the Altar and consecrate it for seven days; the Altar will become **soaked** in holiness—anyone who so much as touches the Altar will become holy... [utensils, such as we are] Consecrate them so they'll be **soaked** in holiness, so that anyone who so much as touches them will become holy.

Exodus 29:37 & 30:29 (The Message)

We must soak in God's Goodness
and squeeze ourselves into the World

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Kenosis: The Emptying of Good onto Mankind

**We must be squeezed out,
and emptied;
to let the Goodness of God fill us.**

**My sacrifice, O God,
is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.**

Psalm 51:17

**Christ "emptied himself" [ASV and many other versions]
to save us –
and then glorified His as Lord.**

**To Soak in God's Goodness,
we must empty ourselves;
then we must squeeze (empty) ourselves into the World**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

You spill what you are filled with

When you are preparing to present a message:
you soak (steep) yourself in the information,
then you are ready.

Similarly, you act based on what you are filled with.

No good tree bears bad fruit,
nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.
Each tree is recognized by its own fruit.
People do not pick figs from thornbushes,
or grapes from briars.
A good man brings good things
out of **the good stored up in his heart**,
and an evil man brings evil things
out of the evil stored up in his heart.

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Luke 6:43-47

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We must be Careful about what we fill ourselves with

When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.

Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.'

When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.

Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there.

And the final condition of that person is worse than the first.

That is how it will be with this wicked generation.

Matthew 12:43-46

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We must be Careful about what we fill ourselves with

Do not get drunk on wine,
which leads to debauchery.

Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**, [following is how this is expressed!]
speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs
from the Spirit.

Sing and make music
from your heart
to the Lord,
always giving thanks to God the Father
for everything,
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:18-33

We must be filled with the Spirit (Presence) of God

Quote

**You are growing a garden in your heart,
some things you wish to increase,
and others you need to weed out.**

Either way requires caretaking.

Henry Cloud

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We must be Careful about what we fill ourselves with

The Pharisees accused the man born blind that he had been “steeped in sin”, and indeed we are! [steeped, similar to soaked]

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the LORD.

**“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.**

Isaiah 1:18

This is a type of the extremely permanent effect of sin upon the soul. The word really means “a double dye,” or “a repeated dipping in dye” until the substance is thoroughly and fully dyed. Thus the Lord is telling us that no matter how deep the sinner may be dyed in his sins (sin-soaked), the Lord is able to blot them out, and to make him white and clean.

Walter L. Wilson

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We must be Careful about what we soak up



How many remember the Palmolive soap commercial,
“You’re soaking in it!”
[leave your hand in because it is good]

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We have a “God-shaped Hole” in our selves

What else does this craving, and this helplessness,
proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness,
of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace?

This he tries in vain
to fill with everything around him,
seeking in things that are not there
the help he cannot find in those that are,
though none can help,
since this infinite abyss
can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object;
in other words by **God** himself.”

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* VII(425)

This hole can only be truly filled with God Himself

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We must Fill ourselves with God

I pray that out of his glorious riches
he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit
in your inner being,
so **that Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people,
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep
is the love of Christ,
and to know this love that surpasses knowledge –
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.
Ephesians 3:16-19

**We are all filled with something: is it mostly God or mostly self?
Can you imagine being filled with the 'fullness' of God?**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We must Fill ourselves with God

Consider yourself a sponge,
completely squeezed out and emptied,
and then filled with God.

Completely saturated,
those who touch you
have the Goodness of God transferred to them.



God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Good Fruit will be Inevitable and Obvious

**No good tree bears bad fruit,
nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.**

Each tree is recognized by its own fruit.

Luke 6:43-44

**The sins of some are obvious,
reaching the place of judgment ahead of them;
the sins of others trail behind them.**

**In the same way, good deeds are obvious,
and even those that are not obvious
cannot remain hidden forever.**

1 Timothy 5:24-25

**Satan, disguising himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14),
Is not actually producing good fruit, but bad.**

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We Must Be an Open Conduit, and not Restrict the Flow

We have spoken **freely** to you, Corinthians,
and **opened wide** our hearts to you.

We are not **withholding** our affection from you,
but you are **withholding** yours from us. [restricting the flow]

As a fair exchange – I speak as to my children –
open wide your hearts also.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

Do not **quench** the Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Goodness (Godness) should flow freely from us (unconsciously)!
So much so, our right hand does not know what our left is doing!
(Matthew 6:3)

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We Must "Overflow"

Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said,
rivers of living water will flow from within them."

[we are not just be filled, but let it flow through us to others]

John 7:38

May the Lord make your love increase and **overflow**
for each other and for everyone else,
just as ours does for you.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

One of our purposes must be to lift up the spirits of others.

And let us consider [plan] how we may spur one another on
toward love and good deeds...
encouraging one another...

Hebrews 10:24-25

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

We Must Recharge Daily

**Consider yourself a battery,
that must be recharged regularly;
some must be completely drained prior to this
so that they provide the full length of charge.**

Quote

**The kingdom is not
an exclusive, well-trimmed suburb
with snobbish rules
about who can live there.**

Brennan Manning

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

Our God-Shaped Hole: Being Filled with God and Good

Absorption and Emission of Radiation:

Fluorescence: near-term emphasis of the radiance of Christ

Phosphorescence: long-term light for times of darkness

(must re-charge - like batteries - during the day to prepare)

Being soaked through and through:

Squeezed out like a sponge, and letting the Spirit fill us

We hold that within, but we transfer to anyone we touch

We were “steeped” in sin, but Christ washes us clean

We can be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God

Goodness should flow naturally from us:

As good fruit does from a good tree

We must open the valve in our heart so that love flows freely

We must be the transfer mechanism for the World to see God

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

We all want God to Rescue us

David describes it in Psalm 18: [What a Vision!]

The Lord is his 1) strength, 2) rock, 3) fortress, 4) deliverer, 5) refuge, 6) shield, 7) horn of salvation, 8) stronghold

He is saved from 1) enemies, 2) cords of death, 3) torrents of destruction, 4) cords of the grave, 5) coiled around me, 6) snares of death

God 1) parted the heavens, 2) mounted the cherubim and flew, 3) shot His arrows and scattered the enemy

Results: 1) The earth trembled and quaked, 2) the foundations of the mountains shook, 3) the valleys of the sea were exposed, 4) the foundations of the earth laid bare

Out of the **brightness** of his **Presence** clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning. Psalm 18:12

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

We all want God to Rescue us

**What David describes it in Psalm 18
Is the radical intervention by God
representative of God
sending His Son to die
for mankind.**

**David sang to the Lord the words of this song
when the Lord delivered him
from the hand of all his enemies
and from the hand of Saul.**

2 Samuel 22:1

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

Examples of Being Trapped

- a well (Joseph, Jeremiah)
- a cave (David)
- a fish (Jonah); God was Present with him while he was in the fish
- a pit, or den (Daniel); God stopped the mouths of the lions
- a fiery furnace (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)
- an enemy army (Elisha and his servant, God showing His army)
- an enemy army (Hezekiah spreading problem before the Lord)
- prison, Jeremiah and other prophets; Peter, James, Paul
- marriage or bad partnership (deliverance) [T]
- a grave (Christ)

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

Other Examples

- **mutiny (Moses, David)**
- **giant (David)**
- **desert (Moses and the burning bush)**
- **captivity (Israelites / Exous)**
- **journey into the unknown (Abram)**
- **storm (disciples); when Peter began to sink, he realized how close His savior was (Warren Wiersbe)**
- **sickness and loss (Job)**

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

We may think we are Alone

Sometimes there is the appearance or feeling of being Alone.

God may sometimes appear to be absent,
as when Christ was crucified

(Psalm 22: "My God, My God,
why have you forsaken me?")

The name "Yahweh-Shammah"
means "The Lord is There" (Ezekiel 48:35)

"And remember,
I am with you always,
to the end of the age"

Matthew 28:20

God shows His Presence in
prophesying, tongues, encounters, battles, births, angels...

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

Job

**God was present and watching
while Job was being persecuted;
We must realize the higher level –
not goods or relationships in this present time.**

**God was with Job,
but did not protect the children
though Job prayed for them.**

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

Stilling the Storm

In both of these storm events,
God was in control,
even though to many of those
who experienced them firsthand
may have believed God was far away.

He was present,
even in the storm
(there He was in the boat),
even though "Jesus would have passed them by"
when He walked on the water.

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

Is He only Present when He Solves our Problems?

We think,

“if God loves us,

**why does He not remove every obstacle in our path,
every problem in our lives?”**

**God did not instantly remove the Canaanites (giants, etc)
from the promised land –**

**He made it a journey,
not an instant arrival.**

**God was present with Job,
in the midst of his great losses (and gains).**

**God gave David success wherever he went,
but there was still much sadness and bloodshed in his life.**

**God is Present with us,
whether He gives us physical victory or not!**

Quote

**The true Creator and Ordainer of nature
must be supposed to act as much through natural processes
as in any other way,
and God is not to be discerned solely
in the ill-understood aspects of the world.**

John Polkinghorne

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

Consider times that God was Present but did not Deliver Immediately

Job – did not let suffering cause him to lose sight of the “core”

Christ – suffered for all; died on the cross for us

Paul

described the “core”: Jesus Christ and Him crucified

prayed three times about his thorn in the flesh (sufficient grace)

he was a top Pharisee, but he also suffered in many ways

James – executed for his faith

Think of Job's story as a parallel to Christ's:

- 1) noted as special by God**
- 2) attack by Satan**
- 3) suffering and apparent separation from God**
- 4) Satan fails**
- 5) God restores and blesses;**
the end result is better than before for man

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

The Rules of Engagement

**Life can be likened to playing cards;
they come out at random.**

**Our problems in life are the results of man's sin (in general),
and many times our own particular sin.**

**God lets the game run;
but He enables us to play the cards we are dealt
with the best results
(know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em),
and He often acts directly.**

**The question is, do we enjoy the game
even though we don't win every hand?**

**PDE: There is a physical level and spiritual level of the game
that are inextricably linked together.**

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

What is our True Reward?

**Would you embrace the “Greatest Story in the World”
if there were no afterlife?**

**What if we had a free choice between this
and hedonism (eat, drink, and be merry)?**

Which way would we choose to go?

**Do you agree with Goodness
and embrace it with all of your heart?**

**What life work would you choose,
even if you had to do it for free?**

God's Presence In Bad Situations

How Does God Show His Presence?

What if we got everything we wanted?

**Consider the idea of manufacturing cash
as you need it;
this is self-destructive.**

**Somehow this reminds me of our laziness
in living for God;
we want a free lunch,
but this cannot be sustained,
sort of like a pyramid scheme.**

**If we must magically produced cash whenever we wanted it,
what would we ever produce?**

Quote

**Jesus did not call us
to be magnificent chandeliers
for people to admire.**

**He called us to be a single bulb
in a back hall
to keep people from breaking their necks
when they go to the bathroom.**

Haddon W. Robinson

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Where is God Present?

We are hard pressed on every side,
but not crushed;
perplexed,
but not in despair;
persecuted,
but not abandoned;
struck down,
but not destroyed.

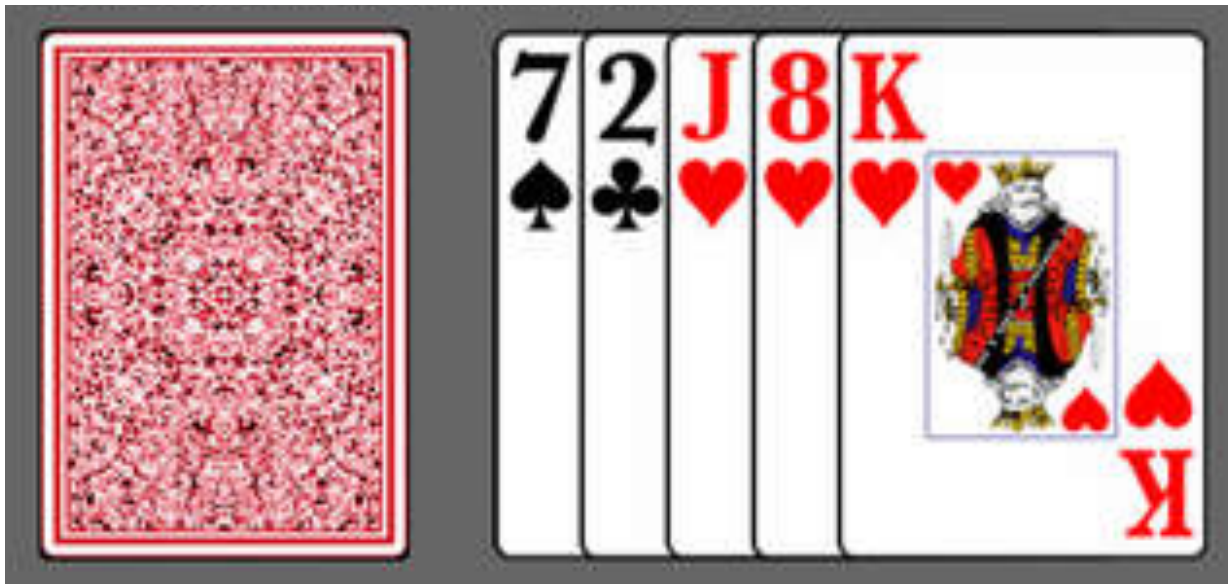
2 Corinthians 4:8-9

God is Present in our Struggles

God's Presence Through the Ages

How Does God Show His Presence?

God is always Present as a Comforter (John 14)
and Advisor (John 16:13)



Consider:

- Our cards are dealt as they are; God does not stack the deck.
- He helps us to make the best play (and sometimes intercedes).
- We lose some and win some, but are ultimately a winner.
- Knowing that God is Present, we should be able to enjoy the game.

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- Preparation for God's Presence
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- The Presence of an Opponent
- The Power of God's Presence
- Our Response to God's Presence
- The Ultimate Presence in Heaven
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How we Develop an Sense of His Presence

Our Sense of God's Presence

is facilitated by

- 1) Awareness,
- 2) Study,
- 3) Worship,
- 4) Prayer,
- 5) Practice, and
- 6) Relationship

We need to feel His Presence;

for instance:

do we feel that we are praying into nothingness?

Sometimes we only 'feel'

a stormcloud above our heads.

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Waiting for the Dawn (Quote)

Then we sat in awed silence
as rays of light illuminated
the Crayola colors of the canyon.

It was like ultraviolet light
revealing the Creator's fingerprints.

The more of God's creation I experience,
the more I am convinced of this:
awed silence
in the presence of divine beauty
is a form of worship
that is often deeper and truer than sung words.

Mark Batterson

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Shekinah (Quote)

**'Shekinah' is a Hebrew word
that refers to a collective vision
that brings together dispersed fragments of divinity.
It is usually understood as a light-disseminating presence,
bringing an awareness of God
to a time and place where God is not expected to be...**

**It's not a public spectacle
but more like a selective showing at God's discretion
to encourage or affirm,
to reveal a reality of something
that we do not yet have eyes to see.**

Eugene Peterson

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Where is God Present?

There are different “spaces” where He is present;
in physical space,
beyond space as we know it,
and in our hearts.

We meet God
in each of these spaces.

Consider the Trinity:
Beyond the Physical: Father
In the Physical: Son
In the Heart: Holy Spirit

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Where is God Present?

The view of the disciples, before Jesus was crucified and risen:

And the Father who sent me
has himself testified concerning me.

You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,
nor does his word dwell in you,
for you do not believe the one he sent.

John 5:37-38

The view of John, later:

No one has ever seen God;
but if we love one another,
God lives in us
and his love is made complete in us.

He should be seen in us!

1 John 4:12

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Where is God Present?

The Lord your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.

He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing.”

Zephaniah 3:17

Have you ever felt (or heard) God singing over you?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Perception of God's Presence

What is your first memory of feeling God's Presence?

My experience building a log cabin in the back yard

...

What is your "Story of Glory"?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Perception of God's Presence

Opening a window into the spiritual world

**We are always in the Presence of God;
we must open a porthole or window in our minds, though,
to actually “see” Him.**

**We perceive (see) God in our hearts and minds
(our “mind’s eye”) –
He is not invisible there.**

**He is visible in “spiritual space,”
but we must be looking for Him.**

**We must poke our head up into the spiritual realm to see Him.
We have to keep our head above the waters –
Too many times we are submerged in the world
and cannot see.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Limited Human Perception Equipment

We have a low-format, low-sensitivity, low-dynamic range viewer.

**We have difficulty making out the "shape" of God,
and we find Him too bright to absorb directly.**

**We need expand our hearts and minds as much as possible
to be able to contain even a small part of God's glory.**

**And no one pours new wine into old wineskins.
Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins,
and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.
No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."**

Mark 2:22

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Seeking God's Presence is Different from Seeking Man's Presence

No need to:

- 1) travel to a specific place
- 2) make an appointment or schedule a time
- 3) learn a language
- 4) make a "donation"
- 5) gain approval of "gatekeepers"
- 6) dress up or cleanse ourselves

PDE

We tend to think of God as a localized being with spatial limitations.

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Using our Senses

All five senses mentioned in a passage:

They have mouths, but cannot speak,
[most closely associated with taste]
eyes, but cannot see.

They have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but cannot smell.

They have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but cannot walk,
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.

Psalm 115:5-7

Smell: Pleasing aroma of sacrifices

Vision: Heavens declare the glory of the Lord

Taste: scroll that tasted like honey

Touch: woman with issue of blood touching Jesus

Hearing: trumpet; hearing the word (or not)

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness (of little things)

Remember Elisha looking for God,
not “seeing” Him in the big things
(powerful wind, earthquake, and fire)
but in the gentle whisper.

Ty

We must weigh
the many times
God gives us small things we want
with the times
we do not get the big things we want.

We should prayer for all things – big and small!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness

**If we walk into an artist's studio
and saw beautiful paintings and sculptures, etc.,
we would have no doubt that an artist was nearby.**

**Yet we are desensitized to the Presence of God
as evidenced by His creation all around us.**

PDE

**The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.**

Psalm 19:1-4

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness – even with this decaying universe

**We become cynics
if we judge the Creator [solely]
by the way the world is now.**

**Leonardo da Vinci's painting The Last Supper
is considered one of the greatest works of art in the world.**

**Faded and marred now,
the appearance of the picture is disappointing;
it doesn't seem beautiful
unless you remind yourself
of how it once appeared.**

**The universe is amazing and beautiful as we see it now,
but it is a pale representation of how God originally made it.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Job's Difficulty in Seeing God

**When he passes me, I cannot see him
when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.**

Job 9:11

**If only I knew where to find him;
if only I could go to his dwelling!
I would state my case before him...**

**But if I go to the east, he is not there;
if I go to the west, I do not find him.
When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;
when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.**

**But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me,
I will come forth as gold.**

Job 23:3-10

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Job's Awareness of Seeing God Eventually

And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh **I will see God;**
I myself will see him with my own eyes –
I, and not another.

How my heart yearns within me!

Job 19:26-27

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

God Confronts Job Directly

Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm.

He said:

“Who is this that obscures my plans
with words without knowledge?

Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.

Job 38:1-3

Job may have felt that he got more than he bargained for!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Moses had an aborted chance to see God physically

The Lord replied,

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

And the Lord said, “I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence...

But ... you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Exodus 33:14, 18-23

Moses had more interaction with God than any Old Testament leader. But He still wanted to “see” God.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Elijah had an aborted chance to see God physically

The Lord said,

“Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

1 Kings 19:11-13

Both Moses and Elijah were able to see the Son of God on the Mount of Transfiguration.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

The Psalmist Sees God Everywhere

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens,
you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths,
you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:7-10

Note the contrast to the expression of Job on not being able to find God.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

[continuation of Jesus' analysis of His disciples' thinking]

**You study the Scriptures diligently
because you think that in them
you have eternal life.**

**These are the very Scriptures
that testify about me,
yet you refuse to come to me
to have life.**

John 5:39-40

They were studying to save themselves (but not to know God)

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study - We must Pursue God

The Lord is with you
when you are with him.

If you **seek him**,
he will be found by you,
but if you forsake him,
he will forsake you.

John 5:39-40

Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.

Isaiah 55:6

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who **seeks him**;

Lamentations 3:25

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study - We must Pursue God

But if from there
you seek the Lord your God,
you will find him if you **seek him**
with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 4:29

And without faith
it is impossible to please God,
because anyone who comes to him
must believe that he exists
and that he rewards
those who **earnestly seek him.**

Hebrews 11:6

The Lord is **near** to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.

Psalms 145:18

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How we Develop an Sense of His Presence

**Our Sense of God's Presence
is facilitated by**

- 1) Awareness,
- 2) Study,
- 3) Worship,
- 4) Prayer,
- 5) Practice / Service, and
- 6) Relationship

**We need to feel His Presence;
for instance:**

do we feel that we are praying into nothingness?

**Sometimes we only 'feel'
a stormcloud above our heads.**

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Awareness: Remapping our Brain (PDE)

Consider accounts (like in the book Breaking Through) about folks who lost one sense (like sight) and somehow developed significantly increased acuity in other senses (by mapping the brain differently).

The blind learn to rely on hearing more and can sense things through their hearing that we, with some physiology, never sense.

We need to “re-map” our brain to better perceive God!

Russ: We tend to find what we are looking for!
Remember story of looking for lost coin under the streetlight

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Our Limited Human Perception Equipment

We have a low-format, low-sensitivity, low-dynamic range viewer.

**We have difficulty making out the "shape" of God,
and we find Him too bright to absorb directly.**

**We need expand our hearts and minds as much as possible
to be able to contain even a small part of God's glory.**

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and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.
No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."**

Mark 2:22

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Open our Minds

**We must keep our minds open
for the possibility of the discovery of truth.
Like a steel trap that is armed...
Not like a screen door in a submarine!**

**Gerald McDermott told the story of when he as a student,
was taken to an art museum by a teacher
who gazed in rapture at the beautiful art.
Gerald himself kept looking at his watch
wanting to leave as soon as possible.
Later, of course, he gained an appreciation of art.**

**We cannot learn / understand much
about the infinite nature and complexity of God,
but we can grasp the core:
that Christ died and was crucified for us!**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Fight the Blindness

**There is none so blind
as the one who will not see!**

John Heywood

**Jesus said,
“For judgment I have come into this world,
so that the blind will see
and those who see will become blind.”**

John 9:39

**For this reason they could not believe, because,
as Isaiah says elsewhere:**

**He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts...**

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

John 12:39-41

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: We Need to Keep God in Focus

The meeting with Christ is in sharp focus;
the meeting with the Spirit is in softer focus. ‘

Spirit is experienced as inspiration,
Word as revelation,’ is Taylor's way of putting it.

John Polkinghorne

God is perhaps in an even softer focus,
but the evidence of His existence is clear.

The Son and the Spirit point to Him.

Anyone who has seen me
has seen the Father.

John 14:9

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Job's Difficulty in Seeing God

**When he passes me, I cannot see him
when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.**

Job 9:11

**If only I knew where to find him;
if only I could go to his dwelling!
I would state my case before him...**

**But if I go to the east, he is not there;
if I go to the west, I do not find him.
When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;
when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.**

**But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me,
I will come forth as gold.**

Job 23:3-10

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Job's Awareness of Seeing God Eventually

And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh **I will see God**;
I myself will see him with my own eyes –
I, and not another.

How my heart yearns within me!

Job 19:26-27

Job knows that he will see God
when he dies.

The Son and the Spirit point to Him.

Fanny Crosby, author of more than 8000 religious hymns,
was blind from shortly after birth.

When asked if she wished she could see, she said no...
and she looked forward to the first person she would see
when she died: Jesus Christ!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: God Confronts Job Directly

Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm.

He said:

“Who is this that obscures my plans
with **words without knowledge?**

Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.

Job 38:1-3

Job may have felt that he got more than he bargained for!

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Awareness: Guard Against Distractions (PDE)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.**

And let us run with **perseverance** the race marked out for us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **Set your minds on things above**, not on earthly things....

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Colossians 3:1-5

We must keep our focus on God.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Fight the Blindness

**There is none so blind
as the one who will not see!**

John Heywood

**Jesus said,
“For judgment I have come into this world,
so that the blind will see
and those who see will become blind.” [being distracted]
John 9:39**

**For this reason they could not believe, because,
as Isaiah says elsewhere:**

**He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts...**

**Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.
John 12:39-41**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: God Confronts Job Directly

It is noteworthy
that when Job finally stood before God
he was completely satisfied and at rest,
though not a single one of his questions
about his sufferings
had been answered.

