

“Creation – Designed for God to be Known & Near” (Pt. 2)

The Ministry of the Spirit

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A good friend and pastor told me of an extraordinary incident in his life that lasted “less than ten seconds.” He was in a hotel in Brazil. “As I walked from one room to the other, there was a sudden sense of the presence of God.” The joy was incalculable. He said, “For that very brief moment, I would have endured anything.” He referred to various trials he has had over the years, including him and his wife raising their daughter who remained in diapers and never walked or talked and died at age sixteen. “Anything,” he stressed. It made me ask, whatever will heaven be like? It reminds me of the line from E. E. Hewitt’s hymn “When We All Get to Heaven”: “Just one glimpse of Him in glory will the toils of life repay.” One glimpse will do it then. One glimpse will do it now. I should make it clear that this book is not primarily about seeing God, although one must not rule out that possibility: God has surprising ways of showing up! However, this book is rather about the sense—the consciousness and awareness—of God’s presence. My friend did not see anything in that hotel room; he felt God’s presence for a few seconds.” **Kendall, R.T.** *The Presence of God: Discovering God’s Ways Through Intimacy With Him* (p. xv).

INTRO ...Introducing "Transcendence" & "Immanence"

[Download This Thought](#): **"There Exists Something to REACH FOR" in our lives!** ("MORE")

...There is an "into all the world" (Gen 1, Matt 28) ...There is "the knowledge of God" (Rom 11:33 "Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable..." Php 3 "I count all things as loss that I might gain Christ") ...There is "Promised Land to Possess" ...There is "transformation from glory to glory (2Cor 3:18)" ...There is the "filling of the Holy Spirit" ...There is the "renewing of the mind" ...There is "freedom/liberty" ('where the Spirit is there is liberty')

"LONGING. We are creatures of longing. When we misdiagnose the object of this longing, then we become frustrated and disappointed." **Beale, G. K.; Kim, Mitchell.** *God Dwells Among Us: A Biblical Theology of the Temple* (Essential Studies in Biblical Theology) (p. 5). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Ed.

"The Infinite ('Holy') Transcendent God (who is "unsearchable" and "dwells in unapproachable light" and whom "know man can know or has ever seen") has created "touch points" where he places something of himself in an "Earth-Based-Eyedropper" and we get to "taste & see" (to know & experience) this God!"

"One of the challenges of Christian theology, both systematic theology and biblical theology, is the interaction—some might even say, tension—between the transcendence of God (his otherness) and the immanence of God (his relatedness to the creation, and especially to his people within the creation). ...God is clearly both transcendent and immanent, and to ignore his self-revelation of either is to construct a golden calf of our own understanding and blasphemously to label it “God.” ...The Bible certainly affirms God’s transcendence and does not shirk from the tension between transcendence and immanence,⁸ yet as the biblical story unfolds and as God seeks to relate to his people, almost by definition (i.e., this biblical story is a story about relatedness) immanence takes center stage in how God reveals himself (although transcendence still hovers about continuously). ...This “tension” in our understanding carries over into the important distinction between God’s presence and his omnipresence." **Scott Duvall & Daniel Hayes**, "God's Relational Presence", p. 5

...Presence... vs. ...Omnipresence

Understanding Eden, Earth & the Presence of God

"Our basic thesis is that the Triune God desires to have a personal, encountering relationship with his people and enters into his creation in order to facilitate that relationship. Thus the Bible begins with God's presence relating to his people in the garden (Genesis) and ends with God's presence relating to his people in the garden (Revelation). ...The entire story culminates at the end of Revelation, where the presence of God is once again in Jerusalem (the new Jerusalem) and in the garden, relating to his people. This "megatheme" drives the biblical story, ...It is indeed the cohesive center of biblical theology." **Scott Duvall & Daniel Hayes**, "God's Relational Presence", p. 1

Gen 2

- Man and his Divine Design
 - ...He is "Dirt + Breath" (he is "from the earth"—w/ a Heavenly Connection")
 - ...He is "from the earth" and he is "for the earth"
 - ...He is a "relational being"
- EDEN ...a Unique Location on Earth ...there are some things here that are NOT common elsewhere
 - There's a unique river (v.10ff)

A seemingly incidental reference to a river flowing out of Eden also reminds us of the abundant life flowing from the presence of God. This river in Eden gives life to the many trees growing on its banks, including the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life (Gen 2:10, 17; 3:24). This water flows out of Eden to water the Garden before flowing outward to give life to the rest of the earth and places where nations would reside (Gen 2:10-14). Similarly, in later depictions of the temple, a river flows with trees of life on its banks. In Ezekiel 47, a river flows from below the threshold of the temple with trees on the banks of both sides. ...This river flows from the presence of God ("from the throne of God and of the Lamb") outward to bring life to the surrounding nations. ...The rivers of life flowing from the presence of God in Eden beckon us to the satisfaction and re-creation of these refreshing waters that are only found in the presence of God." **Beale, G. K.; Kim, Mitchell**. *God Dwells Among Us: A Biblical Theology of the Temple* (Essential Studies in Biblical Theology) (pp. 8-9, 11)

