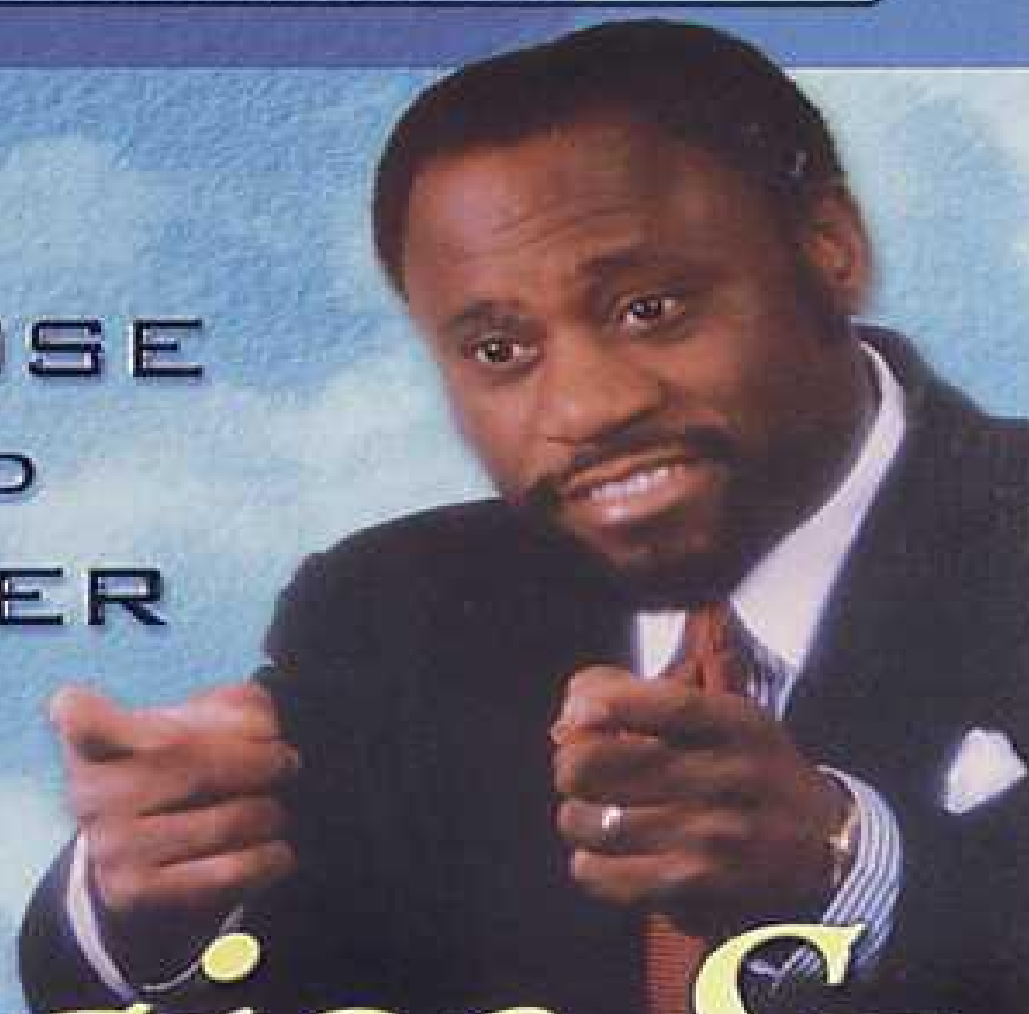


DR. MYLES MUNROE

THE  
PURPOSE  
AND  
POWER  
OF



*Praise &  
Worship*

FOREWORD BY RON KENOLY

## Chapter 1

# *God's Original Plan for Mankind*

## **God's greatest desire as revealed in the Scriptures is for a family.**

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Land and seas, plants and animals, birds and sea creatures all came forth at His spoken word.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Genesis 1:26-28).

This crowning act of creation was a result of God's desire to have a family. He wanted someone to be His friend and to live with Him as a son. God's original plan was that man would share in His authority and rule, not serve Him as a servant. This is why Jesus Christ is the “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev. 19:16b), not the King of subjects. God was interested in a completely different kind of relationship than we normally think of when we talk about a king. He wanted sons who would not only be led by the King but who would also exercise the King's authority and rule on earth.

This relationship between God and man is of paramount importance to God. Creation shows this to be true. The first thing God gave man was His image and likeness because that was the first thing God wanted man to have. The second thing God did was to place man in His presence, which is the meaning in the Hebrew language of the word *Eden*. Therefore, God's greatest desire was that man would act like Him and live with Him.

## **God wanted man to have His image and likeness and to live in His presence.**

The word *image* means “resemblance”

(Strong's, H6754) or “exact likeness” (Webster's, “image”). Therefore, to

be made in God's image means that man resembles God and is an exact likeness of Him. He has God's true nature and His spiritual and moral character. In the Scriptures, the word *Eden* refers to a place of God's presence (see Is. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13). So God gave man His nature and then put Him in His presence. These were God's priorities.

God did not establish reverent patterns, pious traditions, or religious activities in the Garden of Eden. There was simply a relationship between God and man. Establishing and maintaining this relationship continues to be God's primary concern. He is much more concerned about our fellowship with Him than about our works, our activities, our traditions, and even our busyness. God wants relationship—that's the bottom line—and everything God established for man was built on this desire for fellowship.

Thus, God created man for a specific purpose: to have dominion over all the earth; with an image different from that of all other parts of His creation: His own spiritual and moral nature; and with the ability to function like He does: seeing things that are not yet visible (faith). The Scriptures clearly show this intent of God that man would be more like Him than the rest of creation, and that he would think and act like God.

What is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of Your hands; You put everything under his feet (Psalm 8:4-6; see also Hebrews 2:6-8).

Truly, the creation of man was God's greatest production, and He described the man He had made as being "very good" (see Gen. 1:31). Sadly, what God intended for man and man's current experience are quite different. This difference is a result of man's choice to disregard the principles that are an inherent part of God's creation.

## **God Is a God of Principles**

Man's ability to fulfill his purpose and to be all God intended him to be is predicated on the requirement that he obey the principles God established when He created human beings. Why is this true? God is a God of principles. Everything He created was established to operate by certain principles that guarantee its proper function. This pattern in creation includes human beings. We were created to operate by principles that God established before He created us.