His questions were good questions.
He did not sin in asking them.

But in the light of God himself they were simply pointless.
They just drop away and lose their interest.

Dallas Willard

Job was Presented with What was Truly Important!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Moses had an aborted chance to see God physically

The Lord replied,

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Then Moses said, “Now show me your glory.”

And the Lord said, “I will cause **all my goodness** to **pass** in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the Lord, in your presence...

But ... you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”

Then the Lord said, “There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.”

Exodus 33:14, 18-23

Moses had more interaction with God than any Old Testament leader. But He still wanted to “see” God.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Elijah had an aborted chance to see God physically

The Lord said,

“Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

When Elijah heard it, **he pulled his cloak over his face** and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

1 Kings 19:11-13

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: Moses and Elijah

**Neither Moses or Elijah
were able to “handle”
the overwhelming glory of God.**

**God had to limit the manifestation of Himself on earth,
covering Moses in the cleft of the rock;
and Elijah covered himself
before God passed by.**

**Each just got to see a “piece” of God
that they could handle.**

**But both Moses and Elijah
were able to see the Son of God
as the physical representation of God
on the Mount of Transfiguration.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness: The Psalmist Sees God Everywhere

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence? [not that he wanted to]

If I go up to the heavens,
you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths,
you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me, [God is always there]
your right hand will hold me fast.

Psalm 139:7-10

Note the contrast to the expression of Job
on not being able to find God.

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How we Develop an Sense of His Presence

Our Sense of God's Presence

is facilitated by

- 1) Awareness,
- 2) Study,
- 3) Worship,
- 4) Prayer,
- 5) Practice / Service, and
- 6) Relationship

We need to feel His Presence;

for instance:

do we feel that we are praying into nothingness?

Sometimes we only 'feel'

a stormcloud above our heads.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

[continuation of Jesus' analysis of His disciples' thinking:
You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,
nor does his word dwell in you,
for you do not believe the one he sent. John 3:37a-38]

You study the Scriptures diligently
because you think that in them
you have eternal life.

These are the very Scriptures
that testify about me,
yet you refuse to come to me [have a relationship with Him]
to have life.

John 5:39-40

They were studying to save themselves (but not to know God)

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study: We must Pursue God

The Lord is with you
when you are with him.

If you **seek him**,
he will be found by you,
but if you forsake him,
he will forsake you.

1 Chronicles 28:9b

Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.

Isaiah 55:6

The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who **seeks him**;

Lamentations 3:25

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study: We must Pursue God

But if from there
you seek the Lord your God,
you will find him if you **seek him**
with all your heart and with all your soul. [complete focus]
Deuteronomy 4:29

And without faith
it is impossible to please God,
because anyone who comes to him
must believe that he exists
and that he rewards
those who **earnestly seek him.** [complete focus]
Hebrews 11:6

The Lord is **near** to all who call on him,
to all who call on him **in truth.** [see John 4:24] Psalm 145:18

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness – Windows into the Presence of God [PDE]

[the beauty of the universe]

**The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.**

Psalm 19:1

Note on seeing the recent blue blood moon eclipse

[music / art / life]

[godly people]

Can we also sense the presence of Satan through evil people?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness – Will we be Satisfied with His Presence? [PDE]

**Will we be “fully satisfied” in heaven
or will we always have an insatiable thirst for God?**

**We will always want to engage in the relationship,
not because God does not fulfill us,
but rather because God's infinite nature
always leaves more
to be explored, experienced, and discovered.**

This garden of paradise [the Garden of Eden] where Adam and Eve lived was not a place where humans had no needs or desires. Instead, it was a place where all of their needs and desires were met by the God who created them.

The same is true in our lives. You and I have cravings that are designed to be satisfied by our Creator.

David Platt

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness - We must Pursue God

You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I **thirst** for you,
my whole being **longs** for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.
I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.

Because **your love is better than life,**
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

Jesus is the water of
life; a continually
flowing river /
fountain of water.

God wants a
continual, growing,
never-ending
relationship

Psalm 63:1-5

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study: we must pursue God (1)

Hunting for sea turtles: They are amazing animals, and finding them in their native habitat is awesome! We take our cameras and launch out into the ocean, and we have had some startling encounters.

Once we were peering through some murky water, with it swirling with distractions, and suddenly there was this huge turtle right before us! It's hard to jump back when you are swimming in water!

Our search for God is similar to our search for sea turtles. They, like God, are indeed there even if we cannot always see them. If you if you look in the right places, in the right ways, you may be able to a head poking up above the water. As with rainbows, you must put yourself in the right position to see them.

If you really want to see sea turtles, though, you must don the snorkel or scuba gear, get into the water, and go searching for an extended period of time. You must pursue watchfully: waiting, hoping, searching - and then you receive the final reward!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study: we must pursue God (2)



How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study: we must pursue God (3)

Many people aren't aware at all of the presence of God and miss Him entirely. They may try to find Him in a church, but cannot get the level of excitement they need to sustain their interest. It is like seeing a sea turtle in an aquarium or in museum. There is something so very special about seeing them "live" in their native habitat.

Sometimes you need someone to help you watch and share the joy of discovery.

So, go out and look! The hunt is on!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study – we must not be distracted



the invisible **gorilla**

Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons

Selective attention test...

A group of people bouncing a basketball to each other.

The viewer's task:

**count the number of times people wearing white
pass the ball.**

**Most people concentrate so hard on the task,
they never realize that a man in a gorilla suit walks through!**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study - We must Pursue God

“I will send my messenger,
who will prepare the way before me.

Then suddenly
the Lord you are **seeking**
will come to his temple;
the messenger of the **covenant**,
whom you desire,
will come,”
says the Lord Almighty.

Malachi 3:1

Note: Malachi means “my messenger”

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study - We Open our Minds to Recognize God

Consider the message:

GODISNOWHERE

Does it mean: GOD IS NOWHERE?

Or: GOD IS NOW HERE?

People look at the same Creation and choose what to believe

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study - We Open our Minds to Recognize God

Moses said to God,

“Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them,
‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’
and they ask me,
‘What is his name?’

Then what shall I tell them?”

God said to Moses, “**I am who I am.**

This is what you are to say to the Israelites:

‘I am has sent me to you.’”

God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites,

‘The Lord, the God of your fathers – [legacy]

the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob -
has sent me to you.’

[the people knew enough to cry out to this God]

Exodus 3:13-15

We should perhaps read this: “**I am Here!**”

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.

[imprinting the word]

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

[the basis of God's creation]

No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, '**Know the Lord,**'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.
For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."

Hebrews 8:10-12

How can we feel God's Presence without knowing God?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

Concerning this salvation, the prophets,
who spoke of the grace that was to come to you,
searched intently and with the greatest care,
trying to find out the time and circumstances
to which the Spirit of Christ in them
was pointing
when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah
and the glories that would follow.

1 Peter 1:10-11

Here the focus of the study
was the Grace of God through Christ.

It seems that knowledge of God was somewhat assumed
by those studying.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

Do your best to present yourself to God

as one approved,

a worker who does not need to be ashamed

and who **correctly handles the word of truth.**

2 Timothy 2:15

KJV: "**Study** to show yourself approved"

We need to set our minds to capture thoughts
– something like a steel trap or snare
(this is connected to "awareness" as well).

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

**He says,
“Be still,
and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”**

Psalm 46:10

**We must stop the whirlwind of life,
and meditate on God.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Study

The precepts of the Lord are right,
giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the Lord are **radiant**,
giving light to the eyes.

Psalm 19:8

“Is not my word like **fire**,”
declares the Lord,
“and like a hammer
that breaks a rock in pieces?”

Jeremiah 23:29

God's word is energetic and powerful!

Think of the radiance of God, expressed in His Truth

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How we Develop an Sense of His Presence

Our Sense of God's Presence

is facilitated by

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- 4) Prayer,
- 5) Practice / Service, and
- 6) Relationship

We need to feel His Presence;

for instance:

do we feel that we are praying into nothingness?

Sometimes we only 'feel'

a stormcloud above our heads.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Worship is a means of drawing close to the Presence of God.

**For instance, the Psalms are all about
discussing the Presence of God
(Is He there or not?
If He is there, is He listening?)**

**The Psalms exhibit
the full range of emotions
from sadness to joy,
from weakness to strength!**

**Jesus went to the mountain alone
many times to be with God
and express His feelings.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Worship involves striving to become like God

[Tithes / Giving] You must not eat in your own towns the tithe of your grain and new wine and olive oil, or the firstborn of your herds and flocks, or whatever you have vowed to give, or your freewill offerings or special gifts.

Instead, you are to eat them in the presence of the LORD your God at the place the LORD your God will choose - you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites from your towns - and you are to rejoice before the LORD your God in everything you put your hand to. **Deuteronomy 12:17-18**

Tabernacle, then Temple, then Spirit and Truth Anywhere!

God intended to meet with us on the common ground of Goodness; taking care of those who were helpless is a part of that.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Group Worship brings the Presence of God as well

For where **two or three** gather in my name,
there am I with them.”

Matthew 18:20

‘every matter may be established
by the testimony of **two or three** witnesses.’

Matthew 18:16

Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven,
and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Again, truly I tell you that if **two of you** on earth agree
about anything they ask for,
it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.

Matthew 18:18-19

Each of these “two” passages are in the same chapter of Matthew.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (1)

**My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?**

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

My God,
I cry out by day,
but you do not answer,
by night,
but I find no rest.

God had heard the
Psalmist's cries, and
was close, even though
it was not "sensed"

We all want immediate
relief...

Psalm 22:1-2

Remember that David felt this absence of God first;
Christ echoed it...

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

Seeking God's Presence is Different from Seeking Man's Presence

No need to:

- 1) travel to a specific place**
- 2) make an appointment or schedule a time**
- 3) learn a language**
- 4) make a "donation"**
- 5) gain approval of "gatekeepers"**
- 6) dress up or cleanse ourselves**

PDE

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (1)

**My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?**

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

My God,
I cry out by day,
but you do not answer,
by night,
but I find no rest.

God had heard the
Psalmist's cries, and
was close, even though
it was not "sensed"

We all want immediate
relief... but we must wait

Psalm 22:1-2

Remember that David felt this absence of God first;
Christ echoed it...

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Forsaken?

[talking to his disciples]

**A time is coming and in fact has come upon you will be scattered,
each to your own home.**

You will leave me all alone.

**Yet I am not alone,
for my Father is with me.**

Psalm 22:1-2

**About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”
(which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).**

Matthew 27:46

Consider the Contrast in Speaking of God's Presence

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

The arm of the Lord is not too short!

The Lord answered Moses,
“Is the Lord’s arm **too short**?
Now you will see whether or not
what I say will come true for you.”

Numbers 11:23

When I came, why was there no one?
When I called, why was there no one to answer?
Was my arm **too short** to deliver you?
Do I lack the strength to rescue you?

Isaiah 50:2

Surely the arm of the Lord is not **too short** to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.

Isaiah 59:1

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (2)

**Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.**

**In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted
and you delivered them.**

**To you they cried out
and were saved;
in you they trusted
and were not put to shame.**

Psalm 22:3-5

A reflection on God's Greatness

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (3)

But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone,
despised by the people.

All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults,
shaking their heads.

“He trusts in the Lord,” they say,
“let the Lord rescue him.

Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him.”

Psalm 22:6-8

There is scorn from others, who sarcastically call on God to help.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (4)

Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you,
even at my mother's breast.

From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother's womb
you have been my God.

Do not be **far** from me,
for trouble is **near**
and there is no one to help.

Psalm 22:6-8

He has Worshipped God from Birth

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (5)

**Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
Roaring lions that tear their prey
open their mouths wide against me.**

**I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.**

**My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.**

**My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.**

Psalm 22:12-15

He is Surrounded by Enemies

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (6)

**Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircles me;
they pierce my hands and my feet.**

**All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat over me.**

**They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.**

Psalm 22:16-18

He is Surrounded by Enemies

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (7)

But you, Lord, **do not be far from me.**
You are my strength;
come quickly to help me.

Deliver me from the sword,
my precious life
from the power of the dogs.

Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

Psalm 22:19-21

He Prays for God's Presence

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (8)

**I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly I will praise you.**

You who fear the Lord, praise him!

All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!

Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!

Psalm 22:19-20

He will Proclaim God's Presence to the People

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 (9)

**For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.**

Psalm 22:21

Those who heard Jesus would know He would be considering the entire psalm – which resolves the dilemma.

God does Listen and Shows His Presence

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 22 - Summary

**In time of great trouble and despair,
the author has the feeling of being forsaken by God.**

There is a reflection on God's Greatness.

There is scorn from others, who sarcastically call on God to help.

He has worshipped God from Birth.

He is surrounded by Enemies.

He Prays for God's Presence.

He will Proclaim God's Presence to the People

God does Listen and Shows His Presence.

Though God may seem to be absent, He is indeed Present.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

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How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 23 (1)

The Lord is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down
in green pastures,
he leads me beside
quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along
the right paths
for his name's sake. [PDE (Italian) "for the love of His Name"]
[this is for us and God] **Psalm 23:1-3**

The Lord is with the Psalmist,
leading him, **Present** with him,
helping him and guiding him.
"**Presence**" is a part of every line!

This is like the "flip" side of the previous Psalm

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 23 (2)

Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for **you are with me**;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4

Look at the intimacy and closeness described here.
The Lord is **“Present”** even in dark times.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 23 (3)

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Psalm 23:5

The Lord is also **“Present”** even in good times,
Taking care of us, protecting us, honoring us, and filling us.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 23 (4)

Surely your goodness and love
will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Psalm 23:6

The Lord is “**Present**” all of our lives,
even when we don't fully understand it,
and we will be with Him forever.

This “**Presence**” is why this has become
the most popular and most repeated of all of the Psalms.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Analysis of Psalm 23 - Summary

**The author feels taken care of by God,
giving food, shelter, peace, and comfort.**

God guides him in righteousness to glorify God.

**God is present in the darkest hour,
where he knows that God can protect him.**

**God honors him in view of his enemies,
providing a bounty.**

**God's glory will follow him always,
and the author will dwell with God forever..**

David longed for God's Presence.

Beth Moore

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Sacred Songs

Think of hymns that emphasize His Presence...

Be with me Lord (778)

Abide with Me (808)

Anywhere with Jesus (414)

I want Jesus to Walk with Me (607)

If Jesus Goes with Me (408)

Nearer, Still Nearer (478)

What a Friend We Have in Jesus (800)

My God and I

Surround Me, O Lord!

A Shield About Me

The song “Kum-by-yah” (come by here) is not appropriate for God is always here with us.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Gathered Together

**For where two or three gather in my name,
there am I with them.”**

Matthew 18:20

The gathering of several brings special power from God.

But truly He is with us, individually, always ...

**“... surely I am with you always,
to the very end of the age. ...”**

Matthew 28:20

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

We must feel the Presence of God

**How could we sing a song
to the Lord
in a foreign land?**

Psalm 137:4

We cannot worship if we cannot sense that God is near

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Singing New Songs

The Scriptures in many places tell us to “Sing to the Lord a new song.” I had always thought that that meant one song about the new covenant, the new Kingdom, as in Revelation, but I think David in the Psalms used this idea with a deeper meaning.

He believed in singing a new song of worship every day, as we see God's mighty works, the marvelous things that He has done. The universe itself sings a different song every day, and we should too, for our lives are continuously changing.

Praise the Lord.

Sing to the Lord a new song,

his praise

in the assembly of his faithful people.

Psalm 149:1

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Sacred Songs

Think of hymns that emphasize His Presence...

**Be with me Lord (778)
Abide with Me (808)
Anywhere with Jesus (414)
I want Jesus to Walk with Me (607)
If Jesus Goes with Me (408)
Nearer, Still Nearer (478)
What a Friend We Have in Jesus (800)
My God and I
Surround Me, O Lord!
A Shield About Me
I Come to the Garden Alone**

The song "Kum-by-yah" (come by here) is not appropriate for God is always here with us.

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How we Develop an Sense of His Presence

Our Sense of God's Presence

is facilitated by

- 1) Awareness,
- 2) Study,
- 3) Worship,
- 4) Prayer,
- 5) Practice / Service, and
- 6) Relationship

We need to feel His Presence;

for instance:

do we feel that we are praying into nothingness?

Sometimes we only 'feel'

a stormcloud above our heads.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Constant

**God is our constant companion in prayer;
He is never busy (never a "busy" signal)
and there is unlimited bandwidth (He hears us all).**

**The phone is always available –
but you have to make the call!**

And we must never hang up on him.

Pray without ceasing

... pray continually...

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer is, of course, a part of our worship.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Prayer Metrics

Q: How many individual people have you prayed for?

by name...

no name...

enemies...

how vague are we?

Q: How many individual people do you pray for each day?

Q: What is the frequency of prayer in your life?

what is the mean free path (time) without prayer?

Q: How many words do you use? How long do we pray?

do you use the same phrase over and over?

Q: Do we daily thank God for Jesus Christ our Savior?

Can you think of other metric?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Place of Prayer

**While the thought that God
is everywhere present with his whole being
ought to encourage us greatly in prayer
no matter where we are,
the fact that no one place
can be said to contain God
should also discourage us from thinking
that there is some special place of worship
that gives people special access to God...**

Wayne Grudem

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Every Moment

**We need to ask God
to be with us
in everything that we doing –
every minute,
every second,
every instant!**

Prayer is a belief in God's Presence!

He is always there, whether we ask (pray) or not!

**Prayer is unceasingly practicing God's Presence!
from Brother Lawrence as quoted by Beth Moore**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Be With Me, Lord (1)

Be with me, Lord

I cannot live without You.

I dare not try to take one step alone.

I cannot bear the loads of life unaided;

I need Your strength

to lean myself upon.

Be with me, Lord

And then if dangers threaten,

If storms of trial burst above my head,

If lashing seas leap everywhere about me,

They cannot harm,

or make my heart afraid.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Be With Me, Lord (2)

Be with me, Lord

No other gift or blessing

You could bestow could with this one compare.

A constant sense of Your abiding presence,

Wherever I am,

to feel that You are near.

Be with me, Lord

When loneliness overtakes me;

When I must weep amid the fires of pain;

And, when shall come the hour of my departure

For worlds unknown,

Oh, Lord be with me then.

Sonny James

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Near to Make us Great

**What other nation is so great
as to have their gods near them
the way the Lord our God is near us
whenever we pray to Him?**

Deuteronomy 4:7

**You make your saving help my shield,
and your right hand sustains me;
your help has made me great.**

[or, you have stooped down to make me great]

Psalm 18:35

**Christ stooped down (to the cross)
to save us (make us great!)**

Philippians 2:5-11

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Posture

What is your favorite position for prayer?

- standing
- standing with hands lifted
- seated
- on your knees with hands clasped
- on your knees with face on the ground
- laying in your bed
- fully prostrate
- fully prostrate with face on the ground

**There is no right “physical position-
only a correct mental position:
Humility!**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Awareness

Remove the Veil over Your Mind (and Set the Trap)

We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same **veil** remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a **veil** covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the **veil** is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with **unveiled** faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:13-18

God sees through our veil...

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

ACTS

A: Adoration
C: Confession
T: Thanksgiving
S: Supplication

What proportion of our prayer is in each category?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Posture

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**There is no right “physical position-
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How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Prayer From Deep Within Our Souls

In the same way,
the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

We do not know what we ought to pray for,
but the Spirit himself **intercedes** for us
through **wordless groans**. [filters and/or reshapes our words]

And he who **searches our hearts**
knows the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit intercedes for God's people
in accordance with the will of God.

Romans 8:25-27

Whether or not we choose to verbalize our prayer,
God always understands what is going on with us. [Jan]

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Passion

Genuine prayer, Tozer reminds us,
is about a **passion** for God
and an **obsession** with entering his presence.

God **delights** in our presence [He wants us to be His people]
and **delights** in sharing his presence with us.

We are summoned to enter.

Scot McKnight

Do we have a passion or obsession for the Presence of God?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Passion

**As Theresa of Avila said,
“All difficulties in prayer
can be traced to one cause:
praying as if God were absent.”**

Cindy Trimm

**We must feel the Presence of God (the connection)
for our prayers to be effective
and meaningful to us.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Genuine

God is Spirit.

He is personal reality and power –

**the power that works by thought and choice and evaluation,
not a blind force that can be manipulated
if you can only find the correct technique.**

Dallas Willard

**Must we have the words "In Jesus' name"
at the end of our prayer in all cases?**

**What about our formless "groaning"
that the Spirit understands?**

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

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We need to feel His Presence;

for instance:

do we feel that we are praying into nothingness?

Sometimes we only 'feel'

a stormcloud above our heads.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Practice / Service

Practice and Service are a Part of Worship

Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:19

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a **living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship.**

Romans 12:1

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Practice / Service

We all have some kind of gift to practice

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up

Ephesians 4:11-12

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:6-8

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Practice / Service

Specialty Training

Consider individuals who develop an enhanced ability to sense...

- 1) piano tuners (hearing)**
- 2) radiologist (seeing)**
- 3) cook, wine connoisseur (taste)**
- 4) cook, wine connoisseur, perfumer (smell)**
- 5) doctor, vet, woodcarver (touch)**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Prayer

Parable of the Lost Things

Have you ever wondered?

**Why in this parable is there no note
of those who had lost things
praying to God for help?**

**God has promised His Presence for all times –
when we ask for big things,
or when we ask for the smallest things.**

**If we do receive the smallest things,
we must be sensitive to others
who have lost big things.**

How Do We Sense God's Presence?

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How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection

God created us to have a relationship with Him.

He always valued relationships over rules. (Stephen Arterburn)

Adam and Eve had the perfect setup!

God walked in the garden with them.

**Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God
as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day...**

Genesis 4:8a

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection

**In the Garden of Eden,
God walked with us (Gen 3: 8).**

**To “walk with” someone in the Bible
is to have a friendship,
because people talk as they walk together.**

Timothy, Keller

**We must want a relationship with God
above all else!**

Above heaven, rules, glory, etc.

Above our own selfish desires!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection Corrupted

**When Adam and Eve sinned,
this connection was corrupted (by Satan).
The nature of the relationship was then
dramatically changed.**

**Satan continually tries to disconnect us from God.
He shows us things that he claims are “better”.**

**... and they hid from the Lord God
among the trees of the garden.
[they seek protection now from the trees]**

**But the Lord God called to the man,
“Where are you?”**

Genesis 4:8b-9

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection Interference

**Satan continually tries
to disconnect us from God.**

**He worked on Jesus, too –
notably during the temptations...
and especially when He was hanging on the cross!**

**About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”
(which means
“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).**

Matthew 27:46

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection Interference

Jesus stayed connected when he was hurt.

**In the garden of Gethsemane,
during one of his darkest hours
of preparing for the ultimate injury,
he asked for support from his friends...**

Henry Cloud

**Then he said to them,
“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow
to the point of death.**

Stay here and keep watch with me.”

Matthew 26:38

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection

As Adam and Eve hid behind the trees God created,
he called out,
“Where are you?”

Physically, he knew exactly where they were.

What God was really asking was,
“**Where are you in relation to me?**”

John Ortberg

God knows the spiritual status (or location) of Adam and Eve as well.

He simply wanted Adam and Eve to realize
where they were
in relation to Him.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection Interference

Think of radio interference -

(does anyone listen to actual radio anymore?)

When I was young I listened WWL & WLS late at night for ball games.

I struggled to hear against weak signals and atmospheric fade.

Dad and I were ham radio operators,

he worked to build antennas that increased signal vs noise.

One of the first items to discuss was always the signal strength.

Morse code was used when voice was not understandable.

**We also sometimes have to get back to basics with God
before we move to bigger things!**

**The more we embrace / understand / trust God,
the more we can hear Him amidst the noise**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection

Consider the loss of connection,
similar to the fading radiance
as Moses left the Presence of God (1 Corinthians 3:7ff).

We must fight to stay connected!

Jesus promised help:

If you love me,

keep my commands.

And I will ask the Father,

and he will give you another **advocate**

to help you and be with you forever -

the Spirit of truth.

