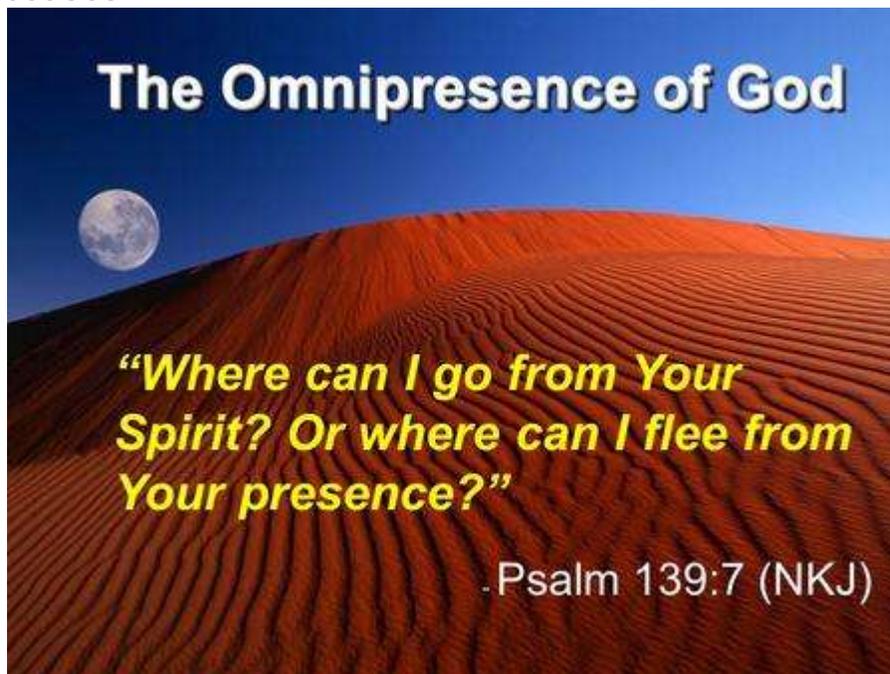


## WE ARE PRISONERS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

[Psalm 139:7-10](#) "Wither shall I go from thy spirit? or wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there: if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

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There are many things in life which seem to us inescapable and omnipresent. A man lost in the desert feels as though the hot sun holds him a prisoner. A criminal fleeing from punishment imagines the strong arm of the law ready to take hold of him at every step he takes. Riding along in our cars with the radio tuned in, it seems to us that the announcer has become omnipresent. We should be grateful that there are no vacuums on earth, grateful that the life-sustaining air is everywhere, even in the smallest cracks in the earth. Think how universal water is. How can anyone escape gravity? Can we ever step out of space? Is there a place where space ceases?



Yet all things have their limitations and their endings. But there is something which is absolutely inescapable, something that holds us prisoners forever. It is God's omnipresence, which is over all and beyond all, nothing can ever escape it. We shall always be surrounded by God's infinite presence.

WE ARE PRISONERS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

## 1. IT IS AN INESCAPABLE PRESENCE

“If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there,” says our text. In our weak and faltering speech we say that God cannot go anywhere, because He IS everywhere. Even the old philosophers, called the Pantheists, recognized this attribute of God and taught that everything is God since He is everywhere and in everything. When we climb the highest mountains or rise in a huge balloon, we cannot find a place where God is absent. Men have rocketed to the moon, but no one can rocket away from God. Astronomers tell us that it takes light, travelling over 186,000 miles per second, many years to reach us from the distant stars. God is out there and beyond. Astronomers have been intrigued by the dark spots in the sky where there are no stars or nebulae. They call these dark spots “holes in the heaven” because they seem to be openings to the end of space. If we could travel through these and keep on going, we still could not escape the omnipresent God. The whole Godhead is present in every speck and spot in creation, and way beyond that. Space surrounds us, and God surrounds space.

“If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there,” says David. Were we to sink to the lowest depths possible, we could still not escape His presence. “If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.” Sail across the vast oceans, seek a lonely island, or go down into the earth into a deep cave, or descend into the ocean depths in a submarine, or be like Jonah in the belly of the fish; we never can escape the presence of God, it is even foolish to try. Did not Adam and Eve look foolish indeed when they tried to hide from God among the trees of the garden? How quickly sin warped their minds.

When visiting Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico, the ranger puts out the lights for one minute in the deep part of the cave to show the visitors what real darkness is like. Are we then hidden from God? Our Psalm says in v12, “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee.” His is an inescapable presence.

## 2. IT IS A COMFORTING PRESENCE

Many people wish to escape God and His disturbing presence by drowning themselves in the pleasures of life. Some even commit suicide to escape God, but they only exchange one form of presence for another. Yea, the wicked flee, but where can they go? It is a sobering thought that we can do nothing nor go anywhere without taking God with us. Would it not therefore be the wisest course to try to get on the right side of Him who has our

eternal destiny in His hands? Would it not be best for man to seek some way to get peace with this omnipresent God while He still may be found?



The believers in Christ have the only way to be at peace with God. The Lord gave His Son to die in our stead on the cross and He wants us to believe in Jesus and be saved. Our omnipresent God is no more angry with us because of our sins, if we accept Christ as our Savior and Substitute. Then our sins are all washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and we stand accepted and redeemed before our God. For believers, then, God's omnipresence is no source of fear. It is rather their greatest comfort and joy. We depend upon Him for support and say, "I need Thy presence every hour." We plead, "Abide with me," and we pray, "Forsake me not." When we love someone we want them to be near us and with us. We love God and our Savior Jesus Christ and we are happy in the knowledge that Jesus is with us "always even unto the end of the world." We are not only pleased with God's presence here on earth, but with joyful anticipation we say with the 23rd Psalm, "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." God's children in Christ are not disturbed or afraid in the presence of the Lord, in fact, they enjoy walking with God as Noah did. Nor is David afraid of His presence, for he closes this Psalm with the words, "Lead me in the way everlasting."

Why are the words "The Lord is my shepherd" so well beloved by all believers? Because, the shepherd is always with the sheep, and his presence gives the sheep peace and comfort and assurance.

We are happy to be "prisoners" of God's presence. Washed in the blood of Jesus we know that our loving Father will take us with Him in glory, there to enjoy His eternal presence. This He has solemnly promised us. Even if we could escape from God by taking the wings of the morning and dwelling in the uttermost parts of the sea, we would not dare to do so, for His presence is our greatest comfort. The Lord has also assured us that He will never tire

of our presence. We want His gracious presence here so that we can enjoy His eternal presence there.



In Christ we are confident that He will take us to heaven, where we will be perfectly happy to be “prisoners” of His presence for evermore. AMEN PRAYER. Dear Lord, without Thee we cannot be happy in life. “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” By Thy Holy Spirit keep us with our dear Savior so that we always find comfort in Thy gracious presence. Never leave us nor forsake us. “Nearer my God to Thee, nearer to Thee” shall be our eternal song. O Holy Trinity, keep us prisoners of Thy presence forever. AMEN