These principles or rules of operation for human beings are found

throughout the Bible, although they are not always referred to as principles. They may also be referred to as God's laws, ordinances, precepts, statutes, commands, commandments, decrees, instructions, word, and ways. Although the meaning of each of these words carries a slightly different nuance from the others, they all carry within them the basic concept of a principle, which is a law that is established to preserve and protect a created thing and to assure its maximum performance. So each time these words occur in Scripture, the particular word used may be removed and the word *principle* may be inserted in its place. These varying words for God's principles can be clearly seen in Psalms 19 and 119:

The law [principles] of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes [principles] of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts [principles] of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands [principles] of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances [principles] of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is Your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward (Psalm 19:7-11).

Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law [principles] of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep His statutes [principles] and seek Him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong; they walk in His ways [principles]. You have laid down precepts [principles] that are to be fully obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your decrees [principles]! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all Your commands [principles]. I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn Your righteous laws [principles]. I will obey Your decrees [principles]; do not utterly forsake me. How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word [principles]. I seek You with all my heart; do not let me stray from Your commands [principles]. I have hidden Your word [principles] in my heart that I might not sin against You. Praise be to You,

O Lord; teach me Your decrees [principles]. With my lips I recount all the laws [principles] that come from Your mouth. I rejoice in following Your statutes [principles] as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on Your precepts [principles] and consider Your ways [principles]. I delight in Your decrees [principles]; I will not neglect Your word [principles]. Do good to Your servant, and I will live; I will obey Your word [principles]. Open my

eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law [principles] (Psalm 119:1-18).

## **Characteristics of Principles**

Since a satisfying relationship with God, each other, and the rest of God's creation is predicated on our obeying His principles in creation, let's look now at some of the characteristics or properties of principles. Understanding these properties can help us to understand how principles function in our life.

- *Principles are permanent.* When God created human beings, He created them to breathe oxygen. Although many years have passed since God first formed man from the dust of the earth, and man has found many ways to "better" his life experience, man still needs oxygen to survive. In essence, any environment where oxygen is absent is deadly to man.

- *Principles never change; they remain constant.* In the English system of measurement, a yard has been determined to equal 36 inches. Now you may create a stick that measures 35 inches long and call it a

"yardstick," but this in no way changes the principle that a yard is a unit of measurement equal in length to the sum of 36 inches. In essence, a stick 35 inches in length is not equal to a yard no matter what you call it, because a yard, by the principles of its definition, contains 36 inches. In a similar manner, modifications by our society to God's standards of conduct do not change God's law. God's law is constant, even as He is constant (see Num. 23:19).

- *Principles work anywhere.* One of the laws of nature is that water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit (or 0 degrees Celsius). It doesn't matter whether you freeze water at the north pole or at the equator, water cooled to 32 degrees F (assuming the water is not contaminated with other substances that skew the water's freezing point) will turn to ice. In the same manner, we can expect that God's laws apply to us no matter where or when we live. His principles are applicable in all times, cultures, and geographic locations.

- *Principles protect the product.* This characteristic of principles can be illustrated by the care labels that many clothing manufacturers sew into their garments at the collar or a side seam. These specifications by the manufacturer regarding the garment's care may include requirements concerning water temperature for washing, line drying versus the use of a clothes dryer, and washing in water versus dry cleaning. The manufacturer provides these instructions to protect the clothing from possible harm that could result in shrinkage of the fabric, color loss, premature breakdown of the

fibers, or other damage. God's laws are also intended to protect us from harm. Although they may at times appear to limit our choices, these limitations are always given by God to protect our freedom and well-being.

- *Principles can never be broken.* The laws of gravity state that the mass of the earth, the moon, or another planet will exert a certain pull on objects at or near its surface. This pull will draw the objects toward it. With the invention of airplanes, helicopters, and other modes of air transportation, one might say that the laws of gravity have been broken. Such a statement can never be true because a principle of creation cannot be broken. What can happen is that man devises various means to combat or redirect the forces of gravity. Then, although the principle of gravity is not evident in a particular event or circumstance, the principle itself—that is, the rule that objects at or near the earth's surface are pulled toward the earth if they are not in some manner prevented from doing so—still holds true.

- *Principles, when violated, produce destruction.* What seems right to you for the use of a product is not necessarily in agreement with what the manufacturer of a product intended. For example, when you buy an iron, the box it comes in contains a little booklet that lists the commandments or laws of the manufacturer concerning its function. These are often called the operating instructions. They tell you how to use the iron so you get the maximum performance from it.

Now you could take that iron, plug it into the wall, and put it into the bathtub with you to heat up the water. Since an iron is supposed to get hot, that way may seem right to you: "The iron is hot and the water is cold, so I'll just put the iron into the water to make it warm." Guess what? There's a way that seems right unto a man, but the end of it is a shocking experience!

Both you and the iron will suffer damage because of your choice to violate the iron's operating instructions (principles).

- *Principles contain inherent judgment.* This last characteristic of principles is particularly important. For example, the principle of fire is heat. When you put your hand in fire, you can expect to get burned because fire produces heat. In other words, you don't get burned because God burns you or the devil burns you. You get burned because heat is a principle of fire. In essence, the judgment—the burn—is inherent in the principle.

Thus, much of what we call "acts of God" are simply judgments that are inherent in God's principles of creation. For example, God has killed no man. Rather, "the wages [natural results] of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23a). When you

play around with sin and start flirting with things you shouldn't be doing, you don't have to worry whether someone will find you out because your own activities will tell on you. Why is this true? Sin contains an inherent judgment. When you violate God's principle, the principle itself contains your discipline or punishment.

## **God's Use of Principles**

The verses previously quoted from Psalms 19 and 119 also clearly reveal the necessity of understanding and obeying God's principles of creation. This is true because only the manufacturer of a product knows what factors are necessary to obtain the maximum operation of the product. In essence, you can't use a product according to your own ideas and expect it to fulfill what the manufacturer promised it could and would do. If you want a product to work, doing all that the manufacturer said it would do, you have to obey the principles (laws, commandments, instructions, etc.) of the one who designed and made the product.

God's demands of us are always based on His principles because He knows we cannot fulfill our purpose and enjoy fulfillment in life unless we operate within the parameters (principles) He has set for us. The effects of His laws cannot be avoided because they are inherent to the law. Therefore, our relationship with God, both our perception of Him and His response to us, is based on how we respond to the principles He has established throughout creation. He is not capricious in His responses to us, but rather is faithful and just. (See Psalm 111:7 and First John 1:9.)