John 14:15-17

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection (Greeting)

**In the Old Testament,
people sometimes connected by bowing and kissing.
see: Moses, with his father-in-law, Exodus 18:7**

**In the New Testament, people connected by a kiss.
“Greet one another with a holy kiss.” Romans 16:16a
(but Judas thus essentially “disconnected” himself from Christ)**

**We connect socially by handshake (men mostly, but women too);
also hugs and kisses.
A good strong handshake (not over-powering)
represents a good connection.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Connection

**... the eventual divine purpose
is to draw all creatures
into a more intimate and freely embraced relationship
with their Creator.**

**The realization of that purpose
will be the coming to be of the new creation
in which the divine presence
is no longer veiled from view
but progressively revealed.**

**Science and Religion in Quest of Truth
John Polkinghorne**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Being Together

Love is...

Walking together;

Love is...

Talking together;

**from the move "Man of the House"
(sung by Cedric the Entertainer)**

Rafting Experience with Zach...

**The power of just being there
without a specific agenda.**

This connects to the idea of God's Presence. [PDE]

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Intimate Presence

**Think of really close relationships that we have...
especially marriage...
working together through the struggles of life.**

**Problems are bearable
because of who we share them with.**

This is true for close friends and co-workers.

**Think about travelling companions:
how do you relate during tense moments during a trip?**

God is indeed always with us!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Worship

Relationship

Worship is about pursuing relationship with God

There is a saying about entertaining:

**“It is good to see them come,
but good to see them go.”**

Think about living 1000 years with relatives!

We had better learn to be comfortable with them.

Are we like that with God in worship?

Do want to get over with?

Are we not really comfortable with God?

... knock and the door will be opened to you. [opportunity]

Matthew 7:7

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Indwelling

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh
but are in the realm of the Spirit,

if indeed **the Spirit of God lives in you.**

And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,
they do not belong to Christ.

But if **Christ is in you**,

then even though your body is subject to death because of sin,
the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

Romans 8:9-10

How can you feel that God, Christ, Holy Spirit is inside you?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Indwelling

**... in the life of Christians
whose conduct is pleasing to God,
the Holy Spirit will be present
to bring great blessing.**

Wayne Grudem

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Indwelling

This is how we know that **we live in him**
and **he in us**:

He has given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and testify

that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God,

God lives in them and they in God.

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love.

Whoever lives in love **lives in God**,

and **God in them.**

1 John 4:13-16

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Indwelling

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees
when the kingdom of God would come,
Jesus replied,
“The coming of the kingdom of God
is not something that can be observed, [no parade!]
nor will people say,
‘Here it is,’ or
‘There it is,’
because the kingdom of God
is **in your midst.**”
[we don't always recognize it] [**is within you** (other versions)]
Luke 17:20-22

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Prayers

Indwelling

[God is Present in our hearts in our prayers]

In the same way,

the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

**We do not know what we ought to pray for,
but the Spirit himself intercedes for us
through wordless groans.**

And he who searches our hearts

knows the mind of the Spirit,

**because the Spirit intercedes for God's people
in accordance with the will of God.**

Romans 8:26-27

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Spirits Interacting

[God is Love (and has always been):

Three Persons, with angels and humankind to love as well]

Don't you believe **that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me**? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is **the Father, living in me**, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that **I am in the Father and the Father is in me...**

... I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the **Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for **he lives with you and will be in you**.

On that day you will realize that **I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.**"

John 14:10-20

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Spirits Interacting

**This integration of spirits
occurs at the highest level,
not just “loving”
that is looking down to sub-creatures
like a man to a dog!**

**We are not isolated in the “dog lot” -
loved, visited often, but not a permanent indwelling Presence.
God desires an intimate relationship with each of us.**

**The Godhead
embraces the Presence of all
in different ways.**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Spirits Interacting

**Father (God above: the almighty Creator and source of being),
Son (God alongside: deity made known in human terms)
and Holy Spirit (God within: at work in the human heart,
transforming and empowering)
without denying their fundamental conviction
that there is a single divine Will and Purpose
at work in creation.**

John Polkinghorne

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Which Realm are you in?

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh
but are in the realm of the Spirit,
if indeed **the Spirit of God lives in you.**

Romans 8:9

God's Spirit should flow through us to others!

Who is in the world
and who is out of the world?

see John 17:11-15

Do we choose the realm of the Spirit or of the Flesh?

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

The Good Spirit

Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God;
**may your good Spirit
lead me on level ground.**

Psalm 143:10

Do not quench the Spirit. [douse it or let it die out]
[Do not stop the flow of God's love through us;
do not let Satan restrict it].

1 Thessalonians 5:19

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...

Ephesians 4:30

We must respect the Holy Spirit!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Being "in" God

God did this
so that they would seek him
and perhaps reach out for him and find him,
though **he is not far from any one of us.**

**'For in him we live
and move
and have our being.'**

As some of your own poets have said,
'We are his offspring.'

Acts 17:27-28

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Spirits Finding a Home

**... He has set eternity
in the hearts of men...**

Ecclesiastes 3:11

**This verse may relate to our need for eternal relationships;
who would want to be in heaven alone?**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Spirits Finding a Home

Jesus replied,

“Anyone who loves me
will obey my teaching.

My Father will love them,
and we will come to them

and **make our home with them.**

John 14:23

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship

Full Flow

[Do not quench the Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5:19]

We have spoken **freely** to you, Corinthians,
and **opened wide** our hearts to you.

[image of valve]

We are not **withholding** our affection from you,
but you are **withholding** yours from us.

As a fair exchange

- I speak as to my children

- **open wide** your hearts also.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

Love is a choice!

Jan Banks

We must open our hearts to let God's love flow freely through us.
But this is our choice!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Indwelling

Spirits Finding a Home

Jesus replied,

“Anyone who loves me
will obey my teaching.

My Father will love them,
and we will come to them

and **make our home with them.**

John 14:23

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will come in and eat with that person,
and they with me.

Revelation 3:20

We must open the door to let Christ in and God's love out.

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Connecting

Sin Separates

Surely the arm of the Lord
is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.

But **your iniquities have separated** [the entire nation had fallen away]
you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.

Isaiah 59:1-2

Satan distracts us,
and tells us that there are better things
than a relationship with God.

We must not let that happen!

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Connecting

Spirits Connecting through Grace (1)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

**Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine
or nakedness or danger or sword?**

As it is written:

**“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”**

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors
through him who loved us.**

Romans 8:35-37

Everyone chooses a team to be on: we must choose Good!

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- **Preparation for God's Presence**
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- The Presence of an Opponent
- The Power of God's Presence
- Our Response to God's Presence
- The Ultimate Presence in Heaven
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Walking

Walking together implies Presence in Time and Place

God walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve
Enoch walked faithfully with God (Gen 5:22-24)
Noah walked faithfully with God (Gen 6:9)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to **walk humbly with your God.**

Micah 6:8

... God has said:

“I will live with them and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my people.”

2 Corinthians 6:16

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Walking

Other Walking Examples

He is with you wherever you go...

Joshua 1:9

I will be with you no matter what!

Isaiah 43:2

Lo, I am with you always...

Matthew 28:19-20

They all ate the same spiritual food
and drank the same spiritual drink;
for they drank from

**the spiritual rock that accompanied them,
and that rock was Christ.**

1 Corinthians 10:3-4

**This Presence of God was not an ethereal thing –
but something represented by a significant physical entity**

How Do We Prepare for God's Presence?

Preparation

Relationship → Connecting

Spirits Connecting through Grace (1)

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Preparation

Relationship → Connecting

More than Conquerors

How can we be "more than conquerors"?

- 1) God is Sovereign and if we are aligned with Him, there is indeed nothing that can oppose us**
- 2) With God as the ultimate victor, there is nothing else to conquer**
- 3) God gives us a feeling that is better than we get when we have a sense of accomplishment or victory**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We try to localize God

This is a common problem for man

People of all ages have made
physical representations of their idea of God.

The Golden Calf

When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

[so Aaron asked for gold jewelry, and the people donated them.]

He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "**These are your gods, Israel, who brought you out of Egypt.**"

Exodus 32:1-4

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We try to localize God

An interesting follow-on to this story of the golden calf

[God is angry!

He told them (almost sarcastically) to go on into the promised land]

“Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey.

But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way.”

When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments.

The Lord had said, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. **If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you.**

Now take off your ornaments and **I will decide what to do with you.”**

Exodus 33:1-6

It is after this that Moses experiences God's glory passing by!

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We try to localize God

A later follow-on to this story of the golden calf

[Jeroboam strategizes to keep from losing his nation's people]

If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.”

After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. **Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.**” One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan.

1 Kings 12:27-29

Jeroboam uses virtually the exact same words as Aaron!

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

God established a place for His Name

But you are to seek the **place**
the Lord your God will choose
from among all your tribes
to put his Name there for his dwelling...

Deuteronomy 12:5

God only established this place for our benefit!

The place He chose was a temporary focal point
until we mature enough to see God
without a physical representation.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

Solomon built the temple for God's Name to dwell in

“But will God really dwell on earth?

**The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you.
How much less this temple I have built!**

**Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy,
Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is
praying in your presence this day.**

**May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place
of which you said, ‘**My Name shall be there,**’ so that you will hear the
prayer your servant prays toward this place. Hear the supplication of
your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this
place.**

Hear from **heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.
1 Kings 8:27-30**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

The Samaritan Woman was concerned about the proper Place (1)

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

John 4:19-20

**He means we can worship anywhere,
either place, or another place!
There is no single place where worship must occur.**

**We are now ready in our development
To see God as spiritual, and not tied to a physical place.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We try to localize God

This causes projection to a physical object

The Golden Calf as a previously mentioned example

**All who make idols are nothing,
and the things they treasure are worthless...
Who shapes a god and casts an idol, which can profit nothing?
The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals;
he shapes an idol with hammers,
he forges it with the might of his arm.
He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak...
It is used as fuel for burning;
some of it he takes and warms himself,
he kindles a fire and bakes bread.**

Isaiah 44:9-15a

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We try to localize God

This causes projection to a physical object

**But he also fashions a god and worships it;
he makes an idol and bows down to it.**

Half of the wood he burns in the fire;

over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill.

He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire."

From the rest he makes a god, his idol;

he bows down to it and worships.

He prays to it and says, "Save me! You are my god!" ...

"Half of it I used for fuel;

I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate.

Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left?

Shall I bow down to a block of wood?"

Isaiah 44:15b-20

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Localizing Spiritual Presence

Comparing God and Satan (PDE)

**Satan tempts us to try and localize or constrain God,
yet Satan desires to go incognito
because he is more effective
when we cannot recognize him
or the effects of his presence.**

**Seeing (recognizing) God convicts us
of His righteousness and Goodness**

**Seeing (recognizing) Satan would convict us
of his deceitful and evil nature.**

Satan also disguises himself to confuse us.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

The Samaritan Woman was concerned about the proper Place

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

[i.e., neither is the only authorized place]

John 4:19-20

He means we can worship anywhere,
either place, or another place!

There is no single place where worship must occur.

We are now ready in our development
To see God as spiritual, and not tied to a physical place.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

Parallel from the Old Testament

And God said,

“I will be with you.

And this will be the sign to you
that it is I who have sent you:

When you have brought the people out of Egypt,
you will worship God [as evidence of God's deliverance]
on this mountain.” [not the only acceptable place]

Exodus 3:12

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

Gathering together

**Do we have to be in a church building to be in God's Presence?
... to pray to Him, etc...**

Do we have to dress up? Put on our "Sunday best"?

**What happens if we drop our Bible, or rip a page in it?
Does God leave us?**

God is inside, in a way, but this doesn't hurt Him.

Can we write in it? [I believe that we must, as we study it]

Is God only Present if there are two or three gathered in His name?

What is truly sacred? What is truly essential?

What is truly needed for God to be with us?

The key is that we must act with Respect for God and His Holiness!

Sensing God's Presence?

Daily Spiritual Exercise

St. Ignatius' Exercise of Examen

There are many versions, but all have five steps

PDE Version:

Become aware of God's Presence

Review the day with gratitude

Pay attention to your emotions

Choose one feature of the day and pray from (about) it

Look toward tomorrow

Jesuit version:

Give thanksgiving.

Ask for the Spirit.

Review and recognize failures.

Ask for forgiveness and healing.

Pray about the next day.

Relish, Request, Review, Repent, and Resolve.

Mark Thibodeaux

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Did God need an Earthly Place (Home?)

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The key is that we must act with Respect for God and His Holiness!

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Is God's Presence only Active at Certain Times?

God is always "In"

**He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

The LORD watches over you...

**The LORD will keep you from all harm -
he will watch over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.**

Psalm 121:3-5, 8

He is always awake in His Presence

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Is God's Presence only Active at Certain Times?

God is always "In"

[To the Israelites beginning their Exodus]

Be strong and courageous.

**Do not be afraid or terrified because of them,
for the Lord your God goes with you;**

he will never leave you nor forsake you.

Deuteronomy 31:6

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Is God's Presence only Active at Certain Times?

God is always "In"

[The Hebrew writer uses it in another way]

Keep your lives free from the love of money
and be content with what you have,
because God has said,

**"Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."**

So we say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.

What can mere mortals do to me?"

Hebrews 13:5-6

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Is God's Presence only Active at Certain Times?

But He may "leave us" temporarily for a specific purpose

[Hezekiah after his miraculous cure and sign from God]

But when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon
to ask him about the miraculous sign
that had occurred in the land,

God left him to test him

and to know everything that was in his heart.

2 Chronicles 32:31

He also turned away from the nation of Israel for a time

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Is God's Presence only Active at Certain Times?

He "left" Christ Temporarily– but He was always Present

About three in the afternoon

Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”

(which means

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”)

[intro to complete Psalm with final resolution].

Matthew 27:46

This was temporary –

**But Jesus knew that God was with Him
and He would be “unforsaken” in the end.**

This separation was needed for Christ to conquer death for us.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Is God's Presence only Active at Certain Times?

God is always Present, but this may be shown in different ways.

... when the Bible says that God is "present"
it usually means "present to bless."

... when the Bible talks about God being "far away"
it usually means that he is not present [inclined] to bless.

Wayne Grudem

God can't please everyone (answer everyone's prayers with "yes").

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

He cannot "not" be Present

**God is always with you,
even if no one else is around.**

**You can always share your troubles,
and He will not tell.**

Nothing can truly separate us.

The cross is always present.

**Wherever we are,
in whatever condition we find ourselves –
there is God.**

**He shares the suffering –
not always preventing it.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Nothing can separate us (worth restating this passage)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [unless we turn away]

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? [there can be no physical or spiritual obstacle]

As it is written:

**“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”**

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The Valley of the Shadow of Death

**Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for **you are with me**;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.**

Psalm 23:4

**Christ has been there, too!
Consider the darkness at the Cross;
Jesus went through it,
and though He felt forsaken at a critical point,
He knew that God would be there at the end.**

Like walking through a long tunnel...

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The Valley of the Shadow of Death

[Job remembers]

**“... when his lamp shone on my head
and by his light I walked through darkness!**

Job 29:3

**God is Present,
even as we travel through
the valley of the shadow of death.
We cling to Him
and He carries us through.**

**If you are going through hell,
keep going!**

Winston Churchill

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The Valley of the Shadow of Death

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through the darkest valley,
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What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The Valley of the Shadow of Death

**In the Spiritual world,
there is no shadow –
for God is the light!**

**This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:
God is light;
in him there is no darkness at all.**

1 John 1:5

**God is Present,
attached to us like a shadow
but in reverse!
[light instead of darkness]!**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Think about being at the edge of the Abyss

The Gates of the Valley of the Shadow of Death

Think about all that Job went through –
losing his children, his flocks, servants (crops), and his health!

Have the gates of death
been shown to you? [gates of the shadow of death]
Have you seen the gates
of the deepest darkness? Job 38:17

The Psalmist often shows his view of the pit of darkness.

LORD, you are the God who saves me; day and night I cry out to you.
May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry.

I am **overwhelmed** with troubles and my life draws near to death.
I am counted among those who go down to the pit [Sheol] ...
I am like one without strength. Psalm 88:1-4

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Think about being at the edge of the Abyss

Making it through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

Jesus came to lead us through!

... the people living in darkness
have seen a great [growing] light;
on those living
in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.”

Matthew 4:16

With this light we can do all things... (Philippians 4:13)

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The Fog of Evil

Satan produces a “fog of evil”

somewhat like the “fog of war”

[so we cannot see the enemy or regions of safety];

He works to block our view of God and Goodness.

We must shout,

”Down in front!”

Satan tries to convince us that God is at a distance,

or tries to put distance between us;

don't let the vastness of space fool you!

(PDE)

God is Present even in the thickest Darkness!

The Holy Spirit blows away the Fog of Evil.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

Looking for the Dawn

**When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison,
he withdrew to Galilee...**

to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

... the people living in darkness

have seen a great light;

on those living in the land of **the shadow of death**

a light has dawned."

From that time on Jesus began to preach,

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Matthew 4:12-17

We all are in darkness looking for the Light

Jesus is not just the Light – He is the growing Light of Dawn

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

Looking to God

The path of the righteous
is like the morning sun,
shining ever brighter
till the full light of day.

Proverbs 4:18

**The righteous path is spiritually brighter each day,
as we grow in our relationship with God!**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

We must not block the light!

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Matthew 5:14-15

See to it... that the light within you is not darkness.

Luke 11:35

**Believe in the light while you have the light,
so that you may become children of light.**

John 12:36

**The Darkness cannot overcome the Light (John 1:5)
but we can obscure the Light if we do not follow God wholeheartedly.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Valley of Shadow

We must sometimes wait through the dark time for relief

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,
the people were crowding around him
and listening to the word of God.

He saw at the water's edge two boats,
left there by the fishermen,
who were washing their nets.

He got into one of the boats,
the one belonging to Simon,
and asked him to put out a little from shore.

Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Luke 5:1-4

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Valley of Shadow

We must sometimes wait through the dark time for relief

**When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon,
“Put out into deep water,
and let down the nets for a catch.” [Jesus began with a topic
Simon answered, that Peter knew well]
“Master, we’ve worked hard all night
and haven’t caught anything.
But because you say so, [the responsibility is yours]
I will let down the nets.”**

**When they had done so,
they caught such a large number of fish
that their nets began to break.
So they signaled their partners in the other boat
to come and help them,
and they came and filled both boats
so full that they began to sink.**

Luke 5:5-8

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Valley of Shadow

We must sometimes wait through the dark time for relief

**When Simon Peter saw this,
he fell at Jesus' knees and said,
"Go away from me, Lord;
I am a sinful man!"**

**For he and all his companions were astonished
at the catch of fish they had taken,
and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee,
Simon's partners. [Peter had to handle his boat alone?]**

**Then Jesus said to Simon,
"Don't be afraid;
from now on you will fish for people."**

**So they pulled their boats up on shore,
left everything and followed him. [left the stinky fish for others?]**

Luke 5:9-11

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Valley of Shadow

We must sometimes wait through the dark time for relief

Items to note:

- This event began when Jesus commandeered Peter's boat to get a little distance from the crowds and began to teach
- Peter and his partners had been fishing all night with no luck and were washing up their equipment (nets, etc.)
- Jesus asks them to go back out to fish again
- Peter (after hearing Jesus teach) acted on the wish of a carpenter
- The catch of fish was nearly unmanageable
- **The fish were always there – just not catchable at first**
- **Jesus' Presence provided success at the right time**
- The outcome was so powerful that the new disciples left the fish that had been their chief objective and they followed Jesus
- Jesus presented them with an even greater objective and mission

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

Jesus is the Light

**Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.**

Psalms 119:105

**... his lamp shone on my head
and by his light
I walked through darkness!
[the valley of the shadow of death]**

Job 29:3

**Consider the concept of ambient light vs directed light. [PDE]
God provides both.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

We must be a beacon!

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Matthew 5:14-15

See to it... that the light within you is not darkness.

Luke 11:35

**Believe in the light while you have the light,
so that you may become children of light.**

John 12:36

**We must be like a lighthouse,
using the Light of God to minimize the confusion for others.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The "Third Man Factor"

The Third Man factor or Third Man syndrome refers to the reported situations where the feeling of an unseen presence ... provides comfort or support during traumatic experiences.

Sir Ernest Shackleton in his book South, described his belief that an incorporeal being joined him and two others during the final leg of their journey.

Shackleton wrote, " When I look back at those days I have no doubt that Providence guided us, ... during that long and racking march of thirty-six hours over the unnamed mountains and glaciers ..., it seemed to me often that we were four, not three." His admission resulted in other survivors of extreme hardship coming forward and sharing similar experiences.

This is similar in a way to the story of the fiery furnace

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Confusion of his World

The "Darkest Hour"

There is a recent movie entitled "Darkest Hour" that tells the story of Winston Churchill as the British Prime Minister during the early years of World War Two.

Consider the similarity here to our faith in troubled times.

What has been your Darkest Hour?

The Greatest Effect is when things are darkest for us!

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

God Shows Himself to Us (1)

**When you come to knowing God,
the initiative lies on His side.**

**If He does not show Himself,
nothing you can do will enable you to find Him.**

And, in fact,

**He shows much more of Himself to some people than to others –
not because He has favorites,
but because it is impossible for Him to show Himself to a man
whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition.**

**Just as sunlight, though it has no favorites,
cannot be reflected in a dusty mirror
as clearly as in a clean one.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see through the confusion

You can put this another way by saying that while in other sciences the instruments you use are things external to yourself (things like microscopes and telescopes), the instrument through which you see God is your whole self.

And if a man's self is not kept clean and bright, his glimpse of God will be blurred – like the Moon seen through a dirty telescope.

That is why horrible nations have horrible religions: they have been looking at God through a dirty lens.

From Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see through the dust obscuring our vision

**Seeing through dirty windows... (or our glasses)
we must periodically clean them
(like windshield wipers)**

**For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror;
[KJV: in a mirror darkly – difficult to understand the view]
then we shall see face to face.**

**Now I know in part;
then I shall know fully,
even as I am fully known.**

1 Corinthians 13:12

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see through the darkness

Have you ever been blind for a time?

blind man's bluff – a game

simulated blindness – Zach in grammar school

eye operation – going by feel

power outage – consider the thick darkness in Egypt

sleepwalking while camping – me at Fall Creek Falls

the blind army – not seeing properly

the blind man - seeing men as trees walking

wild cave tour

The darkness can not overcome the light!

John 1:5

Jesus is the light!

John 8:12

**The LORD is my light and my salvation -
whom shall I fear?**

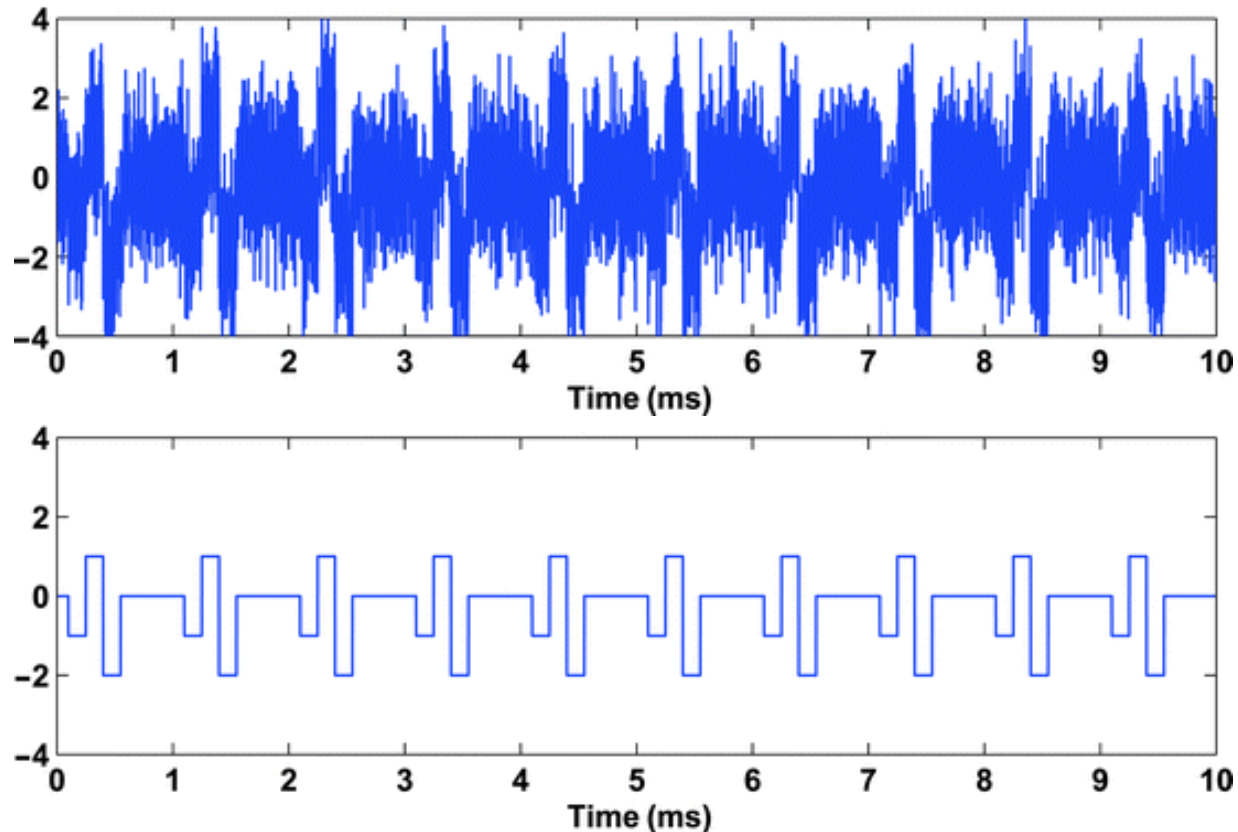
Psalm 27:1

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see (hear) the Pattern through the noise



Signal averaging: a similar process is achieved by repetitive study.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see (hear) the Pattern through the noise

original

several averages

many averages: the message becomes clear!

