



“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Psalm 139:7).

God Is Universally Present

Central Truth: No person can escape the universal presence of God.

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Topic: God: Attributes of.

An atheist was trying to instill his unbelief in his little daughter. He required her to write, “God is no where.” Her lack of writing skill caused her to change the spacing of the letter w and she wrote, “God is now here.”

God is now here! He is “now here” to all persons in all places at all times. Someone has expressed His personal presence in these words: “His center is everywhere; His circumference is nowhere.” Every place can be given the name of the city Ezekiel saw, its name being “*The LORD is there*” (Ezekiel 48:35).

At this very moment God is personally present there with you and is personally present here with me. And He is personally with every other person in every other place on earth. That universal presence of God is called His omnipresence.

Omnipresence is the joining of two words; *omni*, meaning “all,” and *presence*, meaning being “at hand” or “in attendance.” Omnipresence means God is always at hand, always with us. It is a doctrine of assurance for the saints and of dread for the sinner. We will never get away from Him.

I. GOD IS WITH US NOW (Psalm 139:7)

A. He is with us in person. To “*go from*” or “*flee from*” His presence implies that He is here. Asking where one could go to be from His presence is an admission that one is in His presence now.

That is wonderfully true for the Christian. Jesus said, “*I am in my*

Father, and ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:20). How much more presence could one get than that?

The apostle Paul preached, *“In him we live, and move, and have our being”* (Acts 17:28). The ancient psalmist wrote, *“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved”* (Psalm 16:8). He is Emmanuel, *“God with us”* in person.

B. He is with us in trouble. We can claim the promise in times of danger. *“The LORD thy God is with thee”* (Deuteronomy 20:1). Ask Daniel where God was when he was cast into the den of lions (Daniel 3). Ask the three Hebrews where God was when they were cast into the fiery furnace (Daniel 6). Ask Moses where God was when he stood before the Red Sea with a hostile army bearing down upon him (Exodus 14). Ask Paul where God was when he stood before the emperor to give a defense of his faith in Jesus, knowing that the emperor thought himself to be a god and that all his fellow laborers had deserted him (II Timothy 4:16, 17).

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour” (Isaiah 43:1-3).

He reveals His presence in a special way when we are in trouble.

C. He is with us in service. To a man distraught over the difficulties of his task, God said, *“My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest”* (Exodus 33:14). To a nation in severe testing, God said, *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness”* (Isaiah 41:10). To a man fleeing from home and the murderous anger of his brother, God said, *“I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest; . . . for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of”* (Genesis 28:15). Whatever your condition, whatever your task, God is personally present with you.

D. God is with us in worship. Jesus himself promised, *“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”* (Matthew 18:20). What a precious promise! There is no need to ask God to meet with us; He is here.

Believe it. Act upon it. Rejoice in it. God is with you now, right now, whatever your situation may be. He is a God at hand. Praise His name!

II. GOD IS WITH US WHEN (Psalm 139:8-12)

A. God is with us when our conditions change. What a great change is involved in going from earth up to heaven or down to hell (Psalm 139:8). Yet, God is with us in every place.

There was a great change in Elijah's condition. One time he stood on Mount Carmel and prayed down fire from God out of heaven. The people fell on their faces with a confession that Jehovah only is God (I Kings 18). Shortly afterward, he was in the desert, discouraged and asking God that he might die (I Kings 19). God was with him on Mount Carmel. God was with him under the juniper bush beyond Beer-sheba.

There was a great change in Samson's condition from his freedom as a man of God and judge of Israel as over against his bondage as a captive of the Philistines and slave at their mill. Yet in both instances it is evident that the power of God was upon him (Judges 14-16).

Changing circumstances make no difference with our unchanging God. He is always faithful to be with us.

B. He is with us when our locations change. Even the “*uttermost parts of the sea*” does not remove us from His presence (Psalm 139:9). “*Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me*” (Psalm 139:10). The eyes of the Lord me looking over the whole earth (Zechariah 4:10). He sees us here; He sees us there; He sees us everywhere.