**If you want a product to work, you have to obey the manufacturer's principles of operation.**

We may prefer lawlessness, which is the freedom to do whatever we want to do, but our very creation by God, our Manufacturer and Source, requires that we follow His principles. Should we choose lawlessness—doing what we want, when we want, how we want—we can expect to reap the inevitable results, which include slavery, death, and the loss of privileges or freedoms. This is precisely what happened to the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden.

**Disregard for God's Principles Carries Consequences**

When God placed the man in Eden, He gave him some instructions that

were to govern his life in the garden. One of these instructions concerned what he could and could not eat.

And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:16-17).

Please note that this command contains an inherent judgment. Death is the proscribed consequence for disobeying this principle.

Thus, God’s pronouncement to the man in Genesis 3:19—“By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and *to dust you will return*”—is nothing more than the logical consequence of man’s choice to disobey God.

This physical death that will inevitably claim every person, whether in infancy or in old age, is not, however, the only death man suffered because of his disobedience. The more serious consequence of man’s disregard for God’s principles for life in the garden was his loss of the Holy Spirit and his subsequent separation from God. This spiritual death, as it may be called, is at the root of all the ills that plague us as individuals and as a society. In truth, man cannot and will not live up to the potential and purpose God built into him until the love and intimacy God and man enjoyed in the garden is restored. Because life in the presence of God is man’s ideal environment, God’s presence is also his greatest need. Man cannot truly live until the relationship between God and man is restored.

**Death is the absence of the presence of God in a man or a woman’s life.**

### ❖ PRINCIPLES ❖

1. God created man to share His image and authority.
2. God is more interested in relationship than in rules and traditions.
3. Everything God created is governed by principles.
4. Fulfillment of purpose requires obeying God’s principles.
5. Principles contain these inherent characteristics:
  - Principles are permanent.
  - Principles never change.
  - Principles work anywhere.
  - Principles protect the product.
  - Principles can never be broken.
  - Principles, when violated, produce destruction.



- Principles contain inherent judgment.
- 6. God's Word contains the principles that govern men and women.
- 7. Disobeying God's commandments brings natural and spiritual consequences.

## Chapter 2

### *Man's Greatest Need*

**God's greatest desire and man's deepest need is to share an enduring, Spirit-to-spirit relationship.**

Since God is a God of principles, everything He created was established to operate by certain principles that guarantee its proper function. So all created things—whether plant, animal, fish, bird, star, or human being—must adhere to the principles that govern their life if they are to release their potential and fulfill their purpose. One of the most important of these principles ordained by God to preserve and protect His handiwork and to assure the maximum performance of each created thing is the principle of environment.

#### **The Principle of Environment**

The word *environment* is defined as “circumstances, objects, and conditions by which one is surrounded” (Webster's, “environment”).

Therefore, an environment may refer to the forces that affect the state of things, the components that make up the climate in which something exists, or the conditions in which a thing exists. Everything in life was created to function within the particular environment that God prescribed for it before He created it.

In essence, before the moment of creation, God decided both what He would make His creation from and where He would place it after He had made it. This place designed to individually suit the makeup and purpose of each thing God made was its environment. When the environment was ready, God called forth each creation from its intended source and put it in the specific environment He had made for it.

So before God created the sun and the moon and the myriad of stars, He first called forth the light and separated it from the darkness, calling the light “day” and the darkness “night.” He also made a firmament or expanse to separate the waters above from the waters below and called the firmament “sky.” Only then, after all this was completed, did God call forth the lights from the heavens and set them in the sky to mark the day, the night, and the seasons. (See Genesis 1:1-8,14-18.)

God's process in creating plants and animals reveals the same pattern.

Before He spoke plants and animals into being, He gathered the waters together so that dry ground would appear. The dry ground He called “land” and the waters He called “seas.” Only then did He speak to the sea, commanding it to bring forth the many kinds of fish and sea creatures, and to the land, commanding it to bring forth all manner of vegetation, seed-bearing plants and trees according to their kind, and all living creatures, livestock and wild animals according to their kind. (See Genesis 1:9-12,20-25.)

Finally, God was ready to make man.

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:26-27).

These verses from Genesis clearly reveal that God is man’s source. When God made man, He spoke to Himself and man came out of Him. Thus, man was created both to be of the same essence as God, who is spirit (see Jn. 4:24), and to live in the same environment as God, which is the realm of the spirit or the environment of God.

So we see that God prescribed an environment for everything He created before He created it. Then He placed the thing in it.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, you cannot expect one of God’s products to function properly if you do not understand the environment He prescribed for it. In essence, a misplaced product will malfunction if you do not follow the prescription for the environment God ordained. A product in the wrong environment just won’t work properly.

God prescribed an environment for everything He created. Therefore, environments can be good or bad, positive or negative, healthy or unhealthy depending on what the manufacturer prescribed for the product you are using. The environment itself is not necessarily bad, negative, or unhealthy. Rather the problem is a misplaced product. A particular environment is wrong only because the product was not designed to function in it. The prescription and the actuality don’t match.

To say it another way, the nature of the environment will always affect the state, function, and efficiency of a product. If, for example, you buy a \$5,000 television, throw it into the ocean, then try to make it work, you will soon find that you wasted your \$5,000. Or, if you drag a boat down a highway behind a truck, you will find when you try to use the boat in the water that it has been destroyed by the road. Why has this happened? You put

the television and the boat into the wrong environment. The manufacturer never intended that you would put the television into the ocean or drag the boat on the highway.

Therefore, no matter how expensive the product is, it will shut down if the environment of operation is different from what the manufacturer intended. A wrong environment—that is, an environment where the product is out of place—will always translate into wasted potential. Truly the key to a product's efficient and effective operation is the environment in which it is placed.

Consequently, we must clearly understand the environment prescribed for each product because it is the environment that determines the product's success or failure. This prescribed environment is what we may call a product's ideal environment. An ideal environment means that there is a perfect environment that God (or a manufacturer) has prescribed for each product. This is why God placed the man in Eden. Eden is man's ideal environment.

## **Man's Ideal Environment**

When God planned what man would be (spirit) and how man would function (by faith), He also determined where man would live (his ideal environment). God didn't take the man and put him just anywhere on earth. God chose a specific spot on this big planet and put the man in that specially chosen place, which we know as Eden. Now let's try to figure out what Eden is.