We cannot totally reduce the noise in this world to zero.
The noise doesn't matter when we realize the power of the Pattern.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see (hear) the Pattern through the noise

“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.

The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and **the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.**

When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because **they know his voice.**

But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice.”

John 10:1-5

We must filter out all but the Master's Voice

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to penetrate the obscuration



Satan works to camouflage God's Goodness and His own Evil

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Can you see God's Presence in the midst of all distractions?



What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Valley of Shadow

Sometimes Loneliness is the Valley

**The third way to deal with loneliness
is to recognize God's Presence.**

There is no place where God is not.

**He is everywhere at all times,
and you can constantly talk with Him.**

**As long as you understand this,
you are never really alone.**

Prayer is a fantastic tool that you can use in lonely times.

**The fourth source of strength in a crisis is the greatest of all:
the Presence of God in Jesus Christ.**

Rick Warren

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

We must be able to see Him through the Valley of Shadow

Other Examples (from Rick Warren)

There is an important phrase that is found five times in the story of Joseph, each time after a major crisis or defeat: “But the Lord was with Joseph” (for example, Genesis 39:21). [defeat in perspective]

The second thing Jabez prayed for was God's presence in his life: “Let your hand be with me” 1 Chronicles 4:10. [should be our prayer]

God reminded Elijah that he was still right there beside him [after running for 40 days, with tremendous signs and ultimately a whispered voice]” 1 Kings 19:11-13. [unexpected Presence]

In the midst of the storm Paul said, “Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul” (Acts 27:23-24). From this we learn that storms can never hide us from God. We may not see Him, but He sees us.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Can you put the puzzle pieces together?



We don't get the picture all at once,
but as life goes on
each day we encounter God in different ways.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Can you understand the meaning of the poem?



"Do you have the same chart in English?"

We must keep searching for the message...

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see the forest for the trees!

**When we are hiking to the top of a mountain,
many times we cannot see our goal
for the brush and trees blocking our view.**

**We may see glimpses of it,
but cannot always use it as a target.**

**We crash through the briars, vines, and low-hanging limbs
because we know how great the realization of our goal will be!
The mountaintop literally overshadows the obstacles!**

**The spiritual peak is God and His Goodness
represented by the Cross!**

We are drawn to it and keep pressing on.

**The height of the brush is no comparison to the height of the peak,
even though it can hide the peak from our perspective.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time



**When we climb high enough,
we are comforted by the ever-presence of the peak.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must keep climbing toward God!

The path of life leads upward for the prudent
to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

Proverbs 15:24

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see the forest for the trees!

Therefore, since we are surrounded
by such a great cloud of witnesses [or trees],
**let us throw off everything that hinders
and the sin that so easily entangles.**

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,
fixing our eyes on Jesus,
the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

For the joy set before him he endured the cross,
scorning its shame,
and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners,
so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:1-3

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must be able to see the flowers for the weeds!

Keeping the garden weeded takes a lot of work!

Dandelions come back fast if you don't get the root.

**The weeds can represent sin,
choking out the beautiful flowers.**

**We try to eliminate them
working every day,
but it is like how things grow in the rain forest.**

**Only God can help us
control our sinful nature
and keep the garden of our soul alive.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Only God can help us with our sinful nature

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out... [a great struggle for us!]

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

**Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!
Romans 7:18-25**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must maintain perspective wherever we stand

Leonardo had to play tricks to maintain perspective across the room.



What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must maintain perspective wherever we stand

Leonardo had to play tricks to maintain perspective across the room.

Because of the painting's size, the perspective is different depending on the viewer's vantage point. In a big room, this is a problem that is difficult to manage. With a painting as large as The Last Supper, the viewer might see it from the front or the side or while walking past. That required what Leonardo called "complex perspective..."

Leonardo calculated that the proper vantage point would be 300 to 600 feet back – clearly not possible. Leonardo created an artificial ideal vantage point that was about thirty feet from the wall...

Leonardo then proceeded to use optical tricks to make it seem less distorted from other viewing positions. From Walter Isaacson

The point is that we have to be careful and work to maintain the proper perspective no matter what our situation is in life.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must maintain perspective wherever we stand

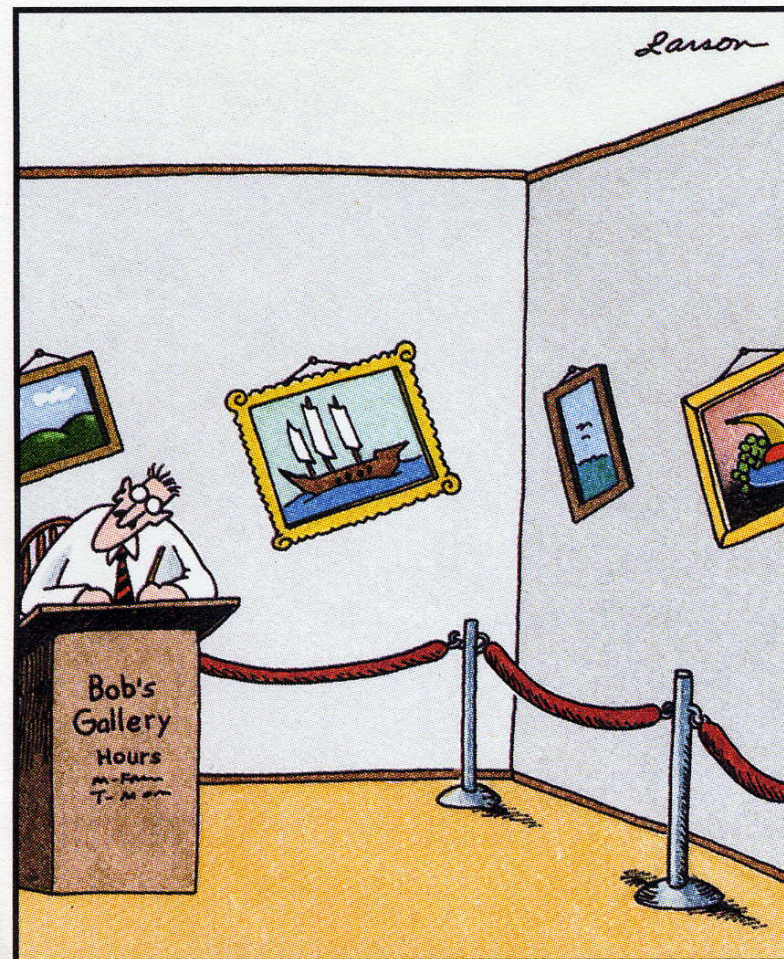


What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

We must maintain perspective wherever we stand



What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

More Looks through the Dark Valley

**No journey is complete
that does not lead through some dark valleys.
We can properly comfort others
only with the comfort
wherewith we ourselves
have been comforted of God.**

Vance Havner

**Whatever hallway you're in –
no matter how long, how dark, or how scary –
God is right there with you.**

Bill Hybels

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Dustin's sermon last week

**Can you tell the whole picture
from seeing only a small portion of a photograph?**

No! But...

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Information in a Hologram

Most of us are familiar with these little plates created by the interference of a beam of laser light reflected from an object with another coherent beam of the same light.

They are capable, on reillumination, of recreating a three-dimensional image of the original object. The information about that object is encoded in the hologram in a subtle way.

It is totally unlike a photographic negative, where each spot of the object corresponds to a spot on the film.

In a hologram, information about the whole object is stored in every spot of the plate, so that if the hologram is cut in two and then reilluminated we obtain, not an image of half the object but a somewhat coarser image of the whole.

John Polkinghorne, part 1

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Information in a Hologram

David Bohm has written of this enfolding of the whole into every part as the presence of an “implicate order.” [like God in every piece]

He sees it as conveying the potentiality for a holistic account of the world that conventional science fragments... [can't put it together]

Theologians might well feel that holograms provide a useful metaphor for ... sacramental presence. [God's Presence through all]
John Polkinghorne, part 2

Perhaps the universe is more like a hologram,
where the image of God is always represented,
but if we limit our view
we cannot see the details
or the perspective (the window)
that we need.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

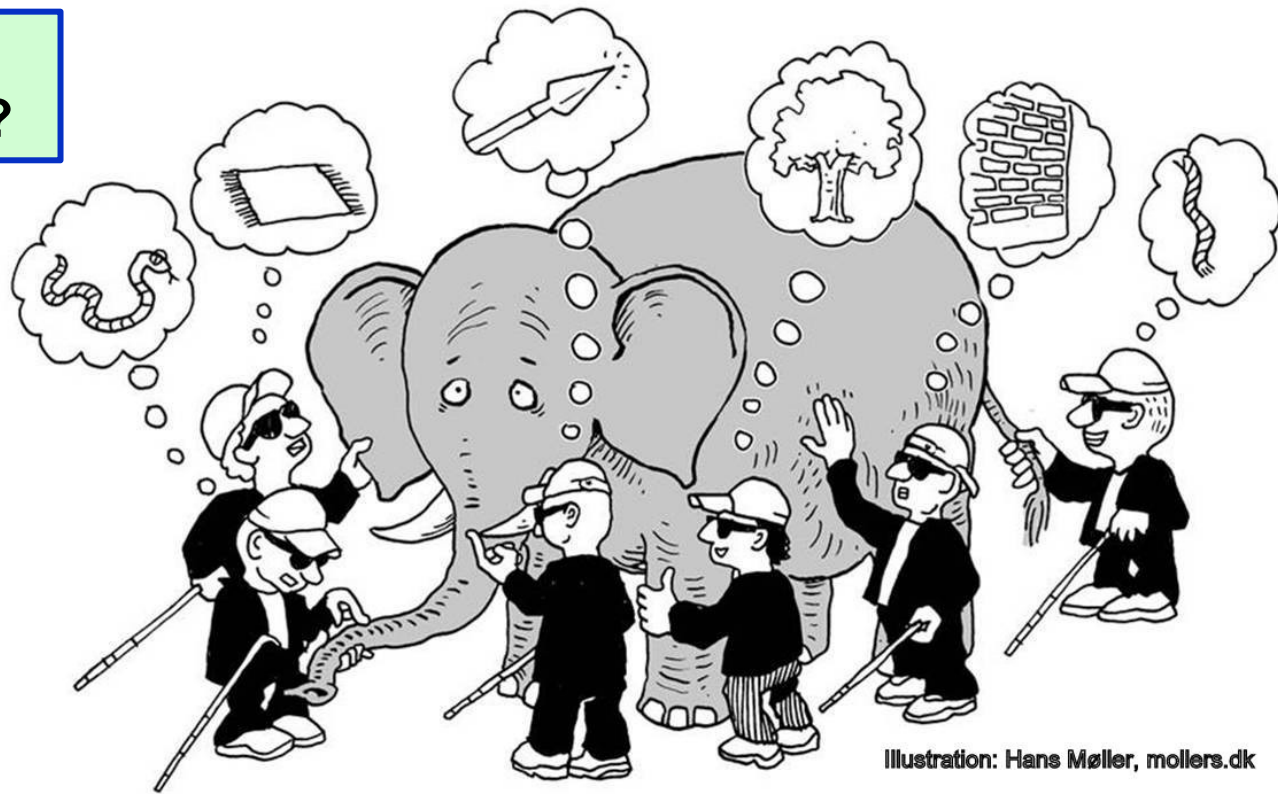
God is Present at all times

The Perspective of the Blind Men

Can you “see” the irony in this cartoon?

They should each rotate their position.

Our view of God may depend on our situation in life, what we are familiar with.



God is present in different ways in different places...

Wayne Grudem

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

The Heavens Declare... (What do they declare to you?)

**The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.**

Day after day

they pour forth speech;

night after night

they reveal knowledge.

They have no speech,

they use no words;

no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,

their words to the ends of the world.

**even the broken
universe declares God!**

Psalm 19:1-4

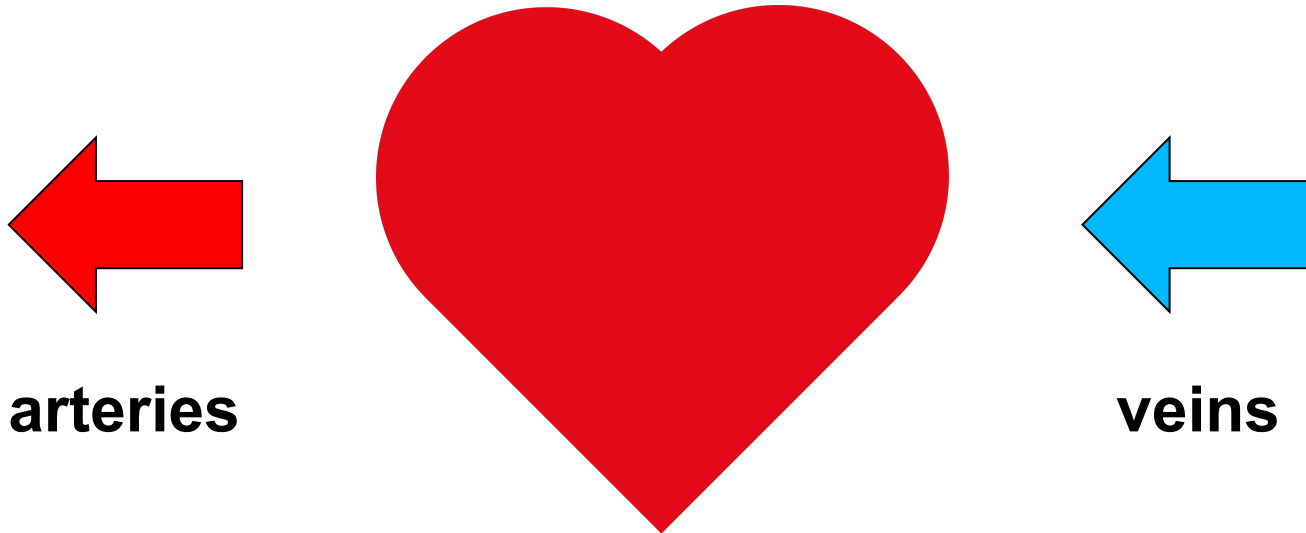
What do the heavens declare to you?

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

Consider the Mystery of Blood Circulation



Though early investigators realized that the heart created pressure, They could not see how there could be circulation – there was no visible path. And they had no real idea of what the blood flow would have accomplished.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

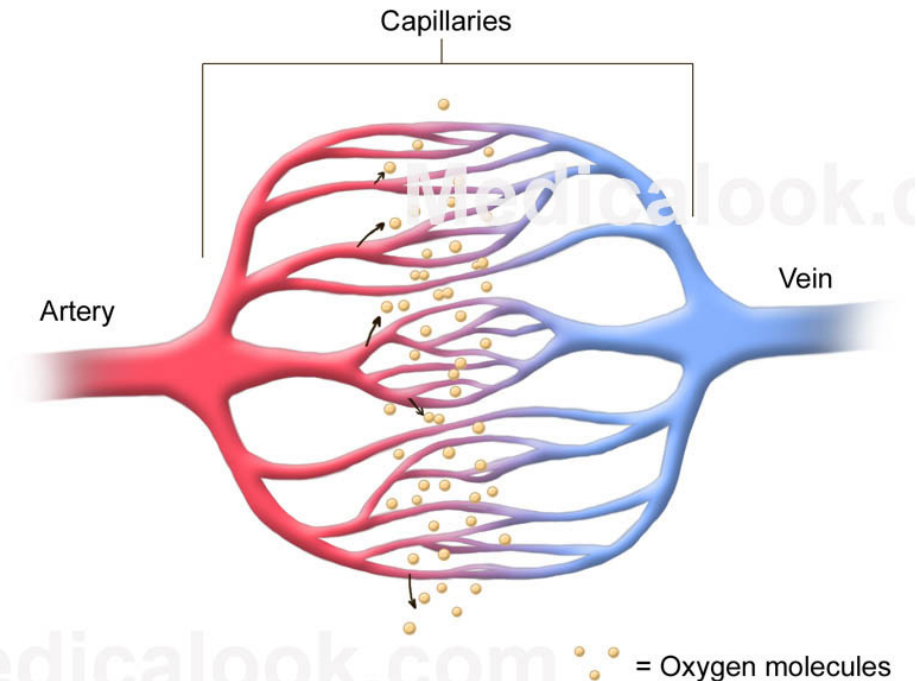
God is Present at all times

Consider the Mystery of Blood Circulation

The capillaries subdivided the flow at virtually undetectable levels.

During this time, oxygen and glucose pass through capillary walls and enter the cells.

Waste products such as carbon dioxide are then passed back from the cells into the blood.



This is a parallel to our need to understand that God is Present even when we cannot see the connection directly.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Present at all times

There is no "instrumentation" able to detect God



We have all of the instrumentation in our soul that we need.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

But is not "part" of it

*We need to find ways
to conceptualize
the Presence of God
in a non-physical sense.*

... our technical way of thinking
reduces mystery to problem,
takes the categories of biblical faith
and represents them in manageable shapes...

Brian D. McLaren

Our problem is in trying to assemble the pieces into the whole!

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

But is not "part" of it

God Himself ...

is [completely] present wherever David might go.

**... God is present with His whole being
in every part of space [and time, hsl]**

**(see also Acts 17:28 where Paul affirms the correctness of the words,
"In him we live and move and have our being,"
and Col. 1:17, which says of Christ,
"in Him all things hold together.")**

Wayne Grudem

**God's Presences Transcends His Creation
(which is a type of subset of his Glory)**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

And is not “contained” by it

***God cannot be contained by any space,
no matter how large.***

See Solomon, 1 Kings 8:27.

Wayne Grudem

“But will God really dwell on earth?

**The heavens, [Solomon had a glimpse of the vastness]
even the highest heaven,
cannot contain you.**

How much less this temple I have built!

1 Kings 8:27

**The concept of “dimension” is inadequate to describe
the vastness of God's being beyond our universe.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

And is not “contained” by it

**God permeates the universe,
but is not inseparable from it or equal to it.**

Thus,

He is always right there with us.

**To think of “where” or “when” God is
stems from the finite limitations of being human.**

**No matter how complex He is relative to us,
His core is easy to understand: Love!**

**... the Lord stood at my side
and gave me strength**

2 Timothy 4:17

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

And is not “contained” by it

We should guard against thinking that God extends infinitely far in all directions so that he himself exists in a sort of infinite, unending space.

Nor should we think that God is somehow a “bigger space” or bigger area surrounding the space of the universe as we know it.

All of these ideas continue to think of God's being in spatial terms, as if he were simply an extremely large being.

Instead, we should try to avoid thinking of God in terms of size or spatial dimensions.

God is a being who exists *without* size or dimensions in space.

Wayne Grudem

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

But is not “part” of it

There is a much more complicated structure underneath the truth that we have been given. It is so deep and “other-worldly” that we cannot see in our present weakness how everything fits together.

We are like animals, who though able to become domesticated as pets, still cannot truly understand their masters. Cats are very difficult to train, but they can show affection. Dogs are the ultimate in affection, and can be trained fairly well, but neither dogs nor cats really understand the hows and whys of your relationship with them. They enjoy that relationship, but demonstrate it in different ways according to their nature.

We are in a similar situation when we try to understand the complete plan of God.

They may think they understand... (like us)

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

But is not “part” of it

**C. S. Lewis caught the needed balance –
that language can be a window
through which one glimpses God,
but never a box in which God can be contained...**

Brian D. McLaren

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

A teacher was using squirrels for an object lesson on industry and preparation. He started out by saying, "I'm going to describe something, and I want you to raise your hand when you know what it is." The children nodded eagerly.

"This thing lives in trees (pause) and eats nuts (pause)..." No hands went up. "And it is gray (pause) and has a long bushy tail (pause)..." The children were looking at each other, but still no hands raised. "And it jumps from branch to branch (pause) and chatters and flips its tail when it's excited (pause)..."

Finally one little boy tentatively raised his hand. The pastor breathed a sigh of relief and called on him.

"Well," said the boy, "I know the answer must be Jesus ... but it sure sounds like a squirrel to me!"

Think Deep! Think Outside the Box!

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

Mapping God into Something We Can Understand (PDE)

God's infinite presence cannot be directly mapped by us into our sense of physical space.

Yet there is a mapping whereby God's presence can fill our lives (or souls).

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

What can separate us? Nothing! (except our own will)

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

God upholds the universe

**The Son is the radiance of God's glory
and the exact representation of his being,
sustaining all things by his powerful word.**

Hebrews 1:3a

**The Son is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation.**

**For in him all things were created:
things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;
all things have been created through him and for him.**

**He is before all things,
and in him all things **hold together**.**

Colossians 1:15-17

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Omnipresent in Space and Time (which He Created)

God upholds the universe

**Water is present everywhere in the sponge,
but the water is still completely distinct from the sponge.**

Wayne Grudem

**This is a simple analogy that is thought-provoking
but admittedly breaks down at small points in the sponge.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

The surface of God is all that we can begin to understand

- We chip away like a prospector looking for gold or precious stones
- We are only scratching the surface of Good / God, but we are searching for the "pearl of great price"
- The deeper we dig, the more we understand, however dimly
- God permeates the universe, and we must let Him permeate our soul as well

God is infinitely complex, yet beautifully simple.

God is Love!

1 John 4:8

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

God Permeates, Yet is "Above" All

"Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls [Psalm 42:7]," is how the psalmist puts it.

When we stand before a waterfall that thunders down a cliff, we can actually feel deep in our chest the vibrations of the water going over the falls.

This is a beautiful picture of what is happening all over creation.

The depths of the presence of God around us are crying out to the depths of our souls—where he also resides.

Deep calls to deep. . . . And the two are ever trying to meet in us.

John Ortberg

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

God Permeates, Yet is "Above" All

The Presence of God:

is somewhat like the interaction

with all of the mass of the universe through inertia;

you feel the "force" all around you.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

God Fills the Universe that He Made

“Am I only a God **nearby,” declares the Lord,
“and not a God **far away**?”**

**Who can hide in secret places
so that I cannot see them?” declares the Lord.**

“Do not I **fill heaven and earth?”
declares the Lord.**

Jeremiah 23:23-25

And surely I **am with you always,
to the very end of the age.”**

Matthew 28:20b

If God Fills the Universe, then He is always Near

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

God Will also Fill our Hearts if we let Him

Come **near** to God

and he will come **near** to you.

[We don't have to be on a particular mountain or place]

James 4:8a

Be filled with the spirit...

Ephesians 5:18b

Consider that this spirit it is the Presence of God

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

You cannot really escape His Presence

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

or darkness is as light to you.

Psalms 139:7-12

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

We Must Thirst for God's Presence

**But another option
is seeing God as referring to a reality
that is more than personal,
not less than personal.**

**This reality is sometimes known, experienced, as a presence –
as having more the quality of a “you”
than the quality of an “it.”**

M.J. Borg

**Our emotions and relationships are part of
our true connection with God.**

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

God is Vast Beyond our Imagination

We Must Thirst for God's Presence

Hannah [mother of Samuel],
asked by her her husband:

**“Aren't I [Isn't my presence]
worth more to you than 10 sons?”**

1 Samuel 1:8

We need to thirst for God's Presence more than any other desire.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Heaven

Jesus Speaks of Heaven as God's True Home

“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in **heaven**,
hallowed be your name...

Matthew 6:9

Heaven was generally considered “up” –
this to try to indicate
the “higher” dimensions of God's existence.
Hell was generally considered as “down” -
the opposite direction (similar to the grave).