It may be necessary for you to move from one house to another, from one city to another, from one state to another. But God is in the new location as He was in the old. Take assurance that He is with you when your location changes.

C. He is with us when others cannot see us. We may say, “*Surely the darkness shall cover me*” (Psalm 139:11). Then we realize, “*The darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee*” (Psalm 139:12). How foolish it is for the sinner to seek the darkness to do his sinful deed. He might as well do it at noonday under the light of the sun. God is not like man, that the darkness hides from Him. There is no secret kept from Him. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13).

III. GOD WAS WITH US THEN (Psalm 139:13-16)

With delicate modesty the psalmist describes the conception and development of life in the mother's womb. His purpose is not biological or medical, but spiritual. So he does not discuss how the development took

place. He sees God involved in the process. From that we learn some amazing truths which apply to our condition today.

A. He was with us when we were in embryonic form. *“Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb”* (Psalm 139:13). Conception, development, and birth are not mere biological processes. They are under the eye of God and supervised by the power of God. The psalmist saw himself “possessed” and “covered” by God even in his mother's womb.

Let the mother-to-be rejoice in that truth. God is with her; He is involved in her experience. She is not facing the months of waiting and the moments of birth alone. He is with her, working in her, and will deliver her a blessing of great joy in her infant child. That is a practical expression of His omnipresence.

B. He was with us when we were formed. We were not hidden from Him. He saw us clearly then. *“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them”* (Psalm 139:16).

Here is the point to consider the tragedy of abortion as it is commonly practiced today. For a while the issue was, “At what point does human life begin in the fetus?” The idea was that it was permissible to abort before human life began. But any thinking person knows that human life is in the egg and the sperm before conception takes place. Then the issue shifted to the convenience of the mother rather than the protection of the infant.

Hear the word of God to Jeremiah, *“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee to be a prophet unto the nations”* (Jeremiah 1:5).

Jeremiah was a person, a future prophet in the will of God, while still in the womb of his mother. He was a person then as he was a person after his birth.

Birth does not begin life. It only manifests the life which has been in existence for the nine previous months. So abortion is not the prohibiting of life starting; it is the ending of a life already begun. Abortion is murder of the unborn.

God knew you before you were born. He formed you in your mother's womb. He thought of you before you thought of Him. He was with you when you were not aware of His presence. Praise His name.

IV. GOD WILL BE WITH US FOREVER

He has promised His personal presence while we live in this world. Jesus' Great Commission concludes with the promise, *“Lo, I am with you*

always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:20).

Omnipresence means that He was with us in time past, He is with us in time present, and He will be with us in time future. He is with us always. *“Be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5).*

He has promised His personal presence in the world to come. The apostle Paul described the events surrounding the return of the Lord and the saints being caught up to meet Him, concluding, *“So shall we ever be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:17).* To *“ever be with the Lord”* means at no time or place will we be apart from Him. Omnipresence is not limited to this present world, therefore. It is for time and eternity. *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever” (Psalm 23:6).*

Think of the implications of the doctrine of God's omnipresence. It speaks of the love of God, that He would never leave us. It warns against trying to hide sin from God because He knows all about us. It assures of the ready help of God since He is always near. Learn to say in the face of all circumstances and in all places, *“I am still with thee” (Psalm 139:18).*

Questions

1. What does omnipresence mean?
2. How does Jeremiah 23:23 speak of God's omnipresence?
3. What Bible examples show God with His people in trouble?
4. What does Isaiah 43:1-3 say about God's help in trouble?
5. What Bible examples show God with us in all conditions?
6. How does Psalm 139:9, 10 show that God is with us in all places?
7. What does Psalm 139:13-16 say about God's presence with the unborn?
8. How does Matthew 28:20 teach that God is with us through all of life?
9. What does I Thessalonians 4:17 say about God's presence beyond death?
10. What personal application can you make of this study in your own life?