The root in Hebrew of the word *Eden* is uncertain. The Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, relates the word to the Hebrew verb *eden* or *ayden*, which means "delight" (Strong's, H5731, H5730). Therefore, *Edenis* translated as the garden of delight. Other occurrences of the word *Eden* in the Old Testament equate *Eden* with the garden of the Lord.

The Lord will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.

Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing (Isaiah 51:3).

You were in Eden, the garden of God... (Ezekiel 28:13).

This seems to concur with the Genesis description of the garden as the place where God walked in the cool of the day (see Gen. 3:8).

Thus, God prepared a garden for man, an environment where it was

pleasant and where His presence touched earth. This is why the Bible never says that Adam planted the garden. Rather, God was the One who planted the garden. That is, God came and impressed (planted) His presence in the earth.

Can you get a picture of this? Eden was the one place where God's presence dwelt on earth. It was the garden of His presence, the spot of His pleasantness, and that was precisely where God placed Adam. Unbroken fellowship between God and man was the environment that God planned for man.

This means that you don't need church services, choirs, worship services, and meetings to succeed in life. There were none of these in Eden. Neither were there prophets, teachers, preachers, or apostles. Your ideal environment is nothing more and nothing less than the presence of God Himself, which was God's first gift to Adam.

### **God's presence is your ideal environment.**

His presence in your house is the most beautiful presence in the world. You don't need a husband or a wife to succeed. You need the presence of God. Consequently,

God gave Adam Himself before He gave him a woman. The first presence you need is a God-friend, not a boyfriend or a girlfriend. If you get a boyfriend or girlfriend, a husband or a wife, outside of God's presence, you have created a state of malfunction for yourself.

Why is this true? Everything that is not in its ideal environment malfunctions. This is inevitable. No person or product can function properly outside the environment specifically designed for it by its manufacturer. So just as fish have to stay in water and plants have to stay in the ground if they are to flourish, so man must stay in God's presence. Any fish that removes itself from water or is removed by another creature will eventually die and rot. The same is true of a plant. No plant can continue to live and bear fruit if its roots are not covered and nourished by the ground. In truth, a plant starts to die the instant its roots are removed from the ground, and its death is certain unless its roots are returned to the soil that is its source and ideal environment. Likewise, man's life and the fulfillment of his destiny are possible only to the extent that he walks and talks with God in the garden of His presence.

### **Man's Fall From God's Presence**

Sadly, what God intended and the reality of man's situation today are

quite different. The reason for this difference is man's choice to throw off what he perceived to be the restrictive principles of God's design. The fall of man, as man's choice to sin is often called, is really a fall from God's presence, with the accompanying loss of the Holy Spirit. Since God created man to live in relationship with Him and sin caused a breach in that relationship, man's opportunity to live in God's presence ended. The Book of Genesis describes it this way:

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).

Since, as we previously noted, the word *Eden* in the Scriptures means the place of God's presence, man's banishment from Eden meant banishment from God's presence. The creature God had created to live in His presence was condemned to live apart from the One who was essential to His well-being. Human history shows the consequences of that separation, consequences that were built into God's principles for man's life.

Now we have to work hard to get into God's presence; but that was not what God intended for the human beings He had created. We were supposed to wake up every morning and go walking in the bush with God. We weren't supposed to have to work ourselves up with singing, instruments, and worship calisthenics to get us into the right mood or frame of mind for worship. God's intent was that we would wake up in His presence, go to sleep in His presence, work in His presence, talk in His presence, go fishing in His presence, eat in His presence, cry in His presence, laugh in His presence, dance in His presence, and on and on. Every part of our life was to be done within the presence of God.

Oh, how we've fallen. What was once our God-given privilege is now denied us by God Himself. For when God sent the man and the woman away from Eden, from the place or moment of His presence, He also set cherubim at the entrance to the garden to be sure that mankind would not return to the environment that had been his home before his sin.

Why would God, who loves man and who created him to live in fellowship with Him, do this? Why would He banish man from His presence and ensure that he could not return? Might it be that the presence of God was so important God would not allow it to be contaminated by man's sin? Might

it be that man could no longer endure the presence of God because he had lost the Holy

Spirit, that which enabled him to communicate with God and to enjoy fellowship with Him?

## **God Is Holy**

The Scriptures clearly state that God is holy, which means that God is completely pure in motive and perfect in goodness, righteousness, and justice.

Exalt the Lord our God and worship at His holy mountain, for the Lord our God is holy (Psalm 99:9).

The Lord Almighty is the One you are to regard as holy,  
He is the One you are to fear... (Isaiah 8:13).

For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is His name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth (Isaiah 54:5).

But the Lord Almighty will be exalted by His justice, and the holy God will show Himself holy by His righteousness (Isaiah 5:16).

Not only is God holy, He is “most” holy in that no other god, person, or thing is as holy as He is (see 1 Sam. 2:2 and Is. 40:25), and His presence is holy as well. Moses encountered the holiness of God when he approached the burning bush and God spoke to him from within the bush.

“Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5).

Years later Joshua had a similar experience.

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a Man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua went up to Him and asked, “Are You for us or for our enemies?” “Neither,” He replied, “but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come.” Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked Him, “What message does my Lord have for His servant?” The commander of the Lord’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so (Joshua 5:13-15).

It would seem, then, that Adam became a foreign body, a contaminant, a cancer, if you will, to the presence of God at the time of his fall. Having lost the Holy Spirit, Adam no longer reflected the holiness of God that was his birthright when he was created in God’s image. Now Adam’s sin made him an affront to the holiness of God. God responded by sending him out from the

garden of His presence and by placing cherubim at the entrance of the garden to protect His presence from sinful man.

## **Protectors of God's Presence**

Cherubim are winged angels that are guardians of the Lord's presence. This role is seen not only in the cherubim's station at the entrance to Eden, but also in their presence near the throne of God.

Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth (Psalm 80:1).

The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake  
(Psalm 99:1).

O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, You alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth (Isaiah 37:16).

This position of protecting the presence of the Lord was particularly evident in the design of the Ark of the Covenant, where the cherubim, with outspread wings, guarded the Mercy Seat where God dwelt on top of the Ark. So when the priests went in to the Most Holy Place, the cherubim were the first beings the priests saw. Before they could get to God, they had to get past the cherubim. Anything or anyone contaminated by sin that approached God's presence would never get past the cherubim because sinful things and people could not enter God's presence lest they be consumed by Him.<sup>2</sup>

The prophet Ezekiel describes the cherubim as having four wings and four faces, and they were covered with eyes:

And within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. Each of them had four faces and four wings. And their legs were straight and their feet were like a calf's hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides were human hands. As for the faces and wings of the four of them, their wings touched one another; their faces did not turn when they moved, each went straight forward. As for the form of their faces, each had the face of a man, all four had the face of a lion on the right and the face of a bull on the left, and all four had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each had two touching another being, and two covering their bodies (Ezekiel 1:5-11 NAS).