Direction was something that we could “grasp”.

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Place and Time

Heaven

God's Speaks of Heaven as His True Home

[The Great Passover of Hezekiah]

**There was great joy in Jerusalem,
for since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel
there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.**

**The priests and the Levites stood to bless the people,
and God heard them,
for their prayer reached **heaven**,
his holy dwelling place.**

2 Chronicles 30:26-27

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

... spiritual practices [disciplines] are also and truly about the Spirit.

They are about somehow driving

with our windows wide open to God,

keeping our elbows in the wind

and our hands surfing beside the side mirror.

They're about tuning our radios to the frequency of the Holy,

turning up the volume,

and then daring to sing along.

They're about staying alert

so our eyes see the glory of the coming of the Lord,

and our ears hear the Word,

and our skin feels

the warm touch and the gentle pressure

of the Presence.

Brian McLaren

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

Spiritual practices

**are a way of putting the universe on fast-rewind
until it collapses into a singularity of dark light,
so as to recall that all creation
originally unfolded from the divine source singing,
“Let there be . . .”**

They are, likewise,

**a way of putting the universe on fast-forward,
imagining it hurtling forward and outward
until it is caught up in the wide arms of grace –
like a beginning toddler falling with awkward,
joyous determination across space
toward his mother's arms.**

Brian McLaren

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

And perhaps most important,
they are a way of locating ourselves in a present moment
no less lighted by the presence of the unseen God
from whom we come,
to whom we go,
and **with whom we travel.**

Spiritual practices are ways
of becoming awake and staying awake to God...

Practicing God's Presence is
learning to be aware of God as **constant companion**,
staying in **constant contact** with God,
living with one's spiritual windows and doors
open to God.

Brian McLaren

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

**... spiritual practices
are also about being sustained
through the perceived absence
of the Presence.**

Brian McLaren

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

**... let me open to you
the windows of my heart,
that all my life may be filled
with the radiance of your presence.
Do not let any corner of my being
be left in darkness,
but illuminate every part of me
by the light of your face.**

John Baillie

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

Once you understand it and are grasped by this,
is to see the world with different eyes.

To see God with different eyes.

To see your neighbor with different eyes.

To see yourself with different eyes.

This is the challenge of the good news for today and tomorrow.

N.T. Wright

What Does God's Presence Mean?

Experiencing the Presence of God

More thoughts on being aware of His Presence

**We should look to God
and ask him to reveal himself to us;
in contemplating his greatness
we will come to see him
as the Answer above all answers.**

Randy Alcorn

Challenge

Experiencing the Presence of God

**I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.**

Psalm 130:6

Start with one minute before God each day...

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- **Preparation for God's Presence**
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- **The Presence of an Opponent**
- **The Power of God's Presence**
- **Our Response to God's Presence**
- **The Ultimate Presence in Heaven**
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

It is critical that we understand this

**We tend to think that God is responsible for Evil.
But He makes it perfectly clear,
from the very beginning,
that there is an adversary
which causes our problems.**

**We must not consider the world
as a place where Evil
is just random bad events
that God should fix for us
(and we blame Him for not doing so).**

**Our world is the center of a cosmic struggle
between Good and Evil.**

Quote

**I believe in Christianity
as I believe that the Sun has risen,
not only because I see it
but because **by it,**
I see everything else.**

C.S. Lewis

**God's light allows us to see Goodness and His Plan!
Without it we see only a confused jumble...**

Challenge

Experiencing the Presence of God

**Be still
and know
that I am God.
[Feel the Presence of God]**

Psalm 46:10

Try to find time to be still and be open to God's Presence.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Is it a victory if there is no opponent

**The old joke I keep referring to about the football team
(substitute the name of your favorite rivalry)
played another (your favorite team)
and were being defeated badly.**

**It began to rain so hard that the winning team left,
and six plays later the losing team scored!**

**There are two issues:
our incompetence (our sin)
and the interference we get from our opponent.**

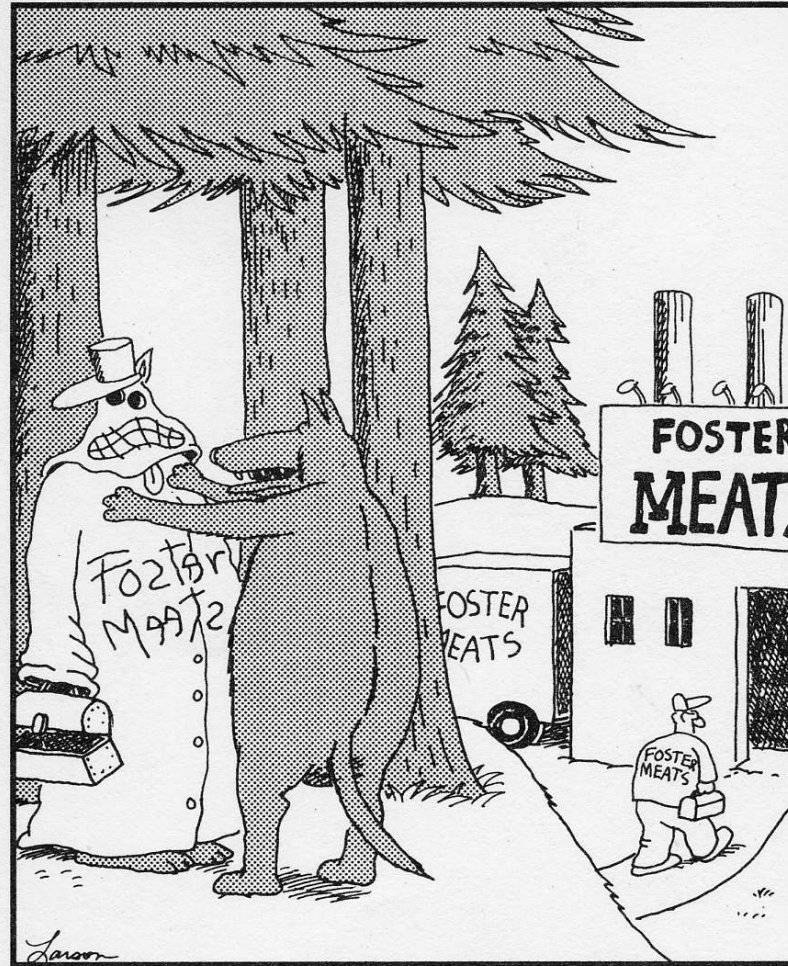
How do we separate them?

**We sometimes defeat ourselves,
but this is also due to the adversary.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He Masks His True Nature to Draw us Away from God



“OK, let’s take a look at you.”

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

We must be able to see the great contrast...

This is love:

**not that we loved God,
but that he loved us
and sent his Son
as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**

1 John 4:10

Satan did nothing like this for us!

Satan's light is like a firefly – compared to God's Light

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

We must be able to see the great contrast...

**Most of us try to live
as if our story does not have a villain.**

John Eldrege

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan was originally an angel of light: Lucifer

Lucifer is the King James Version rendering of the Hebrew word helel or heylel in Isaiah 14:12.

This word occurs once in the Hebrew Bible and according to Strong's Concordance means "shining one, light-bearer".

The Septuagint renders this in Greek as heōsphoros, a name, literally "bringer of dawn", for the morning star.

Later Christian tradition came to use the Latin word for "morning star", lucifer, as a proper name ("Lucifer") for the devil; as he was before his fall.

As a result, "'Lucifer' has become a by-word for Satan/the Devil in the church and in popular literature.

**Satan is actually the prince of darkness
(ref. Martin Luther and John Milton)**

Quote

**It is in hearing
the voice of the devil
that we can better appreciate
the voice of God.**

Dan Brown

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He is always there to attack us

**Our leisure,
even our play,
is a matter of serious concern.**

**There is no neutral ground in the universe:
every square inch,
every split second,
is claimed by God
and **counterclaimed by Satan.****

C.S. Lewis

We are a treasure sought by both God and Satan

**PDE: Just as there is no wavering with God (James 1:17),
We can assume that there is none in Satan's intent either.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He Masks His True Nature to Draw us Away from God

For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers,
masquerading as apostles of Christ.

And no wonder,
for **Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.**

It is not surprising, then,
if his servants also masquerade
as servants of righteousness.

Their end will be what their actions deserve.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

**Satan's light is only a mirage –
a false flickering that cannot compete with God's Light**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He Also Wants to Mask the True Nature of God

**Darkness is not just the absence of light,
but that which is created by blocking the light
as in an eclipse of the sun.**

Satan also endeavors to block the light of God.

**This is like blocking our cell-phone signal;
we all have certain areas where we have no connection.**

**But God's Presence is everywhere,
and we can always make contact.**

**Consider Jonah –
even in the belly of the great fish,
God was able to hear his prayer
and act to deliver him.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan is the prince of darkness

**For our struggle is not against flesh and blood,
but against the rulers,
against the authorities,
against the **powers of this dark world**
and against the spiritual forces of evil
in the heavenly realms.**

Ephesians 6:12

Only God can protect us from the Evil One!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Have you ever felt the presence of Satan?

**Robert Louis Stevenson somewhere says,
“You know the Caledonian Railway Station
in Princes Street, Edinburgh?**

One day I met Satan there.”

**No one knows what experience Stevenson had
but everyone who has any experience of life
knows what he means.**

**There are times when an evil power seems to assault us
and seek to draw us away from God.**

William Barclay

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How do we perceive the spiritual presence of others? (PDE)

**Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers,
for by so doing
some people have shown hospitality to angels
without knowing it.**

Hebrews 13:2

We may also entertain a devil without knowing it.

**I don't judge people -
I'm just a fruit inspector.**

Marshall Keeble

**Which image are we presenting to others
when they “encounter” or “entertain” us?**

**Are we imaging God as we should
or are we imaging Satan?**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Job's Encounter with Satan

**It is unthinkable that God would do wrong,
that the Almighty would pervert justice.**

Job 34:12

**This is a story about Good and Evil,
but the whole story starts with the adversary
challenging the relationship with God.**

**It is most interesting
that Job was never told
about this adversary.**

Teach me what I cannot see.

Job 34:32

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He is called “The Evil One” (1)

Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the **evil one**. Matthew 5:37

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the **evil one**. Matthew 6:13

When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the **evil one** comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. Matthew 13:19

The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the **evil one**, Matthew 13:38

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the **evil one**. [God can protect] John 17:15

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He is called “The Evil One” (2)

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the **evil one**.

Ephesians 6:16

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the **evil one**.

2 Thessalonians 3:3

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the **evil one**. I write to you, dear children, because you have known the Father.

1 John 2:13

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the **evil one**.

1 John 2:14

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

He is called “The Evil One” (3)

Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the **evil one** and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.

1 John 3:12

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the **evil one** cannot harm him.

1 John 5:18

We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the **evil one**.

1 John 5:19

Perhaps it is better to use the description “the evil one”; the concept of Satan may be too “cartoonish” (red pitchfork)

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

We must fight against Evil (and the Evil One)

**Hate evil,
love good...**

Amos 5:15

Love must be sincere.

**Hate what is evil;
cling to what is good.**

Romans 12:9

**Jesus is the true light...
we must fight against the dark
or the false light!**

**Imagine that God sees
the sparks of those who battle back against the Evil One;
the flashing as we use His sword (the Word)**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

We must fight against Evil – we can't just be neutral

**We cannot just Hate Evil:
we must positively pursue the Good!**

**We cannot just remove evil from our lives;
we must fill ourselves with Good.**

**Remember the story of the man
who had an evil spirit removed,
and because he remained “empty”
that spirit and seven others worse than the first
moved in.**

Matthew 12:43-46, Luke 11:24-25

**We may purge out the evil
(as in pumping out a poisonous gas)
but we would still suffocate.**

We must introduce fresh (pure) air to live.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

We must fight against Evil (and the Evil One)

**But we must beware that
we do not
in our arrogance
try to “illuminate God”;**

Many people think that their “good” is sufficient.

**But they simply do not understand
the magnitude of the problem.
(the magnitude of Good or Evil)**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan Aggressively Searches out his Victims

Be alert and of sober mind.

Your enemy
the devil

prowl around like a roaring lion
looking for someone to devour.

1 Peter 5:8

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

C.S. Lewis' Book The Screwtape Letters

C. S. Lewis provides the perspective of a typical human life, with all its temptations and failings, seen from devils' viewpoints.

Screwtape holds an administrative post in the bureaucracy ("Lowerarchy") of Hell, and acts as a mentor to his nephew Wormwood, an inexperienced (and incompetent) tempter.

In the thirty-one letters which constitute the book, Screwtape gives Wormwood detailed advice on various methods of undermining God's words and of promoting abandonment of God in "the Patient", interspersed with observations on human nature and on the Bible.

In Screwtape's advice, selfish gain and power are seen as the only good, and neither demon can comprehend God's love for man or acknowledge human virtue.

The ultimate goal is to feast on the souls of their victims.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Activity

**Satan, it was believed,
would be particularly active
in the last days...**

Scot McKnight

(2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; Revelation)

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Activity

**Don't let anyone deceive you in any way,
for that day will not come
until the rebellion occurs
and the man of lawlessness is revealed,
the man doomed to destruction.**

**He will oppose
and will exalt himself
over everything that is called God or is worshiped,
so that he sets himself up in God's temple,
proclaiming himself to be God.**

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Activity

**For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work;
but the one who now holds it back
will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way.**

**And then the lawless one will be revealed,
whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow
with the breath of his mouth
and destroy by the splendor of his coming.**

**The coming of the lawless one
will be in accordance with how Satan works.**

2 Thessalonians 2:7-9a

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Activity

He will use all sorts of displays of power
through signs and wonders that serve the lie,
and all the ways that wickedness deceives
those who are perishing.

They perish
because they refused to love the truth
and so be saved.

For this reason
God sends them a powerful delusion
so that they will believe the lie
and so that all will be condemned
who have not believed the truth
but have **delighted in wickedness.**

2 Thessalonians 2:9b-12

Quote

**God's presence is not the same
as the feeling of God's presence
and He may be doing most for us
when we think He is doing least.**

C.S. Lewis

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Inertia of Good (or Evil)

Inertia is the resistance of any physical object to any change in its position and state of motion. This includes changes to the object's speed, direction, or state of rest.

Wikipedia

The idea that local dynamics (physics here) is influenced by global properties of the universe (matter everywhere) is called Mach's principle.

John Polkinghorne

The Presence of God and His Goodness draws us towards Him, somewhat like inertia, where the interaction with all of the mass of the universe causes you to feel the "force" all around you.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Inertia of Good (or Evil)

**Consider when someone you know and love dies.
Why does this happen to good people?**

**Satan is the cause of all death –
he set in motion decay and disease...
there is an inertia associated with that as well.**

**We can't impact the inertia of evil
anymore than we can steer the course of the universe
(except in countering with Good whenever we can
and aligning ourselves with God
who is ultimately in control of all things).**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Attraction of Good (or Evil)

The enormous Presence of a massive body distorts space so that other masses are “attracted” to it.

**Good should attract us,
and evil should repel us.**

”Hate evil, Love Good” Amos 5:15

Bodies in close proximity to a gravitational center revolve around it.

Think of people or people from the past that seem to “warp” the space and time around us.

**Jesus (at the Cross)
is such a massively attractive object!
The church revolves around Him!**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Attraction of Good (or Evil)

Consider those who strove to get near Jesus

- the man dropped in from the roof
- Zaccheus
- crowd around the woman with an issue of blood
- many other “crowd” mentions

**There was a swarm of matter (people)
that surrounded and encircled Him.**

God should draw us,

**Satan should repel us; [image of electrical or magnetic force]
neutral is bad (neither hot not cold – spew)**

Who / What are you drawn to?

Choose this day; Joshua 24:15

You cannot serve God and Mammon; Matthew 6:24

Do not be unequally yoked together; 2 Corinthians 6:14

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Main Objective

**Satan's main objective
is to make us
our own worst enemy.**

**We have met the enemy,
and he is us!
from the cartoon "Pogo"**



The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan is a “Schemer”

... in order that Satan might not outwit us.

For we are not unaware of his **schemes**.

2 Corinthians 2:11

Put on the full armor of God,
so that you can take your stand
against the devil's **schemes**.

Ephesians 6:11

We must know the enemy's (other team's) tactics!

These are developed for each of us specifically.

We must prepare to oppose them in the upcoming conflict.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Consider “Stumbling Blocks”

**Stumbling has to do with “not seeing” what lies before us,
whether because we are in the dark,
or we are not paying attention,
or we are moving too fast to maintain stability.**

**We stumble because Satan throws out stumbling blocks
(temptations, distractions, etc.,)
that lead us away from God.**

**We also stumble because we so strongly desire the wrong path
and oppose the Goodness of God
(and the way He accomplishes it).**

[The result of our rebellion against God]

**So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a
distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot
enter.**

Isaiah 59:14

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Consider “Stumbling Blocks” attributed to Evil

Satan and His Evil cause souls to stumble

Idols: Jeremiah 18:15a, Zephaniah 1:3, Ezekiel 14:3

Darkness is the root cause of stumbling –

but we stumble in the light because our heart is darkened

Proverbs 4:19; But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them **stumble**.

Isaiah 59:10; Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. At midday we **stumble** as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead.

John 11:9-10; Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not **stumble**, for they see by this world’s light. It is when a person walks at night that they **stumble**, for they have no light.”

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Consider “Stumbling Blocks” – we must not be the cause

The wicked try to get others to stumble

Proverbs 4:16; For they cannot rest until they do evil; they are robbed of sleep till they make someone **stumble**.

We must not cause stumbling

Leviticus 19:14; Do not curse the deaf or put a **stumbling** block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord.

Malachi 2:8; But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to **stumble**...

PDE: We must try to clear the obstacles, as the trail workers do on the Appalachian Trail.

Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a **stumbling** block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”
Matthew 16:23

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Consider “Stumbling Blocks” – we must not be the cause

We must not cause stumbling

Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to **stumble** are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. If anyone causes one of these little ones - those who believe in me - to **stumble**, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and be thrown into the sea to be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

From Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42, and Luke 17:1-2

[church directive to not put any stumbling block or obstacle in the path of fellow Christians (the church), Jews, Greeks, weak, or unbelievers (ministry)]

Romans 14:13, 1 Corinthians 8:9, 1 Corinthians 10:32,
2 Corinthians 6:3

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Consider “Stumbling Blocks” attributed to God

God's Goodness causes the wicked to stumble

Isaiah 8:14-15 and Romans 9:32-33; He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to **stumble** and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will **stumble**; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured; and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame.

Hosea 14:9; The ways of the Lord are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious **stumble** in them.

Matthew 11:6 and Luke 7:23; “Blessed is anyone who does not **stumble** on account of me.”

1 Corinthians 1:23; but we preach Christ crucified: a **stumbling** block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles...

1 Peter 2:8; They **stumble** because they disobey the message - which is also what they were destined for.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

God Helps Us not to Stumble...

God helps us to not stumble – if we follow His Word

Psalm 17:5 (also Psalm 56:13, 116:8, 119:165); My steps have held to your paths; my feet have not **stumbled**.

Proverbs 3:23 and 4:12; Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not **stumble**. When you walk, your steps will not be hampered; when you run, you will not **stumble**.

Jeremiah 31:9b; I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not **stumble**...

2 Peter 1:10; ... make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never **stumble**,

1 John 2:10; Anyone who loves their brother and sister lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them **stumble**.

Jude 1:24; To him who is able to keep you from **stumbling** and to present you before his glorious presence without fault ...

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

... and helps us when we do Stumble

God helps us when we do stumble

Job 4:4; Your words have supported those who **stumbled**; you have strengthened faltering knees.

Psalm 37:24; though he may **stumble**, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.

Have you ever stumbled?

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack

- **Fiery Darts (pain, death of others, physical and mental attacks, etc.)**
- **Misdirection (lies, confusion, false promises, etc.)**
- **Distraction (temptations, isolation, emphasis on the world, etc.)**
- **Separation (from the Presence, etc.)**
- **Power (to disrupt the world, to attack when we are weak)**
- **Numb our feelings (sear our conscience, etc.)**

Not a complete list!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Fiery Darts

**... take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish
all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [fiery darts, KJV]
Ephesians 6:16**

**God sees the fiery darts that Satan throws at us!
He does not stop them from hitting us,
but helps us to stop the danger.**

**We are in the position of someone trying to catch a ball
when a group of other items are being thrown at us
or are flying around us.**

God can help us discriminate the right target.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Fiery Darts

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.

Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.

Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Luke 13:1-5

Jesus made it clear that this terrible act was not due to those people being worse sinners than others, but He did not comment on the fact that God allowed this evil to happen. He simply moved on to motivate the crowd to pursue God.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Misdirection

**You belong to your father,
the devil,
and you want to carry out your father's desires.**

**He was a murderer from the beginning,
not holding to the truth,
for there is no truth in him.**

**When he lies,
he speaks his native language,
for he is a liar
and the father of lies.**

John 8:44

Satan uses "judo" moves to use our strengths against us.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Misdirection

For such people are **false** apostles,
deceitful workers,
masquerading as apostles of Christ.

And no wonder,
for Satan himself **masquerades**
as an angel of light.

It is not surprising, then,
if his servants also **masquerade**
as servants of righteousness.

Their end will be what their actions deserve.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

Satan and his followers try to appear as Good.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Misdirection

**Even amongst Christians
who do believe in the devil's existence,
there is often a marked blindness
about the reality of spiritual warfare
and the nature of the enemy's tactics.**

David Watson

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

More on the Dark Valleys (Misdirection)

**Looking back,
my wife Jan and I have learned
that the wilderness is part of the landscape of faith,
and every bit as essential as the mountaintop.**

On the mountaintop, we are overwhelmed by God's presence.

In the wilderness, we are overwhelmed by his absence.

**Both places should bring us to our knees;
the one in utter awe;
the other in utter dependence.**

Dave Drevecky

**Dark Valleys are a means of misdirection,
that Satan uses us to take our eye off of the prize.**

We need both mountains and valley to get the full picture!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

More on the Dark Valleys

**Many of us, without realizing it,
have walked the Emmaus road (see Luke 24: 13– 32).**

Sorrow overwhelms us.

the Emmaus road: a dark valley

Questions plague us.

We wonder where God is...

when all along he walks beside us.

Randy Alcorn

**As the Heavens declare God's glory
in the absence of other light,
so God shows himself against the backdrop
of evil and suffering –
if only we are willing to look...
and to discover that seeing him
is worth even the cold darkness.**

Randy Alcorn

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

More on the Dark Valleys

**Vance Havner observed,
“No journey is complete
that does not lead through some dark valleys.**

**We can properly comfort others
only with the comfort
wherewith we ourselves have been comforted of God.”
Criswell Freeman**

**We tend to think of a single dark valley,
when we may be in a series of them
that make up a complicated maze.**

God sees from above and can guide us through it.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

More on the Dark Valleys

[refer to Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27]

**Our problems are overwhelming,
and we think we are going under for the last time.**

God says this to you:

**You may lose the cargo;
you may lose the tackle of the ship;
you may lose the ship;
you may even get wet –
but you are going to make it
because of the promise of God.**

Rick Warren

**Anchor yourself on the truths of God
and pray for daylight.**

Rick Warren

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

More on the Dark Valleys

[refer to Paul's shipwreck in Acts 27]

**The first anchor in a crisis
is the presence of God.**

**In the midst of the storm Paul said,
“Last night an angel of the God
whose I am and whom I serve
stood beside me and said,
‘Do not be afraid, Paul’” (Acts 27: 23– 24).**

**From this we learn
that storms can never hide us from God.**

**We may not see him,
but he sees us.**

Message to all on ship:

**Follow God and He will
take care of you -**

- in this present case**
- In all spiritual cases**

Rick Warren

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Distraction

**Distraction is similar to Misdirection –
its goal is to keep our thoughts
going in the wrong direction,
and pursuing the wrong things.**

**Just as the Dark Valley is one method of Misdirection,
the “desert”
(feeling apart from fellowship and support)
can be a great distraction.**

**The Bible refers to the desert
more than any other physical place.**

Anne Neilson

**Consider the experiences of Hagar/Ishmael, the Israelites, David,
Elijah, John the Baptist, and Jesus.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Distraction

**Jesus was also distracted by Satan and the world,
but He did not let the distractions affect His behavior –
He remained Perfect!**

**When the burdens and distractions of the world
began to weight up on Him,
He would go up on the mountain
and commune with God
to re-focus.**

We need to stop often to re-focus as well...