Their entire bodies, including their backs, their hands and their wings, were completely full of eyes. Each of the cherubim had four faces: One face



was that of a cherub, the second the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle (Ezekiel 10:12-14).

The task of guarding the presence of God is also evidently shared by another group of winged angels called seraphim. Isaiah saw these angels when he received his call to be a prophet:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory.” At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for” (Isaiah 6:1-7).

We see here that the seraphim not only protected the holiness of God; they also met Isaiah’s need when he recognized his sinfulness in the presence of a holy God. Thus, their role was both to protect God’s presence and to preserve man when he recognized his sinfulness and repented.

Please note that these angels, or living creatures or beings, as they are often called, didn’t protect man from God; they protected God’s presence from man. Their task was to prevent man from getting into God’s presence—his intended environment and therefore the place where he functions properly, despite his sin and his loss of holiness. For you see, man despite his sin is still made in the image of God. His sinful behavior has not changed his basic makeup. What has changed is man’s ability to act like God acts.

This is true because man lost the Holy Spirit when he sinned and therefore no longer has the capacity to function from the spiritual and moral character of God. In other words, man is still spirit just like God is Spirit, but he is no longer truth and righteousness, as God is (see Ps. 31:5; 45:4). This is why David, after his sin with Bathsheba, sought God with these words,

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 (Psalm 51:10-11).

David knew that his heart and spirit were not right with God because of his sin, and that God had every right to withdraw His presence from David's life.

## **Sinners Are Malfunctioning Saints**

This condition of a heart and spirit that are not right with God has been man's plight ever since the first man and woman chose disobedience over obedience. Adam and Eve certainly appeared to be functioning fine after they left the garden in that they lived to be more than 900 years old. In truth, they were malfunctioning. Adam was still working the ground and having kids as God had intended when He first created man. Nevertheless, Adam was completely malfunctioning because nothing outside its intended environment can function properly. Adam couldn't function like he'd been designed to do because the absence of God's presence made it impossible for him to live like God had planned he would live.

This is why Adam is said to have died when he sinned. Although his physical being didn't die immediately, Adam did die spiritually in the exact moment he was cut off from God's presence because death is the absence of the presence of God in a man or a woman's life. So we see that the man God had pronounced to be "very good" (see Gen. 1:31) became very wrong because he had lost his ideal environment. He was a good creation in the wrong place and thus began to malfunction (sin).

This is the whole problem with our world today. Men and women are malfunctioning (sinning) because they cannot function properly apart from God. This condition of malfunction would have continued indefinitely had God not intervened to rescue the human beings that He had created with His image and likeness. While we were yet unable to return to His presence because we were contaminated by sin, God died for us.

## **Death is the absence of God's presence in your life.**

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life! (Romans 5:6-10)

God came to our rescue because He wants His family back. He knows that sin is the malfunctioning of a saint, and that saints who are in the wrong environment are incapable of functioning correctly, so He sought to restore us to our right environment.

Since God's work of restoration is a work in process, the evidence of man's estrangement from God because of his lost holiness is a constant refrain throughout the history of God's dealings with His people. Indeed, no generation escaped this slavery to sin as "again and again they put God to the test [and] vexed the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. 78:41) until God dealt with them because of their sin. Moses and Aaron, who lost the opportunity to lead God's people into the Promised Land because they neglected to honor the Lord's holiness before the people, are but an example of the many who have suffered because of their unwillingness—and indeed their inability because of their separation from God—to be holy as God is holy.

But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in Me enough to honor Me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them." These were the waters of Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the Lord and where He showed Himself holy among them (Numbers 20:12-13).

Before the fall it was easy for man to get to God—God's presence was where he spent every moment of every day—and to be holy as God is holy—that was man's innate nature. Once man sinned, however, things changed because he lost the right to be with God every day.

Now God has to deal with all our sin, iniquity, and rebellion before He can let us get near His holy place. And even when we get there, we will find cherubim and seraphim hovering around God to prevent us from approaching Him before our sin is atoned for.

Restoring you to your garden home has been God's plan all along. You are valuable to God despite your sin. Your only problem is that you are in a bad environment, an environment that is something other than where God created you to live. So Jesus paid the exact price you are worth. He laid down His image to buy you back because He knows that although you are a sinner, you still retain His image. In other words, your value didn't change when your environment changed, so God devised a plan to redeem you and to restore you to His presence.

Truly every act of God since man's fall from His presence has been done to restore the relationship that man severed through sin. The entire Old

Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, is the story of God's efforts to put man back into the garden environment that he lost.

Please note that the Bible is the story of *God's* efforts, not man's, to restore things to the way they once were. Man cannot accomplish this task alone. He cannot regain his proper environment without the help of his Creator. Truly he cannot even know what is his proper environment and how he was made to function unless God provides the way to bring him back. Man cannot overcome his sin apart from his Savior.

### **God wants His family back.**

Man's inability to restore the communion with God that was broken by sin has not stopped him from trying to reestablish this connection. The many religions of the world and the increased interest in spiritual things in our generation show just how hard man has tried and still is trying to become reconnected with God. Man, when he is living apart from the presence of God, knows that he is lost and empty, with no anchor or foundation for his soul. Whether or not he understands the reason for this void in his life, he feels the effects of it and often spends much time, effort, and money trying to fix his problem.

Nevertheless, none of our self-help books, spiritual exercises, or occult rituals can fulfill our spiritual need. God's prescription for our sin is the only one that works. The only way we become reconnected with God is to accept His gift of salvation through Jesus Christ to cleanse us from all sin. The only way we can stay connected is to practice His presence on a daily basis. Sadly, our refusal to accept God's prescription for sin is quite evident in our sin-filled world.

Do you know why you keep sinning? You sin because you stop, or have never started, practicing the presence of God. It's tough to sin and fellowship with God at the same time. This truth is why you must practice the presence of the Lord all day long.

"How do I practice the presence of God?" you may ask. "Through praise and worship" is the answer. When you are at your job, just hum a song. It's hard to cuss, to gossip, or to complain when you're humming a song. When someone does something to hurt you or to make things difficult for you, just start praying or singing in tongues. You can't get angry when you are talking to God and singing His praises.