**PDE: Jesus was aware (and tempted), but not actually diverted
from His mission and perfect life.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Misdirection, Distraction

Satan in his temptations

**tries to get us to focus on ourselves,
satisfying our desires,
instead of pleasing God.**

**We must be able to perceive the mind-bending over-arching
extent of the glory and magnitude of God.**

**We must act because we love His Goodness
and let go of our own wishes and "needs"
to further that Kingdom.**

**Satan gets inside our heads...
But God does, too!**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Separation and Isolation

**Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness,
where he thought He would be isolated; separated from God.**

**But Jesus was led there by the Spirit,
and Satan failed in his attempt to destroy Jesus' work.**

**When the devil left Him, angels came and attended Him.
see Matthew 4:4-11 and Luke 4:1-13**

Jesus felt the presence of the Evil One very closely...

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Separation and Isolation

**Satan also expected that Jesus
would be isolated on the cross,
and separated from God.**

**Imagine his delight when Jesus cried,
“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” [Matt 27:46]**

**[Remember that the whole Psalm is really referred to –
the crisis and the resolution!]**

**But the isolation was only temporary
and the ultimate victory was God's
in that He resurrected His Son
so that those who believed would be saved
from the clutches of the evil one.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Separation and Isolation

Who shall **separate** us from the love of Christ?

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine
or nakedness or danger or sword? ...

No, in all these things

we are more than conquerors [beyond our expectations!]
through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life,

neither angels nor demons,

neither the present nor the future,

nor any powers,

neither height nor depth,

nor anything else in all creation,

will be able to **separate** us from the love of God

that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Power over Weakness

**Satan attacked Jesus with temptations
after He had fasted for forty days and forty nights
and was very hungry.**

**He tempted Him to created His own food
from the stones around Him.**

**Then the devil offered power over injury,
asking Him to jump off the temple peak.**

Then the devil offered to share power over the world.

**In each case,
Jesus responded with the Word,
which was God,
and was victorious over Satan.**

Satan's power was only temporary.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Power

Competing with God:

**Satan desires
to take authority away from God
and be as God.**

From Barry Banks:

**Satan was unsure on how to attack (deal with)
the combined divine/human
incarnate nature of Jesus.**

He grossly underestimated both!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Power – Prince of the air (KJV)

... you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
in which you used to live
when you followed the ways of this world
and of **the ruler of the kingdom of the air**,
the spirit who is now at work
in those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 2:1-2

**Satan has been allowed certain powers
over the world and its people.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan Holds the Power of Death

**Since the children have flesh and blood,
he too shared in their humanity
so that by his death
he might break the power
of him
who holds the power of death [temporarily] –
that is, the devil –
and free those
who all their lives
were held in slavery
by their fear of death.
Hebrews 2:14-15**

**Satan has been allowed certain powers
over the world and its people.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Misdirection and Distraction

The Spirit clearly says
that in later times some will abandon the faith
and follow **deceiving** spirits
and things taught by **demons**.

Such teachings come through hypocritical **liars**,
whose consciences have been **seared**
as with a hot iron.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Misdirection and Distraction

You belong to your father, the **devil**, and you want to carry out your father's desires. **He was a murderer from the beginning**, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for **he is a liar and the father of lies.**

John 8:44

Satan is real.

His main identity is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8: 44).

His way of lying is more by deception than bold-face falsehoods.

**He “is called the devil and Satan,
he deceiver of the whole world” (Rev. 12:9).**

Therefore, he hates “the Spirit of truth” (John 15:26).

John Piper

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Modes of Attack: Separation and Isolation

Even if our gospel is veiled,
it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In their case **the god of this world**
has **blinded** the minds of the unbelievers,
to keep them from seeing the light [he blocks the light]
of the gospel of the glory of Christ,
who is the image of God.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

“The god of this world” is Satan. [hsl: temporarily!]

He is called “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30),
and John says that

“the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”
(1 John 5: 19)

John Piper

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Jesus Describes Satanic Activity in Some Parables

Represented by the birds, thorns, and rocky soil in the parable of the sower.

(Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15)

Weeds among the good plants in the parable of the tares.

(Matthew 13:24, 30, 36-43)

Satan is also represented in miracles where demons (or unclean spirits) are cast out.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Satan's Basic Formula

**An ever-increasing craving
for an ever-diminishing pleasure
is the formula.**

C.S. Lewis

**PDE: Indeed, Satan works to entrap us continually more deeply
and more firmly.**

... let us throw off everything that **hinders
and the sin that so easily **entangles**.**

**And let us run with perseverance
the race marked out for us...**

Hebrews 12:1

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Our Modes of Defense

- **Connect to God**
- **Prayer**
- **Be Filled with the Spirit**
- **Embrace the Proper Perspective**
- **Put on the Armor of God**
- **Confront the Enemy**
- **Accept Counsel**
- **Fellowship**

Not a complete list!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Connect to God

**Jesus felt very strongly
the presence of the Evil One.**

Consider how Jesus acted in Satan's presence.

**During the temptations,
He brought God and His Word into play each time.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One - Prayer

Many of the Psalms are prayers for deliverance from Evil.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me; your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

Psalms 23:4

Deliver me from evildoers

and save me from those

who are after my blood.

Psalms 59:2

Rescue me, Lord, from evildoers;

Psalms 140:1a

Keep me safe from the traps set by evildoers,

from the snares they have laid for me.

Psalms 141:9

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One - Prayer

This is also a key in the Lord's Prayer:

**“And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.”**

Matthew 6:13

David wrote something similar:

**“I called (will call) on the Lord,
and I am (will be) saved from my enemies.”**

Psalms 18:6 (various translations)

Prayer – Physical Position

What is the Best Position for Prayer?

Three preachers sat discussing the best positions for prayer while a telephone repairman worked nearby.

"Kneeling is definitely best," claimed one.

"No," another contended. "I get the best results standing with my hands outstretched to Heaven."

"You're both wrong," the third insisted. "The most effective prayer position is lying prostrate, face down on the floor."

The repairman could contain himself no longer. "Hey, fellas," he interrupted, "the best prayin' I ever did was hangin' upside down from a telephone pole."

What has been your best praying moment or position?

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One - Prayer

**Scripture teaches that as we pray,
we know we are welcomed
into God's presence...**

Norman H. Wright

**God has the "infinite" capability
to hear, understand, and process
into the big scheme of things
the prayers of each one of us.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Be Filled with the Spirit

**Do not get drunk on wine,
which leads to debauchery.**

Instead, be filled with the Spirit...

Ephesians 5:18

**This is about being filled with anything that is not God
(not just drink).**

**We must love the Holy Spirit,
for helping us see and feel the Presence of God,
as we love the other two persons of the Godhead.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Be Filled with the Spirit

**“When an impure spirit comes out of a person,
it goes through arid places seeking rest
and does not find it.**

Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’

**When it arrives,
it finds the house unoccupied,
swept clean and put in order.
[spiritual nature also abhors a vacuum]**

**Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits
more wicked than itself,
and they go in and live there.**

Matthew 12:43-45a

**This is somewhat similar to the story of the Prodigal Son,
determining that he should return home.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Be Filled with the Spirit

**And the final condition of that person
is worse than the first.**

That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”

Matthew 12:45b

We must not let anything but God fill us!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Be Filled with the Spirit

**The story of silicon carbide –
graphite pieces infused with silicon vapor.**

Silicon Carbide:

- 1) begin with the good manufacturability of graphite (carbon – 18.5% of human body)**
- 2) infuse it with silicon vapor at high temperature in a furnace vapor (silicon – 15% of earth's crust)**
- 3) the result is one of the hardest compounds ever (9 to 9.5 vs 10 for diamond on Moh's scale); only 0.5% volume growth**
- 4) The seams between assembled pieces are no longer detectible**
- 5) Surface did not warp in harsh (cryogenic) conditions**

Melting out the stainless steel bolt that was stuck.

The Holy Spirit can seamlessly re-integrate our broken souls!

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Proper Perspective

Daniel's Friends Threatened with the Fiery Furnace

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him,

“King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. [they still showed respect to the King]

But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that **we will not serve your gods** or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

Daniel 3:16-18

We must also recognize God's ability to deliver and have the confidence that even if He did not, that they trusted in Him.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Proper Perspective

Hebrews 11: God's Heroes

All these people were still living by faith when they died.

They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.

People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.

If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

Instead, **they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one.**

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:13-16

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Proper Perspective

Paul's Dilemma

For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and **be with Christ**, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Philippians 1:21-26

Paul sees the value in this life and the next!

Quote

**Only when you look
into the gospel of Jesus Christ
does all the goodness of God pass before you,
and it's not the back parts anymore.**

Tim Keller

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your **stand against the devil's schemes**.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the **full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Ephesians 6:10-13

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

This Present Darkness, Ephesians 6:12

We wrestle against the:

**world rulers or governors / cosmic or mighty powers / forces /
universal lords or princes / authorities of / over this present
worldly darkness**

**[master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present
darkness**

**worldly governors, the princes of the darkness of this world
lords of this age, rulers of this darkness**

**evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and
great evil princes of darkness who rule this world**

**leaders and the powers and the spirits of darkness in this world
powers that rule the world in this dark age**

**a powerful class of demon-gods and evil spirits that hold this
dark world in bondage**

**supernatural powers and demon princes that slither in the
darkness of this world**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – The Armor of God

Stand firm then, with the

belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the
breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your
feet fitted with the readiness that comes
from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the

shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish
all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take the

helmet of salvation and the
sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:14-17

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – The Armor of God

**We must be aware of the Presence of God
and His protection of our Soul,
no matter what happens!**

**Nothing is "engineer-proof", "bullet-proof", or "cancer-proof";
but if our soul reaches for God,
then there is no power on earth or heaven
that can separate us from His Presence!**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – The Armor of God

**Think of those who have been killed (by the Evil One)
in an attempt to cover up the truth:**

**Jesus,
Stephen,
James,
Paul,
see Heb 11;
also Old Testament prophets**

**Jerusalem, Jerusalem,
you who kill the prophets
and stone those sent to you...**

Matthew 23:37

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One - Confront

**When Peter was being used as a puppet of Satan,
Jesus turned and looked at His disciples
and said to Peter,**

“Get behind me, Satan!

**You are a stumbling block to me;
you do not have in mind the concerns of God,
but merely human concerns.”**

Matthew 16:23 and Mark 8:33

**From Morris: Jesus was really speaking to Satan,
but Peter was used as the “vehicle”;
similarly the Pharisees and Sadducees.**

Other indications of Satan using people:

- **Judas**
- **Ananias and Sapphira**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One - Confront

**God loves to see
the sparks of those
who battle back against the Evil One.**

**Visualize the flashing of swords
in a swordfight!**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Accept Counsel

Jesus warned Peter that he was under attack:

“Simon, Simon,
Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat.

But I have prayed for you,
Simon, that your faith may not fail.

And when you have turned back,
strengthen your brothers.”

Luke 22:31-32

PDE: Jesus could have chosen to totally isolate Peter – but He did not. Jesus did pray for Him in addition to the warning; He also told Peter to help the others.

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Fellowship

We have to gather together to help each other.

**We need to be with other people,
forming bonds and relationships
to strengthen the whole.**

**Stardust forms a planet in the gravitational grip
as it revolves around a star.**

**We circle God, but do it together with others
as a group or family.**

Fellowship is the means of gaining power and substance.

They all joined together constantly in prayer...

Acts 1:14

We bear each others burdens (Galatians 6:2)

We gather together for encouragement (Hebrews 10:25)

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Fellowship

**We become a church, a family, a fellowship
because we have a common purpose and faith.**

But how does evil conglomerate?

Evil generates hatred, arrogance, backstabbing, etc.

**Consider Hell as the absence of Good
(and of God),**

especially the absence of Love for each other.

We reject God in favor of self (as did Adam and Eve).

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Fellowship with Believers

[The Fellowship of the Believers]

They devoted themselves
to the apostles' teaching
and to **fellowship**,
to the breaking of bread
and to prayer.

Acts 2:42

[Support when needed...]

James, Cephas and John,
those esteemed as pillars,
gave me and Barnabas
the right hand of **fellowship**
when they recognized the grace given to me.

Galatians 2:9

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

How to Deal with the Evil One – Fellowship with the Triune God

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard,
so that you also may have **fellowship** with us.

And our **fellowship** is with
the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:3

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:14

We fellowehip with each person of the Godhead!

The Presence of an Opponent

We are Fallen, But God Loves Us

There is Beauty in the Flawed Universe

**God is attracted to us even though we are flawed
(due to Satan's attack)!**

**God sees Good in us
(we are not evil, but sinners);
as we see Good in our flawed and dying universe.**

Consider flowers, animals, mountains, sunsets, etc.

But We must recognize the impact of Evil!

**Let the beauty of the (flawed) earth be to me
a sacrament which makes real
the beauty of holiness revealed
in Jesus Christ my Lord.**

John Baillie

The Presence of an Opponent

We are Fallen, But God Loves Us

There is Beauty in the Flawed Universe – And it Leads to God

**... now that you have enjoyed
these works of art,
you must shake hands
with the artist;**

**since you were thrilled
by the music,
we will introduce you
to the composer.**

J. I. Packer

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Seriousness of Our Problem

So I find this law at work:

**Although I want to do good,
evil is right there with me.**

**For in my inner being I delight in God's law;
but I see another law at work in me,
waging war against the law of my mind
and making me a prisoner
of the law of sin at work within me.**

What a wretched man I am!

**Who will rescue me from this body
that is subject to death?**

Romans 7:21-24

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- **Preparation for God's Presence**
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- **The Presence of an Opponent**
- **The Power of God's Presence**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Power of Our Solution

**Thanks be to God,
who delivers me
through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

Romans 7:25

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

The Power of Our Solution

**Therefore,
there is now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus,
because through Christ Jesus
the law of the Spirit
who gives life
has set you free
from the law of sin and death.**

**For what the law was powerless to do
because it was weakened by the flesh,
God did
by sending his own Son
in the likeness of sinful flesh
to be a sin offering.**

Romans 8:1-3

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is With Us!

**In the beginning,
God walked with Adam and Eve
in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:8)**

**When mankind fell,
it seemed that God's Presence was gone.**

**But God came back,
in the form of man,
in the person of Jesus Christ.**

We are under attack and need a Savior!

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down" (besides walking with man in the garden...)

[Egyptian Bondage]

The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So **I have come down** to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey..." Exodus 3:7-10

[Tower of Babel]

... **the LORD came down** to see the city and the tower the people were building. Genesis 11:5

[The Sin of Sodom and Gomorrah]

... **I will go down** and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. Genesis 18:21

God has a Plan for His Presence to Save Us!

Quote

As Saint Augustine put it:

**“The effect of their activities
is to assist the progress of the faithful ...**

**An argument aroused by an adversary
turns out to be
an opportunity for instruction.”**

From Scott Hahn

Satan is also referred to as the “Accuser”

**Attacks by atheists (books, magazines, etc.)
yield significant positive reaction by believers in God.**

The Presence of an Opponent

There is an Adversary: Satan

Summary of the Problem and the Solution

**We cannot keep from sinning,
and are completely guilty.**

**We are in a wretched state
and need rescuing!**

**Jesus is the Solution!
He gave Himself
to remove our guilt.**

There is now no condemnation through Him!

**We must embrace His Presence!
(Embrace His Grace!]**

Outline

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- **Our Response to God's Presence**
- **The Ultimate Presence in Heaven**
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down"

When man fell, God was ready with the Plan...

[Many feel that this was the first prophecy of the coming Christ]
[God, condemning the serpent (Satan)]

And I will put enmity
 between you and the woman,
 and between your offspring and hers;
He will crush your head,
 and you will strike his heel.

Genesis 3:15

[In light of the prophetic meaning,
perhaps the last phrase should be:]

... you (Satan) will strike his heel
 but he (man/Christ) will crush your head!

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down"

In my distress I called to the LORD; [note the preface in vss 1-5]
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.
The earth trembled and quaked,
and the foundations of the mountains shook;
they trembled because he was angry.
Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.
He parted the heavens and **came down**...

Psalm 18:6-9a

God comes with power! (though it may be hidden)

He stooped down to make us great! (earlier NIV)

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[God blesses Abraham when He asks him to leave his home
but He went with Him (led rather than sent)]

I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and **all peoples on earth**
will be blessed through you."

Genesis 12:3

Echoed:

during the covenant incident in **Genesis 22:18**
at a time of famine in **Genesis 26:2-5**
to Jacob at Bethel in **Genesis 28:14**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Highlight on the Story of God's Presence to Jacob

Jacob is a deceiver, and has to run for his life; Gen 27:36ff
Jacob sees a stairway to heaven, with God at the top, at Bethel;
Gen 28:10ff

On his return home, he meets angels at a place he calls “the
camp of God”; Gen 32:1

He then wrestles with an angel and is given credit (and a change
of name to Israel) for struggling with God; he claims, “**I saw
God face to face**, and yet my life was spared”; Gen 32:30

When he meets Esau, he says, “For **to see your face is like
seeing the face of God**, now that you have received me
favorably” Gen 33:10

Finally, he returns to Bethel to live and builds another altar there
to God, as instructed by God “who appeared to you when
you were fleeing from your brother Esau... who answered
me in the day of my distress and **who has been with me
wherever I have gone.**” Gen 35:1-4

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

**God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.**

[Jacob blesses Judah with the prophecy from God]

**The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until he to whom it belongs shall come
and the obedience of the nations shall be his.**

Genesis 49:10

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[Isaiah predicts that God will become man...]

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:

The virgin will conceive
and give birth to a son,
and will call him Immanuel [God with us].

Isaiah 7:14

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[Isaiah predicts that the child will be called God...]

... there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

... The people walking in darkness [^ no condemnation]
have seen a great light; [Jesus is the Light]
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.

... For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [son -> Father]

Isaiah 9:1-6

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

**God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.**

**[Isaiah predicts that the child will rule
an everlasting kingdom God...]**

**Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.**

**He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.**

**The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.**

Isaiah 9:1-8

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

**God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.**

[Isaiah predicts that the child come from Jesse (David)]

**A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.**

**The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord -
and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.**

Isaiah 11:1-3a

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

**God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.**

[Isaiah predicts that the child come from Jesse (David)]

**He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice
he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.**

**... Righteousness will be his belt [armor of God, Eph 6]
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.**

**... They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.**

Isaiah 11:3b-9

Quote

A reporter asked Mother Teresa,
“When a baby dies alone in a Calcutta alley,
where is God?”

Her response?

“God is there,
suffering with that baby.

The question really is.
where are you?”

Randy Alcorn

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down"

When man fell, God was ready with the Plan...

First prophecy of the coming Christ and condemnation of Satan
Genesis 3:15

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Isaiah predicts that God will become man and be with us,
ruling over an everlasting kingdom
Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:1-8

Isaiah predicts that the child come from Jesse (David)]
Isaiah 11:3b-9

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will save all peoples]

... It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.

I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach
to the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 49:6

PDE: God called Israel to be what the Gentiles needed.

PDE: The theme of these passages is of God's pursuit of the lost

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will be a suffering Savior]

... He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

... Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities; [though we rejected Him]
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:1-5

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will be a suffering Savior]

... We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way; [rejecting Him]
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

Isaiah 53:6-7

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.

[Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will be a suffering Savior]

... After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge
my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he **poured out his life unto death**, [Phil. 2:5-11]
and was numbered with the transgressors.

For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:8-11

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Development of the Plan

**God begins to prepare His people,
and speak of a deliverer available for all mankind.**

**There are many more prophecies
in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets
to show that the Messiah was coming.**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Wise Men

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born **king of the Jews**? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the **Messiah** was to be born.

Matthew 2:1-4

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

**Jesus Entered the World as a Tiny, Newborn Baby -
And Died on a Cross**

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... [and as such it is truly the greatest story every told!]

... we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles...

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

... God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

1 Corinthians 1

... and He lived the fullest possible human experience!

Jesus was in the world, and on the Cross!

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The View of the People (1)

There was no Jew who did not regard his own nation as the chosen people. But the Jews saw quite clearly that by human means their nation could never attain to the supreme world greatness which they believed their destiny involved. By far the greater number of them believed that because the Jews were the chosen people they were bound some day to become masters of the world and lords of all the nations. To bring in that day some believed that some great, celestial champion would descend upon the earth; some believed that there would arise another king of David's line and that all the old glories would revive; some believed that God himself would break directly into history by supernatural means.

William Barclay

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The View of the People (2)

But in contrast to all that there were some few people who were known as the **Quiet in the Land**. They had no dreams of violence and of power and of armies with banners; they believed in a life of constant prayer and quiet watchfulness until God should come. All their lives they waited quietly and patiently upon God. Simeon was like that; in prayer, in worship, in humble and faithful expectation he was waiting for the day when God would comfort his people. God had promised him through the Holy Spirit that his life would not end before he had seen God's own Anointed King. In the baby Jesus he recognized that King and was glad. Now he was ready to depart in peace.

William Barclay

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Simeon (1)

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. **It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.** Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

Luke 2:25-32

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Simeon (2)

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Luke 2:33-35

Simeon realized that this baby was the promised Savior!

How did Mary receive this information?
(She kept these things in her heart – Luke 2:19)

The earth would have to wait until it grew up!

Quote

**Oh! What a Savior,
gracious to all!
Oh! How His blessings
round us fall.
Gently to comfort,
kindly to cheer,
Sleeping or waking,
God is near.**

Fanny J. Crosby

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down"

When man fell, God was ready with the Plan...

**First prophecy of the coming Christ and condemnation of Satan
Genesis 3:15**

**God blessed Abraham and all peoples through him
Genesis 12:3**

Jacob promised a special ruler through Judah Genesis 49:10

**Isaiah predicts that God will become man and be with us,
ruling over an everlasting kingdom
Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 9:1-8**

**Isaiah predicts that the child come from Jesse (David)]
Isaiah 11:3b-9**

Isaiah predicts a suffering Savior Isaiah 53

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down"

The critical plan came with Jesus was born...

The Magi came to honor the Christ child. Matthew 2:1-4

The "foolishness" or "weakness" of this plan is the root of the "Greatest Story Every Told". 1 Corinthians 1

The "Quiet in the Land" people looked for the real Messiah.

Simeon was promised to see the Messiah before he died. Luke 2:25-35

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Anna

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to **all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.**

Luke 2:36-52

Anna is a great model for us in her prayer life and dedication.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Samaritan Woman

The woman said,

“I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming.

When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

Then Jesus declared,

“I, the one speaking to you - I am he.”

John 4:25-26

“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Could this be the Messiah?”

John 4:29

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Martha

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

John 11:23-27

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Jewish Leaders

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the **Messiah**? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

Matthew 22:41-42

But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: **Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.**”

Matthew 26:63

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Other People

[Jesus Raises a Widow's Son]

**They were all filled with awe
and praised God.**

“A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said.

“God has come to help his people.”

Luke 7:16

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Other People

Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, "When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?"

John 7:31

Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others asked, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?"

John 7:41-42

Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Messiah?

John 7:26

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."

Luke 23:35

Quote

**At the heart of Christianity lies
the astonishing, mysterious, exciting,
and I believe true,
conviction that the infinite and invisible God
has acted to make the divine nature known
in the clearest and most accessible way,
in the Word of God
taking flesh
as the man Jesus Christ.**

John Polkinghorne

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God "Came Down"

The Magi came to honor the Christ child. Matthew 2:1-4

The "foolishness" or "weakness" of this plan is the root of the "Greatest Story Every Told". 1 Corinthians 1

The "Quiet in the Land" people looked for the real Messiah.

Simeon was able to see the Messiah before he died. Luke 2:25ff

Anna, right after this, also was given the opportunity to embrace the Messiah. Luke 2:36-52

The Samaritan woman, and the people of her town, expected the Messiah. John 4

Martha believed in Jesus as the Messiah. John 11:23-27

Even the Pharisees expected a Messiah. Mt 22:41-42 and 25:63

Friends of the widow of Nain saw God had come down to help. Luke 7:16

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Other People Expected a Messiah

Still, many in the crowd believed in him. They said, “When the **Messiah** comes, will he perform more signs than this man?”

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Luke 23:35

The Power of God's Presence

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Other People Expected a Messiah

Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the **Messiah?** John 7:26

Among the crowds there was widespread whispering about him. Some said, "He is a good man." Others replied, "No, he deceives the people." John 7:12

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.**" [we must realize this every day]
Matthew 16:13-16

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

John The Baptist Expected a Messiah

John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, he sent them to the Lord to ask, **“Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”**

When the men came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’”

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.

So he replied to the messengers, “Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

Luke 7:18-23

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Apostles Expected a Messiah

The first thing Andrew did
was to find his brother Simon and tell him,
“We have found the **Messiah**” (that is, the Christ).

John 1:41

Simon Peter answered,
“You are the **Messiah**, the Son of the living God.”

Matthew 16:16

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Bread of Life: God with Us, Coming Down!

I am the living bread
that **came down** from heaven.

Whoever eats this bread
will live forever.

This bread is my flesh,
which I will give
for the life of the world.”

John 6:51

When Christ began to dig into the details,
the crowds began to fall away and not follow anymore.

Their expectations were of a hero-king,
not a suffering Savior!

They did not feel their guilt.

He **came down** to strengthen us so that we might live!

Quote

**The intensity of a fire is measured
not only by the heat it gives off
but also by the number of nearby objects
it ignites.**

Paul Borthwick

**Are we just bright and shiny,
or do we ignite others
with our love for God and man?**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Other People Expected a Messiah

Many in the crowds that followed Jesus

The religious authorities

The apostles

John the Baptist

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Emptying into Our World

**Kenosis (Greek: the act of emptying)
is the 'self-emptying' of Jesus' own will
and becoming entirely receptive
to God's divine will.**

**Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, **he made himself nothing** [vs 7a]
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death -
even death on a cross!**

Philippians 2:6-8

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Emptying into Our World

Kenoo (Philippians 2:7, various versions)
made Himself of no reputation
emptied himself
stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity]
he gave up everything
he made himself nothing,
he gave up his place with God
of his own free will he gave up all he had
poured out in emptiness
laid aside his mighty power and glory
set aside the privileges of deity
He put aside everything that belonged to Him
he gave up his divine privileges
poured out and emptied himself
he emptied himself of his outward glory by reducing himself
He poured Himself out to fill a vessel brand new

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Emptying (temporarily)

Emptying onto us (voluntarily) to give us strength!
He is the living Bread, the living Water, the Light;
even though he emptied, He is not nothing.

Think of taking off your suit clothes
to work on your car.

He emptied Himself,
because He (and God) loved us,
then was gathered back up
and now stands
rejuvenated
at the Right Hand of God.

Christ emptied much of His Godly power,
but He lost none of His love for us.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Emptying (temporarily)

This “emptying” of godly power,
worked against the nominal expectations of man
(the wisdom of God vs the foolishness of man).

Our interpretation of God's solution
depends on our understanding of the real problem.

The Jews' idea of the problem was that
as God's chosen people they should be rulers of the world,
and a “heroic” leader was needed to accomplish this.

This was the wrong problem.

The real problem is that man has sinned
and fallen short of the glory of God;
therefore we need a suffering Savior
to bear our punishment,
and restore our relationship with God.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Poured Out for Us

[the sacrament for the new covenant between God and man]

... after the supper he took the cup, saying,

“This is my blood of the covenant,
which is **poured out for many**
for the forgiveness of sins.

Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20

Exalted to the right hand of God,
he has received from the Father
the promised Holy Spirit
and has **poured out**
what you now see and hear.

Acts 2:33

Christ poured out His heart to us!

Quote

**True friends
are those rare people
who come to find you in dark places
and lead you back to the light.**

Steven Aitchison

**PDE: Especially those who
search you out when you are in a dark place ...**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Poured Out for Us

[the sacrament for the new covenant between God and man]

...This is my blood of the covenant... **poured out for many**
Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20

... the promised Holy Spirit ... has **poured out**

Acts 2:33

... God's love has been **poured out into our hearts**
through the Holy Spirit,

Romans 5:5

[prophecy] I will **pour out** my Spirit on all people...

Acts 2:17-18

Christ poured out His heart into our hearts!

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Poured into Us (PDE)

For God, who said,
“Let light shine out of darkness,”
made his light shine **in our hearts**
to give us the light of the knowledge
of God's **glory**
displayed in the face of Christ.

But we have **this treasure**
in jars of clay
to show that this all-surpassing power
is from God
and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

**We must be able to receive this treasure.
We must not be a “bag with holes in it (Haggai 1:6)**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We must pour ourselves out

**“For through the law I died to the law
so that I might live for God.
I have been crucified with Christ
and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me.
The life I now live in the body,
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me
and gave himself for me.**

Galatians 2:19-20

**But even if I am being poured out
like a drink offering
on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith,
I am glad and rejoice with all of you.**

Philippians 2:17

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We must pour ourselves out

Song #655: Poured Out Like Wine

(Traditional)

**Would you be poured out like wine
upon the altar for Me?**

**Would you be broken like bread to
feed the hungry?**

**For I am already being poured out
like a drink offering,
and the time
for my departure is near.**

2 Timothy 4:6

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God Loves His Creation (Especially Mankind)

God has Sorrow when His children do not love Him and disobey (do not align themselves) with His Will.

He indicates **regret** (NIV: two cases, two verses each):

- 1) making human beings / human race (Genesis 6:6-7).
- 2) making Saul king (1 Samuel 15:11, 35)

He indicates **sorrow** (NIV: two cases)

- 1) Jesus' lament over Jerusalem (Luke 13:31 – heading)
- 2) Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26, etc.)

He **wept** (NIV: two cases)

- 1) over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41)
- 2) at Lazarus' grave (John 11:35)

He does not indicate **remorse** (NIV: no cases)
(remorse is a lasting sorrow)

This Jesus is not separated from God –
thus God has these emotions as well.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

He Came Down to "Camp" with Us

In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things were made;
without him nothing was made that has been made.

In him was life,
and that life was the light of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:1-5

The fine details of God's plan are beyond our comprehension.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

He Came Down to "Camp" with Us

The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us.

We have seen his glory,
the glory of the one and only Son,
who came from the Father,
full of grace and truth.

John 1:14

We as creatures need a bridge to the Creator - this is Christ.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

He Came Down to "Camp" with Us

John 1:14: He "pitched His tent among us"

Various translations and paraphrases:

- dwelt among us
- lived here on earth with / among us
- tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us
- made his home with / among us
- made his home; pitched his tabernacle
- took up residence among us
- moved into the neighborhood
- made his dwelling among us
- chose to live alongside us

**He came to stay with us for the long-term,
not like a quick delivery by FedEx.**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

He Came Down to "Camp" with Us

The Prologue [of John's Gospel] speaks of the union of the eternal with the temporal.

The Greek word translated 'lived' literally means 'was **entented**', reference to the Tabernacle that accompanied the wilderness wanderings of Israel as a covenanted symbol of the divine presence with them.

For John, the incarnate Word is [the] true form of the divine **presence** with humanity...

His approach to divine presence in Jesus is simply to say that 'God [the Creator] chose to be present as [a] creature'...

John Polkinghorne

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Camping Together to Share the Experience

Camping with Zach at Arrowhead when he was about 5 yrs old – I set up the tent, we cooked dinner, and I put him to bed.

After I read him a story, I told him that I was going out to the fire and talk to the other fathers for a while.

He looked at me and said,

“You’re just kidding me, aren’t you?”

So I stayed in the tent with him.

We are Comforted by the Presence of Someone Stronger

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Understanding our Experience

**For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses,
but we have one who has been tempted in every way,
just as we are
- yet he did not sin.**

Hebrews 4:15

He Showed Us He Understands by "Tenting" with Us

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Kenosis: Emptying into Our World

**Kenosis (Greek: the act of emptying)
is the 'self-emptying' of Jesus' own will
and becoming entirely receptive
to God's divine will.**

**Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, **he made himself nothing** [vs 7a]
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death -
even death on a cross!**

Philippians 2:6-8

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Poured into Us (PDE)

For God, who said,
“Let light shine out of darkness,”
made his light shine **in our hearts**
to give us the light of the knowledge
of God's **glory**
displayed in the face of Christ.

But we have **this treasure**
in jars of clay
to show that this all-surpassing power
is from God
and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7

**We must be able to receive this treasure.
We must not be a “bag with holes in it (Haggai 1:6)**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We must pour ourselves out

“For through the law I died to the law
so that I might live for God.

I have been crucified with Christ [as a cancer being removed]
and I no longer live,
but Christ lives in me.

The life I now live in the body,
I live by faith in the Son of God,
who loved me
and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:19-20

But even if I am being poured out
like a drink offering
on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith,
I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

Philippians 2:17

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We must pour ourselves out

Tom Marcrom's timely choice of songs last week...

Song #655: Poured Out Like Wine

(Traditional)

**Would you be poured out like wine
upon the altar for Me?**

**Would you be broken like bread to
feed the hungry?**

**For I am already being poured out
like a drink offering,
and the time
for my departure is near.**

2 Timothy 4:6

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

And we fill ourselves up...

[Paul's Labor for the Church]

**Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you,
and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking
in regard to Christ's afflictions,
for the sake of his body,
which is the church.**

Colossians 1:24

**Jesus spoke of the man "emptied of an evil spirit",
who because he did not fill himself up
with the Good Spirit of God,
became filled with seven spirits worse than the first.**

Matthew 12:43-45

**PDE: Are there constraints or limits
on what we can do with God's indwelling Spirit?
What do you think they are?**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Holy Spirit is Poured into Us – but do we leak?

Does our sin put holes in our container
so that we cannot retain the Spirit?

God's Grace can seal the holes;
but we must work to hold the Spirit.

[PDE]

Fill a cup with lead
and it will not hold water.

Fill a cup with sugar
and you can add a goodly amount of water.

We need to live “permeable” lives,
to absorb the Spirit and retain it.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Understanding our Experience

**For we do not have a high priest
who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses,
but we have one who has been tempted in every way,
just as we are
- yet he did not sin.**

Hebrews 4:15

**He came down in weakness (as a baby)
so that He could participate in our entire life process.**

He Showed Us He Understands by "Tenting" with Us

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

One to Ride the River With (1)

Consider this story (just for purpose of illustration):

We are in a boat with many people on it floating down a river.

**We come to realize that we are moving,
though we cannot discern much about where we are
because of the dense mist that swirls around us.**

**We cannot see far ahead of us,
or the banks on either side of us.**

**We can see only a little bit beyond us.
God can see through it, though, as
the landscape all around us and above us
is part of God's higher-dimensional domain.**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

One to Ride the River With (2)

**We also have no real control over the direction we are going,
as we are in a powerful current
that moves us inexorably along.**

We just carry on our activities of life on the ship.

**Some never think beyond the extent of the boat
– they don't even realize that there is a limit or edge
because they keep themselves to its interior
and never get out onto the deck.**

**The boat represents this world (or universe),
and the river represents time.**

**We do not know how the trip started,
as we were not around to participate in the launch.**

We cannot tell on our own where we are going, either.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

One to Ride the River With (3)

**We can conceive of God as a Spirit above and around us,
and perhaps walks on the banks that we cannot see.**

**But He descended upon us
as the Christ for a while to offer guidance.**

**He “came down” to participate in our physical “place and time”
to experience with us our struggles in life.**

**He then departed by ascending beyond this earth
to return again to His true home.**

**He emptied Himself spiritually and then physically
to show the true nature of the God of Love.**

**He was (and is) absolutely someone
“good to ride the river with”.**

He continues to ride with us in Spirit!

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

One to Ride the River With (4)

**While sharing Himself with us,
Christ explained the purpose of our journey.**

**We are merely passing through;
we are pilgrims.**

**We are like Abraham seeking a city
whose builder and founder is God.**

**The river leads us to the ocean,
which represents a new universe:
a new heaven and earth,
if we live in Him.**

**Here there is a different type of current
that moves us forward
in the Presence of God.**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me (#603)

Jesus, Savior, pilot me

Over life's tempestuous sea;

Unknown waves before me roll,

Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal;

Chart and compass came from Thee:

Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

Follow-on to "One to Ride the River With"

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Jesus Came Back for Us!

**The Hero coming back to save us,
is a classic, a core theme –
one of the Greatest!**

**This is the supreme example
that we had a preview of
when Jesus came back for the man
after being healed
at the pool of Bethesda.**

**Coming back for us
was a battle –
not only “emptying” Himself
but being attacked by Satan (the temptations)
being rejected by many
and suffering our punishment for us.**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Confined Creator (1)

Soozie was bedridden with her back injury and infection for several weeks. As I tried to comfort her and minister to her, I considered how active she normally was and how this confinement must have been such a severe struggle for her.

She was not able to sit or stand on her own. She lay in bed for several weeks not being able to perform the creative work that she was normally involved in doing, and which was such a vital part of her existence.

She was a frustrated artist now – a confined creator.

It may be hard for us to understand how difficult that is for a person used to having great creative power.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Confined Creator (2)

A somewhat similar constriction of tremendous creative power occurred when Christ took the form of man and came to this earth. While here, He was severely limited in His capability to perform creative activity – after being intimately involved with the creation of the universe.

Think about how deeply He must have felt this confinement.

He was constrained even more when he was bound to the cross, and also suffered great derision from people around Him. He did no real creative work there, except the overarching salvation of mankind. Which, of course, could be **the greatest creative act of all.**

see Philippians 2:5-11

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Manifestation of What Comes Down

All of these are available to us:

- **Jesus on the cross**
(bearing our punishment, and conquering death)
- **Light (shines down)**
- **Bread (comes down like Manna)**
- **Another Comforter comes down**
- **Living water (like rain coming down?)**
- **Indwelling – the interconnection (poured out into us)**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is with us all of the time – in different forms

**God with us (Immanuel) all of the time;
in the form of one person or another (or other messengers)**

**God is the source of Goodness –
Christ is the expression of Goodness –
The Holy Spirit (Comforter) illuminates this Goodness.**

**Christ is now preparing us a place;
He is coming down again (the “second coming”)
at the end of time.**

**Now ... he is always with us and we need to abide in him
(Psalm 139: 7; John 14: 18; 15: 5–8)**

**The Comforter is with us now that Jesus has risen;
do we ignore it?**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Light (and in Him there is no darkness at all) John 8:12

**Consider our original discussion
of the manifestation of the Presence of God.**

**Remember how He showed Himself
as Radiance and Light.**

**Light is here among us,
Present with us.**

It enables us to see in this life, in this world.

When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,

**“He is good;
his love endures forever.”**

2 Chronicles 7:3

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Light

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said,
“I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

Jesus' statement “I am the light of the world” in John 8 can be understood best when we see that in John 7 he was making this claim during the Festival of Tabernacles, commemorating God's glory cloud leading Israel through the wilderness.

Jesus is, therefore, not speaking about some general power of illumination.

He is identifying himself as the glory of Israel, the God of Moses, who has become a human being.

Tim Keller

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Light

The Way we speak of is Jesus,
the “luminous Nazarene,”
as Albert Einstein once called him.

Dallas Willard

He had a body:
a focus of his **personality** in space and time
that was publicly observable
and interacted with physical realities.

But it was **radiant**,
and therefore it was called
“the body of his glory” (Phil. 3: 21).

Dallas Willard

Our radiance, reflecting God and Christ, is a spiritual light.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Light

Jesus on the cross
was like a burning bush
that seemed to flicker out,
but then emerges as a candle
that cannot be extinguished.

Christ is the light now and forevermore;
we should not need great displays of His **Presence**
(like a giant screen at the Super Bowl).

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Light – Overpowering darkness, and even other light!

**In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God...**

**In him was life,
and that life was the **light** of all mankind.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.**

John 1:1-5

**Consider Daniel's friends cast
into the very hot (**very, very bright**) blazing furnace.
The king saw another person in the fire with them,
like a son of God.**

Can people see another **person in the fire with us?
Do we recognize that God is with us?**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Personally Present

God is always **Present**,
whether we recognize it or not.

He is not always noticed,
but we need to see Him
as a Personal **Presence**.

Paul learned that God was not an impersonal force to be used
to make people behave in certain prescribed ways,
but a **personal** Savior
who set us free to live a free life.

Eugene Peterson

We wish to speak of God as **personal**,
but recognize that he transcends personality
as we understand it.

John Polkinghorne

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Personally Present

... John was also saying
that the Logos behind the universe
was not an abstract, rational principle
that could be known only
through high contemplation
by the educated elite.

Rather, the Logos of the universe
is a **person** –
Jesus Christ –
who can be loved and known
in a **personal relationship**
by anyone at all.

Tim Keller

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Personally Present

**“The divine ... was no longer an impersonal structure,
but an extraordinary individual.”** **Tim Keller**

**A time is coming
and in fact has come
when you will be scattered,
each to your own home.**

You will leave me all alone.

**Yet I am not alone,
for my Father is with me.**

John 16:32 , NIV

But I'm not abandoned.

The Father is with me.

John 16:32, The Message

**Psalm 22 refers to the issue of forsakenness, and its resolution!
If God abandoned Christ, He would not have resurrected Him!**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God is Personally Present

In the Old Testament, **[God is not an impenetrable wall]**
God resided in the temple.

Now people are the temple (1 Cor. 3: 16).

With Jesus we have
a **personal**, living connection with God.

Henry Cloud

He stands by us!

Jesus ... stood among them,
and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Luke 24:36, John 20:19, 26

... The Lord stood at my side
and gave me strength...

2 Timothy 4:17

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God Dwells in Us and We Dwell in Him

John 14

... I am in the Father, and ... the Father is in me (vs 10a)

... the Father, living in me ... is doing his work. (vs 10b)

... I am in the Father and the Father is in me (vs 11a)

[the Comforter] ... lives with you and will be in you (vs 17)

... I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. (vs 20)

John 15

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. (vs 4a)

1 John 4:16b,c

God is love.

**Whoever lives in love lives in God,
and God in them.**

God amazingly allows us to live with Him

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Holy Spirit is Poured into Us – but do we leak?

Does our sin put holes in our container
so that we cannot retain the Spirit?

God's Grace can seal the holes;
but we must work to hold the Spirit.

[PDE]

Fill a cup with lead
and it will not hold added water.

Fill a cup with sugar
and you can add a goodly amount of water.

We need to live “permeable” lives,
to absorb the Spirit and retain it.

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God Dwells in Us and We Dwell in Him

First, Jesus is “with” us.

Jesus has gone to be with the Father,
but he also lives in the heart of each believer:

“And surely I am with you always,
to the very end of the age”

Matthew 28:20

By faith, he lives inside us:

“so that Christ may **dwell** in your hearts
through faith”

Ephesians 3:17

This means we have an ongoing,
sustaining relationship with him.

In some mysterious way,
Jesus and the Holy Spirit **indwell** us.

Henry Cloud

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God Dwells in Us and We Dwell in Him

Why is Jesus so different?

I think the answer must be
that God was perceived to be

present

in and with him

in some unique, unprecedented way.

Clearly, the resurrection was a spur to this judgement,
but it was also motivated

by the new life those early believers

had found for themselves in Christ.

John Polkinghorne

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God Dwells in Us and We Dwell in Him

**For [some people],
an indwelling Presence may be meaningless.**

**They are glad Jesus is there,
but don't know what to do with him.**

Henry Cloud

**You, dear children, are from God
and have overcome them,
because the one who is **in you**
is greater than the one who is in the world.**

1 John 4:4

We must be aligned (agree) with God's Goodness.

God's love just flow through us!

Quote

The riddle of Jesus

**is why someone whose life seemed to end in complete failure
has proved to be the most influential figure
in the history of the world.**

John Polkinghorne

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We are the Presence of God

We are the hands and feet of God.

we are the light

when Christ is not physically present

(though He is always Present

in all aspects

except in a particular physical body).

“You are the light of the world.

A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.

Instead they put it on its stand,

and it gives light to everyone in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others,

that they may see your good deeds

and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:14-16

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We are the Presence of God

We must exhibit the radiance of God.

Moses and Stephen both showed this.

And, of course, Jesus at the Transfiguration.

**Consider how the lights continue to shine
even when we are apart –
the influence of others lives on.**

**One of the blessings of having strong relationships
is that even when we are apart (by distance or death),
we retain virtual sense
of that person's presence.**

Perhaps like a phosphor that lingers...

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Church is the Presence of God

[The] church is not a stopping place
but a starting place
for discerning God's **presence**
in this world.

Barbara Brown Taylor

The church is to be a light to the world.

The **Presence** of God is for all of us individually,
but the church links us all together!

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

The Communion Reminds us of the Presence of God

**The Lord's Supper
is a reminder
of the Presence of Christ –
in particular His body and blood!**

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

Consider the Jesus and the Disciples in the Presence of God

- He spent much time with disciples
(teaching, mentoring, traveling)
- He sends them off at times to further the mission work
- He gets away from them at times (mountain to pray)
- He Himself felt very strongly the **presence** of God

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

We Need a Mediator – A Go-Between

**Putting aside the issue of sin and holiness,
just consider the magnitude of God's creation –
how can we communicate with the Creator
or even be in his presence?**

**We need a mediator, a schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24, KJV)
in a sense,
to help bridge the gap between us
so that we can have a relationship.**

**The relationship is the main thing,
and God sent Christ to be the door (or window or bridge)
through whom we can truly see God and His Goodness
(which is more important than His Creation,
but not completely distinct or apart from it).**

Quote

**Our God put on skin
and lived with us.
God did this
because he is passionate about us
and wants to be in a relationship with us.**

Greg Laurie

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

God Dwells in Us and We Dwell in Him

Think about variations of the meaning of the words
“I am with you”:

- I understand you
- I agree with you
- I am physically with you
- I am dwelling spiritually in you (with your spirit)

PDE

We must be connected spiritually.

God always wants a full relationship with us.

When we are desperate, we want a full relationship with God,
yet at other times we seek to push God away
or hold Him at arm's length.

Amazing to think that the Creator of the universe
allows us to limit or constrain His engagement with us.

PDE

The Power of God's Presence

The Greatest Weapon against Satan

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We must exhibit the radiance of God.

Moses and Stephen both showed this.

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of that person's presence.**

Perhaps like a phosphor that lingers...

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- **Preparation for God's Presence**
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- **The Presence of an Opponent**
- **The Power of God's Presence**
- **Our Response to God's Presence**
- **The Ultimate Presence in Heaven**
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

It should make us want to be like Him

**Our awareness of God's Presence
should radically affect our behavior,
knowing that He sees everything we do...**

**What did man do with God's actual Presence
(when He came to earth as a man)?
Some accepted, some rejected...**

How about you?

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

It should make us want to be like Him

**Righteousness draws us near to God;
Sin repels Him.**

Christ is the buffer that overcomes our Sin.

God is present with the righteous...

Psalms 14:5b

**For the Lord is righteous,
he loves justice;
the upright will see his face.**

Psalms 11:7

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

**Wash your hands, you sinners,
and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

James 4:8

What does it really mean for us to “draw near to God”? [PDE]

What does it really mean for “God to draw near to us”?

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

It should make us want to be like Him

The former regulation is set aside
because it was weak and useless
(for the law made nothing perfect),
and a better hope is introduced,
by which **we draw near to God**.

Hebrews 7:18-19

Our new hope in Grace (not the law) draws us near to God.

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

It should make us want to be like Him

Righteousness draws us near to God;

Sin repels Him.

Christ is the buffer that overcomes our Sin.

[Sin drives God away from us ...]

And he said to me,

**“Son of man, do you see what they are doing –
the utterly detestable things the Israelites are doing here,
things that will drive me far from my sanctuary?**

Ezekiel 8:6a

Sanctuary: a Holy or “sanctified” place – a place of separation from evil; God set up the temple to be such a place, but man's misuse of it made it useless to God.

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

It should make us want to be like Him

Our awareness of God's Personal Presence should radically affect our behavior, knowing that He sees everything we do...

**Righteousness draws us near to God;
Sin repels Him.
Christ is the buffer that overcomes our Sin.**

Our new hope in Grace (not the law) draws us near to God.

We should hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God.

We take the presence of God with you wherever we go.

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

It should make us want to be with Him

Go into the streets of any of our big cities around 10:00 at night, and you will see two different kinds of dogs. Some are being taken for their ritual evening walk by their devoted owners; others have just been shooed out of the house for a few minutes, to fend for themselves. The difference between them is striking. The loners just mooch around from one sniffing point to another. Obviously bored, they don't see any point in going anywhere, so they hang about within whistling distance of home and wait for the call to come in. They look only half alive by contrast with the other lucky dogs. As every dog knows, having your master with you makes all the difference. You may not know where you are being taken, but you know that you are being taken, and that's enough to fill your doggy heart with a joyous sense of anticipation.

Alan Hayward

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Christ shines through us!

Paul elsewhere calls the “fruit of **light**...”

Dallas Willard

Compare to **Gifts of the Spirit**:

Fruit of the spirit must come from the transformation within!