This is quite different from what people used to say when I was growing up, "Look, I can put my religion on the side for a minute." What they meant

was, “I’ll stop worshipping, I’ll stop practicing the presence of God for a minute so I can curse you. Then I’ll pick it back up again when I’ve finished taking care of you.” God doesn’t intend that we live like this. He designed us to always be with Him. He planned that we would never have to function without Him. He wanted us to know the joy, peace, and power of living with Him: “In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11b KJV). Joy and pleasures are God’s gifts for His children when they stay in the environment He planned for them. So if you stay in God’s presence, you will always please Him. Then you won’t have to fight anybody because He’ll do it for you. Indeed, He will make your enemies your footstool (see Ps. 110:1).

### **The Bible is our Manufacturer’s program to put us, His product, back into our ideal environment.**

Praise and worship are God’s solutions to get us back into His presence. We must be clear, however, that praise and worship don’t put us back into God’s presence; they bring God’s presence *to* us. That is, they are but the means that provide the conditions that invite God to come to us as He came to Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. They are the tools that set the stage for God’s arrival.

All salvation history is the story of God’s efforts to do just this: to reestablish the conditions where He can live with His people as He did in the garden. He is our Source and our Manufacturer. Therefore, He is the only One who knows both what He created us to do (our purpose) and where He designed us to succeed (our ideal environment). He is also the only One who can help us regain all that we lost through sin.

#### **◆ PRINCIPLES ◆**

1. Everything in life was created to function within a specific environment.
2. Man’s ideal environment is the presence of God.
3. Man’s sin has separated him from his ideal environment.
4. Sinners are malfunctioning saints. Therefore, all our problems stem from the fact that we have lost our ideal environment.
5. God is holy. He cannot allow sin to enter His presence.
6. Salvation through Jesus Christ is the only means by which we can return to God’s presence.
7. Praise and worship are God’s gifts to restore His presence to man.

## **Chapter 3**

### ***Creating a Dwelling Place for God***

**God's goal throughout history has been to get man back into His presence.**

God is in the restoration business, and the Bible is a record of His efforts to get us back into His presence. Therefore, the stories in the Old Testament are not primarily about the patriarchs, judges, kings, and prophets, or about the victories and defeats of God's people. Rather, the Bible can be summed up as an account of God's acts to get man back into His ideal environment. It tells of God's basic desire: "I want a place on earth where I can put My presence again because I need to rescue this malfunctioning machine called 'man.' "

This work of God to get man back into His ideal environment reached its climax in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God's Son. Everything Jesus did was to get God's presence back into man's experience. This is why He had to shed His blood.

God's temple, namely us, had become unholy, so God had to cleanse us and make us holy again through the sacrificial death and the poured-out blood of His Son. Truly, we cannot be qualified to receive the presence of God into our life until the blood of Jesus cleanses us and makes way for the return of God's Spirit to our human temples. Therefore, the key to the continuing work of Jesus in each of us is the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit is alive and well in us, He restores the presence of God to our life and leads us into the holiness that was our birthright at creation.

However, long before God sent Jesus and the Holy Spirit, man attempted to bridge the gap that his sin had created between him and God. These early attempts at worship begin in the Book of Genesis.

#### **Altars for God**

Man's first act of worship is recorded in Genesis chapter 4, right after the story in Genesis 3 of man's sin and his fall from God's presence.

In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock (Genesis 4:3-4a).

## **Altars prepare a place for the presence of God to come.**

What were Cain and Abel doing here? They were trying to get back into touch with God. They evidently knew they needed to be in communication with God. This effort to get God's presence back into man's life is evident throughout the Old Testament. Repeatedly, God's people built altars to prepare a place for the presence of God to come and offered sacrifices either to invite God to come or to commemorate a time and a place where He had come.

After the offerings given by Cain and Abel, the next record in the Bible of man's attempt to communicate with God through sacrifices and offerings is found in the story of Noah. After the flood, when Noah, his family, and all the animals had emerged from the ark, Noah built an altar and offered burnt offerings unto God.

The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in His heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease." Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth" (Genesis 8:21-9:1).

Please notice that God is pleased with Noah's attempts to communicate with Him. Hence, God blesses Noah and his sons. Nonetheless, Noah is still a malfunctioning man. This is, perhaps, most evident in the blessing that God gives to Noah, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth." This blessing is very similar to God's blessing of the first man and the first woman (see Gen. 1:28), but an important element is missing. God does not command Noah to subdue the earth and to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature. Why? Through his sin, man has lost both his right and his power to dominate the earth. He gave that right to satan, whom Jesus refers to as the "prince of this world" (see Jn. 14:30). Therefore, although man is again communicating with God, this relationship does not have the moment-by-moment intimacy of the garden fellowship that God and man had enjoyed.

### **Friends With God**

*Abraham*

Abraham (Abram) is the next man whom the Scriptures tell us built an altar to the Lord. This follows God's appearance to him when God promised Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to Abraham's offspring (see Gen. 12:7). This is but the first of many altars that Abraham built to God. Perhaps the most well-known altar Abraham built was the one on MountMoriah when God commanded him to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering (see Gen. 22). This story shows why Abraham was regarded by God as His friend. Not only was Abraham a worshiper (as is evidenced by the number of altars he built), but so great was Abraham's commitment to, passion for, and trust in God that he gave Him even his son, the son of promise. Believing that God would provide a lamb for the sacrifice, yet not knowing that at the very last minute God would provide a ram to take the son's place, Abraham bound Isaac on the altar and raised his hand to kill him. Only God's voice stopped him from giving God what He had asked for.

### *David*

As is often true in the Bible, the place of one sacrifice becomes the place of another. This time the worshiper is David. He has sinned by counting the fighting men of Israel and God has shown His displeasure by sending a plague on the people. When David sees the carnage among his people, he entreats God to punish him, not them, because he is the one who has sinned. God, through the prophet Gad, then tells David to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah (later associated with Mt.Moriah where Abraham offered up Isaac; see 2 Chron. 3:1) so that the plague may stop.

This was certainly not the only time David built an altar to the Lord. As a youth tending his father's sheep, he had learned to seek the presence of Yahweh. These early experiences with God influenced him so much that when faced with the choice of three years of famine, three months of fleeing from his enemies, or three days of plague, David chose the plague.

I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men (2 Samuel 24:14b).

Do you see why David chose the third option? He preferred to fall into the hands of God rather than the hands of men. Why would David choose God over man? David knew the God he had sung to as a shepherd boy playing his harp. Now, when he is king and is faced with a difficult decision that means suffering not only for him but for his people, David draws on what he had learned during those years of private worship before he entered the public eye. He knows that God is good and His mercy endures forever, so



he entrusts himself and his kingdom to God.

David's lasting relationship with God is also seen when he takes Bathsheba, another man's wife, to his bed and tries to cover his sin. When the prophet Nathan confronts him, David immediately responds, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13b).

### **Praise must be learned in private before it is exhibited in public.**

He doesn't argue or make excuses. He accepts the truth of Nathan's words and the justice of God's punishment.

The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the Lord show utter contempt, the son born to you will die (2 Samuel 12:13b-14).

Psalm 51, written during this time in David's life, shows just how much he valued the presence of the Lord. Although he interceded for his son's life while the child still lived, David didn't criticize God for taking him. In truth, Psalm 51 shows that David thought of a punishment far worse than the loss of his son:

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. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me (Psalm 51:10-12).

You see, David was used to having his own private worship services. He knew the joy and power of living with God. He also knew what happens to a man when sin takes the presence of God from his life.

As a young man, David had played his harp for King Saul when an evil spirit tormented him. This spirit came to Saul after the Lord had departed from his life because of his failure to obey God. The memories of those hours with Saul surely contributed to David's own plea that God not take His Spirit from him. He knew the misery man endures when faced with the absence of God. Losing the Holy Spirit and the presence of God would therefore have been a punishment far greater than the death of his son.

### *Moses*

Moses was another "friend of God." As the leader of a grumbling, dissatisfied people, he often cried out to God. So when God told Moses to take the people up to the Promised Land, but that He would not go with them lest He destroy the people as they traveled, Moses said, "No way!" He wasn't

going anywhere unless God was going with him.

Moses said to the Lord, “You have been telling me, ‘Lead these people,’ but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. You have said, ‘I know you by name and you have found favor with Me.’ If You are pleased with me, teach me Your ways so I may know You and continue to find favor with You. Remember that this nation is Your people.” 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” (Exodus 33:12-15).

What was God’s response? God agreed to do the very thing Moses asked because He knew Moses by name and was pleased with him.

Like Abraham before him and David after him, Moses was hungry for God. He wanted to know God and to find favor with Him. Not only that, he wanted to see God. It wasn’t enough that God spoke to him from the pillar of cloud whenever he entered the Tabernacle and that his face shined with God’s glory even after he had left the Tabernacle. Moses wanted to see God face to face.

God knew that Moses’ request was a problem. No man in his sinful nature could see God and live. But since Moses was so intent on seeing Him, and because Moses was His friend, God agreed to let Moses see His glory.

What Moses saw... Wow! That must have been some close walk God took past him. What else could Moses do but bow to the ground and worship. He had seen the glory of the Almighty! Now he was more sure than ever that he didn’t want to go anywhere if God was not going along. (See Exodus chapter 33.)

## **Temples for God**

The outdoor altars of Cain and Abel, of Noah, of Abraham and his descendants, and of Moses eventually gave way to the enclosed sanctuaries of the Tabernacle and the Temple, but their purpose remained the same. All were places of God’s presence, and sacrifices were offered there with the belief that God would accept them and be pleased with them.

In the Tabernacle and the Temple, however, the worship of God became more regulated. Indeed, the building of the Tent and the Temple, as well as the praise and worship offered there, were governed by the specifications of God Himself, with no room for variance.

The Lord said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites to bring Me an offering. You are to receive the offering for Me from each man whose heart prompts him to

give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze....Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them” (Exodus 25:1-3,8).

Do you see what verse 8 says? God wanted a place to live among His people so He told Moses to bring an offering. All this money was not about having a nice building with soft comfortable chairs. God told Moses to gather an offering from the people because He wanted to get His presence in their midst. It wasn't enough for Him to meet with Moses on the mountain. He wanted to live with all His people.

Building a place for God is always about having the presence of God in the midst of His people. In fact, a big fancy building may look like a church and may even be called a church, but in reality it is very far from being one. Why is this? Nothing is happening there.

Building a church for God is not about the building or the equipment. It's about God's presence. If God's presence is not with you, it doesn't matter how elaborate your building is, how well educated your staff are, how well planned your worship services are, or how dynamic the preaching is. Without God's presence all you have is a big building filled with people. On the other hand, you can meet in a plain room with simple worship and an untrained preacher but have everything. The difference is in the absence or the presence of God.

God's presence is the only essential ingredient in worship. Our praise and the other elements of our meetings must lead us into the presence of God. If they don't, there is no reason to do them. Oh, yes, they may be nice and may make us feel good, but the purpose of gathering is to enter the presence of the Lord. Anything that does not contribute to this is simply unnecessary clutter. God's presence in our presence is the only worthwhile end to our meetings.

This was God's entire purpose for instructing Moses to build the Tabernacle: He wanted to get close to His people. Everything God told Moses to do in some way revealed the lost condition of man and unveiled God's plan to rescue man from his wrong environment by getting His presence back in man's presence.

God's blueprint for the meeting place between Himself and man ensured that man could not just stumble or wander into His presence, lest he be consumed by God because of his sin. This is why God's dwelling place was in the central part of the Tabernacle. God was safeguarding His presence to keep it holy. He also gave Moses very specific instructions concerning the

priests, the sacrifices and offerings, and the atonement procedures so that nothing profane would come close to Him. Each of the furnishings, bowls, plates, and other utensils were also made according to God's exact instructions, as well as the Tabernacle itself and the curtains that hung within it. Particular attention was given to the Ark of the Covenant, where God would dwell between the cherubim, and to the rest of the inner chamber that was known as the Holy of Holies.

### **God's presence is the only essential ingredient in worship.**

The furnishings in the Tabernacle each revealed something about God's intent concerning His people and His presence among them. In the Outer Court stood the altar of burnt offerings, where the sacrifices of the people were presented to God to atone for their sins. Beyond the altar, closer to the door leading into the Tabernacle, stood the laver, where the rites of purification were done. These washings were probably intended to make the priests and the sacrifices holy. Within the tabernacle in the Inner Court, also called the Holy Place, stood the table of shewbread, on which the priest put the fresh bread of the presence every Sabbath. This was eaten only by priests and only in the Holy Place. Frankincense was also placed on the table of shewbread. This was burnt on the altar of incense, which stood before the veil leading into the Holy of Holies, to make atonement. Across from the table of shew-bread stood the golden lampstand or candlestick.