But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

Live as **children of light** (for the **fruit of the light** consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.

Ephesians 5:8-10

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Christ shines through us!

Worship is not another job we have to do.

**It is one aspect of the gift of "living water"
that springs "up to eternal life" (John 7:38; 4:1-26).**

Dallas Willard

**The light that shines through them
is the light of their Father's love within them.**

John Piper

Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed... There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-6

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Do we "see" Jesus in those around us?

**Saint Luke's taught me
to see the Divine Presence
in human faces,
and especially in those
that least resembled mine.**

Barbara Brown Taylor

**Your children
are the windows
through which
the world sees you best.**

Douglas Kaine McKelvey

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Do we “see” Jesus in those around us?

**Martin Luther ... [speculated] that throughout his life
Jesus “conducted himself so humbly
and associated with sinful men and women,
and as a consequence was not held in great esteem,”
on account of which
“the devil overlooked him
and did not recognize him.”
[or did not recognize His power]**

God has not absconded at all.

Mother Teresa (1)

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Do we "see" Jesus in those around us?

**Rather, he has taken on a disguise,
a most unlikely disguise of the stranger, the poor,
the hungry, the prisoner, the sick,
the ragged ones of earth:**

**"I tell you the truth,
whatever you did
for one of the least of these brothers of mine,
you did it for me." [from Matthew 25]**

**If we cannot detect God's presence in the world,
it may be that we have been looking in the wrong places.**

**First we meditate on Jesus,
and then we go out and look for him in disguise.**

Mother Teresa (2)

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Do we "see" Jesus in those around us?

**A reporter asked Mother Teresa,
"When a baby dies alone in a Calcutta alley,
where is God?"**

Her response?

**"God is there, suffering with that baby.
The question really is:
where are you?"**

Mother Teresa

**If God is "in" us,
then love
representative of God's
will flow continually from us
without us necessarily realizing it.**

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Can We Hide from His Presence?

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,

if I settle on the far side of the sea,

even there your hand will guide me,

your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me

and the light become night around me,"

even the darkness will not be dark to you;

the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

Psalm 139:7-12

Quote

**God, too,
escapes our grasp
but not our worship.**

**“By love
he can be caught
and held
but by thinking never.”**

John Polkinghorne

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

We must Hunger and Thirst for Him – Daily!

**I wait for the Lord,
my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.**

**I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.**

Psalm 130:5-6

**How many times
have you suffered through the night
waiting for the dawn to break
on a new day?**

Like waiting for “game time”!

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

He Must Cover Us Like Our Clothes (like another skin)

**In his great power
God becomes like clothing to me;
he binds me
like the neck of my garment.**

Job 30:18

His Goodness should cover us (close and tight) as well:

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...

Colossians 3:13-15

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Do we "see" Jesus in those around us?

**A reporter asked Mother Teresa,
"When a baby dies alone in a Calcutta alley,
where is God?"**

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your right hand will hold me fast.

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the night will shine like the day,

for darkness is as light to you.

Psalm 139:7-12

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

He Knows Us Intimately

You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

Psalms 139:1-2

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

Responding to Others with Compassion (re: Matthew 25)

... because I rescued the poor who cried for help,
and the fatherless who had none to assist them.

The one who was dying blessed me;

I made the widow's heart sing.

I put on righteousness as my clothing;

justice was my robe and my turban.

I was eyes to the blind

and feet to the lame.

I was a father to the needy;

I took up the case of the stranger.

I broke the fangs of the wicked

and snatched the victims from their teeth.

Job 29:12-17

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We are Representatives of God

We must know Him Intimately

How precious to me are your thoughts, God!

How vast is the sum of them!

**Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand -
when I awake,
I am still with you.**

Psalm 139:17-18

**As soon as we awake,
we should feel the Presence of God.**

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

We must strive to become one with God

**This does not mean
becoming one with God as an equal,
but integrated with Him
as a part of the ever-deepening kingdom
or universe of His Goodness.**

**Maybe God allows each of us
to join God
in loving some
special aspect of creation.**

Brian McLaren

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

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We must strive to become one with God

**We want something else
which can hardly be put into words –
to be united with the beauty we see,
to pass into it,
to receive it into ourselves,
to bathe in it,
to become part of it.**

C.S. Lewis

**We should try to become a part of the Goodness of God!
Choose to be on His Team!**

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Paul uses the analogy of true marriage in Ephesians 5:22-33

**Wives,
submit yourselves to your own husbands
as you do to the Lord.**

**For the husband is the head of the wife
as Christ is the head of the church, his body,
of which he is the Savior.**

**Now as the church submits to Christ,
so also wives should submit to their husbands
in everything.**

Ephesians 5:22-24

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Paul uses the analogy of true marriage in Ephesians 5:22-32

**Husbands, love your wives,
just as Christ loved the church
and gave himself up for her to make her holy,
cleansing her
by the washing with water through the word,
and to present her to himself as a radiant church,
without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish,
but holy and blameless.**

**In this same way,
husbands ought to love their wives
as their own bodies.**

He who loves his wife loves himself.

Ephesians 5:25-28

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Paul uses the analogy of true marriage in Ephesians 5:22-32

After all, no one ever hated their own body,
but they feed and care for their body,
just as Christ does the church –
for we are members of his body.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother
and be **united** to his wife, and the two will become **one
flesh.**”

This is a profound **mystery** –
but **I am talking about Christ and the church.**

Ephesians 5:29-32

We become one with God in a somewhat similar way.
We must move toward God, and away from all distractions (PDE).

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

We must be still and quiet to remove distractions

Give us discernment

**to know when to pray,
when to speak out,
when to act,**

**and when to simply shut off our screens
and our devices**

and to sit quietly in your presence.

Douglas Kaine McKelvey

He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. Psalm 46:10

But the Lord is in his holy temple:

let all the earth keep silence before him.

Habakkuk 2:20

Quote

**God,
like a father,
doesn't just give advice.
He gives himself.**

Randy Alcorn

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Then we must act out of our love for God.

How do we influence others to live in the Presence of God?

The sledgehammer approach is not truly effective!

We must find a hook, a connection, that we can build on.

Most people do not reject real love...

Most people reject being told that they are wrong...

Living a Christ-like life

and acting out of love

lays a foundation

from which we can best impact

the lives of others.

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Then we must act out of our love for God.

Range of Response (PDE & HSL):

Hate God – anything related to God or Goodness (self-love)

Ignorance / Apathy – Don't know and/or don't care

Fear – obey out of fear of punishment

Guilt – obey to counteract our wrong-doings

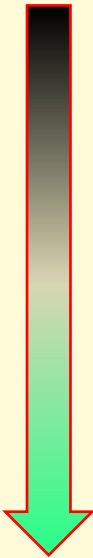
Reward – obey to obtain favor

Respect – obey out of sense of God being Good

Love God – obey because we love Him

Love God's commandments –

because we believe in God and His Goodness



Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Then we must act out of our love for God.

Love the Lord your God
and **keep** his requirements,
his decrees,
his laws
and his commands always.

Deuteronomy 11:1

I obey your statutes,
for **I love** them greatly.

Psalms 119:167

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We must absorb and integrate our souls with Him

Then we must act out of our love for God.

Jesus replied,

“Anyone who **loves** me
will **obey** my teaching.

My Father will love them,
and we will come to them
and make our **home** with them.

John 14:23

But if anyone **obeys** his word,
love for God is truly made complete in them.

This is how we know we are **in** him:
Whoever claims to live **in** him
must live as Jesus did.

1 John 2:5-6

Quote

**I'm a big believer
in dropping to my knees at a church altar
and washing the invisible feet of Jesus
with my tears.**

Beth Moore

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Some Reject the Goodness and Love of God

**Those that saw Jesus' Presence,
including His behavior
and His miraculous healing power,
did not always "get" Him.**

**I have come in my Father's name,
and you do not accept me;
but if someone else comes in his own name,
you will accept him.**

John 5:43

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Some Reject the Goodness and Love of God

Consider the response of the rich man in torment:

“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

“Abraham replied, ‘**They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.**’

“‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

[Morris: Jesus does go to us from the dead]

“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Luke 16:27-31

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Create Your Own Pattern – and Stick to It!

The Lord's Prayer – Our Father

- **Thanks for Blessings and Prayer on Behalf of Close Family**

Psalms 23 – Pray for Presence

- **Prayer on Behalf of Extended Family**

Excerpts from Psalm 51 - Prayer for Forgiveness

- **Prayer for Forest Mill, special friends, & those who don't like me**

Romans 12:10 and Philippians 2:3 – exalting others

Philippians 2:5-11 – Recognition of Jesus' Sacrifice

Prayer from Psalm 18 – God is our Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer

Prayer of Humility

- **Prayer on Behalf of Close Family**

Prayer of Love

- **Love for God, Christ, and Holy Spirit**

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

The Lord's Prayer – Our Father (Matthew 6:9b-13)

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, [we all need this reminder!]
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.

*for yours is the kingdom
and the power and the glory forever.*

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

The Shepherd's Psalm (Psalm 23)

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Excerpts from Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ...

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. ...

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your **presence**
or take your Holy Spirit from me. ...

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Add-on

And we know that in all things

God works for the good of those who love him,

who have been called according to his purpose.

Romans 8:28

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Exalting Others

Be devoted to one another in love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:10

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

**Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,
not looking to your own interests
but each of you to the interests of the others.**

Philippians 2:3-4

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Philippians 2:5-11 – Recognition of Jesus' Sacrifice

**In your relationships with one another,
have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing [emptied himself – kenosis]
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!**

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Philippians 2:5-11 – Recognition of Jesus' Sacrifice

**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Prayer from Psalm 18 – God is our Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer

**I love you, Lord,
my strength.**

**The Lord is my rock,
my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield
and the horn of my salvation,
my stronghold.**

**I called to the Lord,
who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.**

Psalm 18:1-3

Our Response to God's Presence

God's Presence Should Govern Our Behavior

We have a Choice

Daily, Focused Prayer Brings Us Closer to God

Prayer of Humility

I humble myself before you, O Lord.

You are the greatest, I am the worst!

You are everything, I am nothing!

**You are the Almighty Creator of the Universe and Life;
You are the Great Healer, and I am absolutely weak!**

You are all-wise, and I am utterly foolish!

You are perfectly Pure and Good, and I am filthy dirty!

**Forgive me of my many sins,
and help me overcome my sinful nature through your power.**

Quote

**Some people don't see God at all,
but others are even worse off,
because the God they see
is a monster or a toy or a totem or a fetish.**

Brian McLaren

Outline

- **Introduction**
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 - Physical (place and time)
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- **The Ultimate Presence in Heaven**
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 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

God is Always With Us

**Do you believe in God's Presence,
or only wish He was Present?**

**Israelites went wild
even though they were in the Presence of God,
because Moses was not in their view! (Exodus 32)**

**The Israelites wanted a king (1 Samuel 8:19)
because they could not "see"
the Presence of God –
they wanted a man in their "view".**

**Don't confuse the presence of God
with the presence of a mere man!**

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

God is Always With Us

When the people of Israel were at the Red Sea:
the sea was before them,
the Egyptians were behind them,
but they did not see
that God was above them.

[Summarizing the life of David]

I have been with you
wherever you have gone...

2 Samuel 7:9a

The Presence of the God through the Holy Spirit –
like the invisible friend that we may once have had;
always with us, ready to talk.

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Footprints in the Sand

**"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest
and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why,
when I needed You the most,
You would leave me."**

**He whispered,
"My precious child,
I love you and will never leave you
never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."**

Unknown

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

The Kingdom of God / Heaven is Near

Jesus said, “[If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then] The kingdom of God has come to you” (Luke 11: 20).

He was referring to his presence among the people.

Greg Laurie

From that time on Jesus began to preach,

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Matthew 4:17; also 3:2, 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9, 10:11, & 21:31

Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because

the kingdom of God **is in your midst.**” [or within you]

Luke 17:20-21

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

God is Always With Us – in the Old and New Jerusalem

The Lord said to him:

**“I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me;
I have consecrated this temple,
which you have built,
by putting my Name there forever.**

**My eyes and my heart
will always be there.**

1 Kings 9:3

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

God is Always With Us – and Will Protect Us in Heaven

... God is present in a special way in heaven.

Wayne Grudem

**God must be capable of compartmentalizing
such that we are protected in “heaven”
from the reach of evil.**

He can isolate us.

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Parousia – the Presence (Now and Later)

In Greek, the word is Parousia...

In recent centuries, interpreters have used the word almost exclusively to denote Jesus' Second Coming at the end of time.

That's the only definition you'll find in most English dictionaries.

Yet it is not the primary meaning. Parousia's primary meaning is a real, personal, living, lasting, and active presence.

In the last line of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus promises,

“I will be with you always.”

Scott Hahn

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Parousia – the Presence (Now and Later)

In his incarnation, Jesus came;
and, as he passed from human sight,
he promised to sustain his presence forever:
**“I am with you always,
to the close of the age” (Mt 28: 20).**

Thus, his Parousia - his presence - remained with Christians,
even as they prayed for its plenitude [completeness].

The word parousia occurs in only one place in the gospels,
in Matthew 24, and there it does not mean “second coming”
(a term that occurs nowhere in the Bible).

Scott Hahn

The idea is that Christ is always with us, Present;
there will be a bodily return, but His Presence now is key.

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Is Satan always present with us on earth? [Jan]

Perhaps not every instant...

**Satan attacked Adam and Eve one one recorded occasion;
we was apparently not there
when God confronted them in the Garden.**

**Satan attacked Job at intervals –
only within the limits God established;
the results of the attack were continuous, though...**

**Satan attacked Jesus at intervals –
after the temptations in the wilderness:**

**When the devil had finished all this tempting,
he left him until an opportune time.**

Luke 4:13

**Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion
looking for someone to devour.**

1 Peter 5:8b

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

God's Radiant Presence will Be Seen Again in the New Kingdom

Then GOD will bring back the ancient pillar of cloud by day and the **pillar of fire** by night and mark Mount Zion and everyone in it with **his glorious presence**, his immense, protective presence, shade from the burning sun and shelter from the driving rain.

Isaiah 4:5, The Message

In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and **glorious**, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel.

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and **a glow of flaming fire by night**; over everything the **glory** will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 4:2-6, NIV

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

God's Radiant Presence will Be Seen Again in the New Kingdom

The moon will shine like the sun,
and the sunlight will be seven times **brighter**,
like the light of seven full days,
when the Lord binds up the bruises of his people
and heals the wounds he inflicted.

Isaiah 30:26

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Imagine Being with God in Heaven

**I can only imagine what it will be like
when I walk by Your side!**

**I can only imagine
what my eyes will see when Your face is before me...**

I can only imagine; I can only imagine...

Surrounded by Your glory, what will my heart feel?

Will I dance for You Jesus, or in awe of You be still?

Will I stand in Your presence, or to my knees will I fall?

Will I sing hallelujah; Will I be able to speak at all?

I can only imagine; I can only imagine;

I can only imagine when that day comes;

when I find myself standing in the Son!

I can only imagine

when all I would do is forever, forever worship You!

I can only imagine; I can only imagine!

Bart Millard (Mercy Me)

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Imagine Being with God in Heaven

[John Preston, Puritan]

**When he lay dying,
they asked him if he feared death,
now it was so close.**

**“No,” whispered Preston;
“I shall change my place,
but I shall not change my company.”**

From J.I. Packer, Growing in Christ

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Imagine Being with God in Heaven

This garden paradise
where Adam and Eve lived
was not a place
where humans had no needs or desires.

Instead,
it was a place where all of their needs and desires
were met
by the God who created them.

The same is true in our lives.

You and I have cravings
that are designed to be satisfied
by [the **Presence** of] our Creator.

David Platt

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Seeing the Face of God

[Jacob Wrestles With God after Sending His Family Ahead]

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak...

... the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, “It is because **I saw God face to face**, and yet my life was spared.” **Genesis 32:22-32**

[Peniel means “Face of God.”]

For to see your face is like seeing the **face of God**, now that you have received me favorably. **Genesis 33:10**

Jacob considered this an awesome and wonderful thing!

Perhaps we shall see others in heaven in the same way!

Quote

**An abused imagination
yields perversions that defy reason.**

**On the other hand,
when the imagination is **stirred**
for all that is noble and right,
its capacity to make the world a better place
is enormous.**

Ravi Zacharias

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Is Satan always present with us on earth? [Jan]

Perhaps not every instant...

**Satan attacked Adam and Eve one one recorded occasion;
we was apparently not there
when God confronted them in the Garden.**

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only within the limits God established;
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after the temptations in the wilderness:**

**When the devil had finished all this tempting,
he left him until an opportune time.**

Luke 4:13

**Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion
looking for someone to devour.**

1 Peter 5:8b

Resisting the Devil

I want to live my life
in such a way
that when I get out of bed in the morning,
the devil says, "aw [expletive deleted],
he's up!

Steve Maraboli

Do you resist Satan so powerfully?

Resist him,
standing firm in the faith...

1 Peter 5:9

Submit yourselves, then,
to God.
Resist the devil,
and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

The Ultimate Presence in Heaven

His Presence With Us Now

Imagine Being with God in Heaven

You and I have cravings
that are designed to be satisfied
by [the **Presence** of] our Creator.

David Platt

Your relationship to God
on earth
will determine your relationship to him
in eternity.

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Conclusion

Back to the Beginning

Jesus Healed the Man at the Pool of Bethesda

Jesus initiated this miracle for a man who had sought healing in a place where he believed that a miraculous “**stirring**” of the pool waters sometimes occurred

Jesus healed the man, who was cast out of the synagogue as a result of his declaration of Jesus’ power.

Jesus found the man and demonstrated His **Presence** and power to comfort him.

The “**stirring**” by the hand of God may or may not have actually happened, but the heart of Jesus was stirred in compassion for this man. His heart is stirred for us as well.

And we must let the Spirit **stir** our hearts in return, and feel His **Presence** with us always.

Will our Eulogy describe what “stirred” us?

Conclusion

God's Presence

God's Promise of His Presence is Undeniable!

**God is always Present as a Comforter (John 14)
and Advisor (John 16:13)**

We are sinners, and and are completely guilty.

Jesus came to our rescue!

He gave Himself

to remove our guilt and condemnation.

**We must embrace His Presence here on earth,
as we will in heaven!**

Conclusion

God's Presence

God's Promise of His Presence is Undeniable!

**Our Understanding and Appreciation of His Presence
Will be Even Greater (Magnified) in Heaven**

**For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror;
then we shall see face to face.**

**Now I know in part;
then I shall know fully,
even as I am fully known.**

1 Corinthians 13:12

**Now we see in black and white;
then we will see in color!**

Dinesh D'Souza (paraphrased)

**We can know that a well is very deep
without being able to explore every inch of it.
Think of God as an infinitely deep well.**

Conclusion

God's Presence

God's Promise of His Presence is Undeniable!

Through the Spirit We Will Grow to Be More Like Him

**And we all, with unveiled face,
continually seeing as in a mirror
the glory of the Lord,
are progressively being transformed into His image
from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory,
which comes from the Lord,
[who is] the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18, Amplified Bible (AMP)**

**And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate [or reflect]
the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image
with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV**

Conclusion

God's Presence

God's Promise of His Presence is Undeniable!

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul...

... I will fear no evil,
for **you are with me**;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me ...

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely your goodness and love will follow me [God follows us]
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Each of these phrases in Psalm 23 can be considered
in terms of our future eternal life with God in heaven.

Conclusion

God's Presence

We Will Fellowship with Him at His Table

Like Jonathan's son,
apart from Christ I am broken,
outcast,
and crippled in both feet.

I could never even crawl into God's **presence**,
but in Christ
I put my feet under His table
as His child.

Beth Moore

God will supply us our every need at His table!

We must feel the "Pleasance" of His Presence!

Conclusion

God's Presence

We Will Have a Relationship With Him Forever

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

**“Look! God’s dwelling place
is now among the people,
and he will dwell with them.**

**They will be his people,
and God himself will be with them
and be their God.**

Revelation 21:3

This encompasses the whole Purpose of God!

Quote

Yet I am always with you;
 you hold me by my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
 and afterward
 you will take me into glory.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
 And earth has nothing I desire
 besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
 but God is the strength of my heart
 and my portion forever.
Those who are **far** from you will perish;
 you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.
But as for me,
 it is good to be **near** God.
 I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge;
 I will tell of all your deeds.

Psalm 73:23-28

Challenge

Experiencing the Presence of God

**I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.**

Psalm 130:6

Start with one minute before God each day...

Outline

- **Introduction**
 - brief study of miracles
 - focus on one of the most interesting miracles
- **God's Presence Through the Ages**
- **How Do We Sense God's Presence?**
- **Preparation for God's Presence**
- **What Does "Omnipresence" Really Mean?**
 - Physical (place and time)
 - Spiritual (beyond space and time)
- **The Presence of an Opponent**
- **The Power of God's Presence**
- **Our Response to God's Presence**
- **The Ultimate Presence in Heaven**
- **Conclusion**
 - Appendix – Presence Scriptures

Our Response to God's Presence

The Impact of God's Presence

Scriptures related to God's Presence: Topics

Wrath

Rejection

Humility

Covenant Renewal

Blessing

Rejoicing

Sharing a Meal

Accompaniment

Impact

Glory

Fire

Light

Praying

Casting Lots / Decisions

Growing up

Salvation

Good News

Encouragement

Rest, Shelter

Death

Forever

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Wrath

- **Genesis 4:14, 16; Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.” So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.**
- **Isaiah 2:19; People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Rejected

- **Leviticus 22:3; “Say to them: ‘For the generations to come, if any of your descendants is ceremonially unclean and yet comes near the sacred offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the Lord, that person must be cut off from my presence. I am the Lord.**
- **2 Kings 17:18; So the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left...**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Humility

- **2 Kings 22:19 and 2 Chronicles 34:27 and; Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the Lord.**
- **Ezra 9:15; Lord, the God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.”**
- **1 Samuel 6:20; And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, “Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? ...To whom will the ark go up from here?”**

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Renew Covenant

- **2 Kings 23:3 and 2 Chronicles 34:31; The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the Lord - to follow the Lord and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.**

Blessing

- **Genesis 27:7; 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.'**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Rejoice

- Deuteronomy 12:7; There, in the presence of the Lord your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the Lord your God has blessed you.
- Deuteronomy 27:7; Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the Lord your God.
- 1 Chronicles 29:22; They ate and drank with great joy in the presence of the Lord that day.
- Psalm 16:11; You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.
- Proverbs 8:30; Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence...

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Meal

- Exodus 18:12; Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.
- Exodus 25:30; Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times.

Accompaniment

- Exodus 33:14; The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
- Exodus 33:15; Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Impact

- **Exodus 34:34; But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out.**
- **Numbers 17:9; Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the Lord's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each of the leaders took his own staff.**
- **Deuteronomy 4:37; Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength...**
- **1 Kings 19:11; The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake.**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Glory

- **John 17:5; And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.**
- **1 Thessalonians 2:19; For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you?**

Fire

- **Leviticus 9:24; Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.**
- **Leviticus 10:2; So fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Light

- Psalm 89:15; Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, Lord.
- Psalm 90:8; You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.
- Psalm 18:12; Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced, with hailstones and bolts of lightning.

Praying

- 1 Kings 8:28; Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day.

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Casting Lots / Decisions

- **Exodus 28:30; Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the Lord. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the Lord.**
- **Deuteronomy 19:17; the two people involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the Lord before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time.**
- **Joshua 18:6; After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the Lord our God.**
- **Joshua 19:51; These are the territories ... assigned by lot at Shiloh in the presence of the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And so they finished dividing the land.**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Growing up

- **1 Samuel 2:21; And the Lord was gracious to Hannah; she gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord.**

Salvation

- **2 Chronicles 20:9; 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.'**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Good News

- **Luke 1:19;** The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.
- **John 8:38;** I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.”
- **Acts 10:33;** So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Encouragement

- **1 Thessalonians 3:13; May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.**
- **2 Timothy 4:1; In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge:**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Scriptures related to God's Presence

Rest, Shelter

- **Hebrews 9:24; For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.**
- **1 John 3:19; This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence:**
- **Revelation 7:15; Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.**

Death

- **1 Samuel 26:20; Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the Lord. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea - as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."**

Our Response to God's Presence

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Forever

- Psalm 51:11; Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- Psalm 139:7; Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
- Psalm 140:13; Surely the righteous will praise your name, and the upright will live in your presence.
- Psalm 61:7; May he be enthroned in God's presence forever; appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.