The final part of the tabernacle was the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. On the Mercy Seat above the Ark and between the cherubim that were part of the lid to the Ark was the place where God would dwell. Cherubim, the protectors of God's presence, were also woven into the veil that hung between the Inner Court and the Holy of Holies. (See Exodus chapter 25 and following.) All this was part of God's plans and preparations to provide a place where He could live in the midst of His people. The same was true for the Temple in Jerusalem, when God gave the plans to David and entrusted David's son Solomon with the task of building it.

With the coming of Christ, each of the furnishings in the Tabernacle was revealed to be a type of Him. The Tabernacle, the very house of God, was a type of the Church, where God wants to live. The table of shewbread represented the physical body of Christ and the Christ that would be incarnated in the man. The lampstand, which never went out, represented the

Word of God and the Holy Spirit. The altar of burnt offerings was a type of the sacrifices of praise that continually arise from God's people. The courtyard, or Outer Court, spoke of the assembling of God's people. Even the material of the priests' clothes and the things in the Ark of the Covenant revealed part of God's plan that would be consummated in Christ. The priests' clothes were linen, not wool, so the priests would not sweat in God's presence. (Sweat represented work. See Exodus chapters 28-29 and Ezekiel 44:17-18.) The articles in the Ark of the Covenant were the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the rod of Aaron that budded, and a little jar of manna that was a reminder of the wilderness. All these represented important things to God. The rod of Aaron represented the death we experience because of sin and the rebirth and new life that come through Christ. It also represented the burial of Jesus Christ and His resurrection. The manna represented God's grace, received through no work of man, and the tablets containing the

Ten Commandments spoke of our helplessness to keep the law of God and thereby be righteous before Him.

When the priests poured the blood on the top of the Ark, it covered all those things that revealed our sin and our lack of grace. Instead of seeing our sin, God and the cherubim who protected His presence saw the blood. Thus, God could come to dwell above the mercy seat without destroying the priest because of his sin and the sin of the people. The law that condemned us was covered by the blood of grace.

Through Jesus, we gain access to every part of God's dwelling place. He is the sacrifice, the blood, the dwelling place, and the presence of God. He is also the One whose death destroyed the veil that separated God's dwelling place from His people. Now everyone has access to God—everyone, that is, who accepts the gift of grace that is made available to us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

This way provided by God is the same today as it was two thousand years ago.

**Jesus is still the only way to God. There is no improved savior, no improved blood.**

There is no improved savior and no improved blood. The Savior has been, is, and always will be Jesus Christ, and His blood is the only sacrifice sufficient and acceptable to atone for our sins.

We human beings may be looking for new and improved ways to

worship, but God is not. He does not want experts in worship. What God wants is people who will follow His instructions every time they approach Him.

This is just the way God is. He isn't looking for change, since He doesn't change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (see Heb. 13:8). His bottom line continues to be His passion for getting His presence back into man's experience. This is His plan for the entire human race because Adam carried in him all the nations of the world. Therefore, when God removed Adam from His presence, He removed all the nations as well. Likewise, when Jesus came to earth, He came to restore the Holy Spirit to all mankind. Before He could do this, however, He had to clean us up so that we could receive God's Spirit. He had to cleanse our impurity.

To say that we are impure does not mean that we are dirty, as in the filth of dirt. What it does mean is that we are impure in God's sight. What we believe, what we say, and what we do don't match. This is what impurity is to God. Therefore, God sent Christ to restore a pure heart to us so that we can be integrated in thought, word, and action. Only when our heart is once more pure can we become the temple in which the Holy Spirit lives (see 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).

Since the Holy Spirit is God, He is the key to getting us into God's presence today. He is also the only One who can teach us what God requires of us now (see Jn. 14:26). Sadly, many Christians miss the joy of living with the Lord because their hopes are fixed on Heaven and what they will someday gain there. This may be the theology of the hymnbook, but it is not the theology of the Bible. God's purpose is not that we will fly away to Him someday, but that we will live in His presence today in this world. Therefore, all His work through the Old Testament and into the days of Jesus and the Church has been to get us back into the environment where He first put us here on earth. That environment is His presence.

In essence, the issue is not where you are located, but who is located where you are. You need God's presence to function. So wherever He is, be that in Heaven or on earth, you can function there. This makes seeking God and living in His presence today in this life quite important.

Why else would God create a new Heaven and a new earth?

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea (Revelation 21:1).

He's making another environment for us that is like the atmosphere man once enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. This atmosphere will be on earth because we were created to dominate the earth, not Heaven.

Therefore, Heaven is not the fulfillment of your future. Your eternal home will be a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the HolyCity, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband....I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp (Revelation 21:1-2,22-23).

This new earth won't need a sea to provide water or the sun and the moon to provide light because God Himself will be our light and our life. Just as Adam and Eve enjoyed continual fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden, we will wake up every morning in God's presence and go through the whole day with Him. No matter where we are, we will breathe in life.

### **Praise is the way you get into God's presence.**

However, you don't have to wait for this new earth to live with God. He wants to come to you right now. He wants to live in your home today. He can if you will start praising Him and filling your home with testimonies of how great He is and how good He has been to you. Just start bragging about God from a pure heart, and He will come to you right where you are. He'll set up His throne in your house. That's His plan, and He's bringing it to pass in our generation. He's creating a new order where the power of satan is defeated in your life and in mine simply because we make room for His presence. We know that He wants us to have His presence. The only question is whether we will make room for Him to come to us.

You do this by filling your environment with praise until He comes and fills the place you have made. That's all. There's no more sweating, no more hard work, no more contriving to do this or that to get to God. You make room for Him, and He comes. That's it. And you do this through praise.

### **◆ PRINCIPLES ◆**

1. All God's work throughout history has been to get His presence back into man's environment.

2. Altars, sacrifices, and offerings invite God's presence to come or they commemorate where He has been.
3. God's friends are worshipers.
4. The whole purpose of the Tabernacle and the Temple was to provide a place for God to live in the midst of His people.
5. God's presence is the only essential ingredient in worship.
6. The design and worship of the Tabernacle looked forward to Jesus and the return of the Holy Spirit.
7. God wants His people to follow His instructions when they come to meet with Him.
8. God wants to live with you today.