?? - Ministry of the Spirit?? ...**Jn 7:37-39** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

- There are unique trees there

"The word garden itself suggests something enclosed and protected. It was set apart from everything else. The garden was in Eden. Eden was a larger demarcated area, and then there was the world beyond. The heavenly template for the tabernacle was already in view: the holy place (Eden) was near him; the Most Holy Place (the garden) was nearer." **Ed Welch**, "Created to Draw Near", p. 22



- God is "uniquely there" (Gen 3:8) (a unique "exchange" with God)

"the seemingly casual mention of God "walking" in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:8) is rich with connotations that suggest God's presence in the temple. In Leviticus 26, the Lord promises that he will "walk" among them and be their God (Lev 26:12). In Deuteronomy 23, the Lord commands the Israelites to keep their camp holy because he "walks" in the midst of their camp (Deut 23:14). ...In a similar manner, the Lord is "walking" in Eden (Gen 3:8) because Eden itself was the temple and dwelling place of God." **Beale, G. K.; Kim, Mitchell.** *God Dwells Among Us: A Biblical Theology of the Temple* (Essential Studies in Biblical Theology) (p. 6)

SUMMARY: Every place on earth is NOT the same. Some places/moments offer unique exchanges with the presence of God!

- **Man Has a Particular Assignment in Eden** (Gen 2:15)
 - Man has a "global/earthly assignment" (Gen 1:26) ...
 - Man also has an "Eden Assignment" ... "to work it and keep it" [šâmar; a primitive root; properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to, etc.:]

" A natural way to follow the priestly story is to look for tabernacles and temples. This is where priests worked, and this is where God came near. ...The problem is that the tabernacle doesn't appear until later in Scripture's unfolding story—around the time of Moses. Identities are forged at creation. So we look for times when God came near before the tabernacle.

...Humanity had a mission in this tabernacle—"to work it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15)—which is the same language used for the priests and Levites in Israel's tabernacle. The priests were to serve and "keep guard" over it (Num. 1:53; 3:36). This means that humanity's work in the garden was not restricted to gardening. Humanity was to maintain the temple grounds and also protect it from intruders." **Ed Welch**, "Created to Draw Near", p. 19, 22

... **Num 1:53** *But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the people of Israel. And the Levites shall keep guard over the tabernacle of the testimony.* [šâmar]

[**EARTHLY PRIESTS** (Adam/Eve ...Levites ...1Pet 2:9) = "**Immanent Eye-Droppers**" (where the Infinite ('Holy') Transcendent God is dispensed/revealed into the earth!)]

...Eden is a Special Place and it offers our first place of understanding "The Presence of God"

"the presence of God is a central goal in God's redemptive mission. The second truth follows: the presence of God is the agent by which the Lord accomplishes his redemptive mission." ...The restoration of God's presence—or we could say his relational nearness—once lost in the fall is one of the most pivotal acts in the story of redemption. As John shows us, the final hope of history is that "the dwelling place of God is with man" and that God "will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God" (Rev. 21:3)." ..."This objective, though, is not only prevalent at the story's end, but also woven throughout Scripture's plotline. From the beginning, the goal of God's presence affects the Creator-creature relationship. In Eden, God charges the first couple to expand the garden-sanctuary, the locus of God's presence, both geographically and genealogically (Gen. 1:28–30). The temple of God's presence found in the garden is meant to cover all of creation. From this perspective, we see that the Lord, in his divine wisdom, ties Adam's role to the administration of his presence to the entire world." **Ryan Lister**, "The Presence of God", p. 25

>> "the restoration of God's presence (relational nearness) is one of the most pivotal acts in the story of redemption" ...Thus it is one of the most pivotal things about our lives! ...Understanding, pursuing, restoring, developing, fanning into flame, increasing our 'exchange' with the presence of God SHOULD be a Life-long OBSESSION!

Ps 27:4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

...David's "One Thing" ...
...My One Thing!?!? ...

"...God's realm is heaven, and man's is earth, which is why the Spirit's hovering over the waters is unexpected. Hovering implies closeness. Eagles hover over their young (Deut. 32:11). The gods of legends stayed in their abodes. The one true God, however, came close, and when he did, the life of heaven came to earth. It did in the beginning. It did when the Spirit "overshadowed" Mary (Luke 1:35). It did later when the Spirit descended on Jesus at his baptism (Luke 3:22). It does now. Apparently, heaven was never meant to contain the triune God. The movement between heaven and earth was always intended to be fluid." **Ed Welch**, "Created to Draw Near", p. 19, 21

["fluid", ie, dynamic. It is NOT a 'static', 'constant', 'no variety' presence!
[The "Charismatic Dimension" has a reputation of being a bit "unpredictable" ...The Presence of God has ALWAYS been 'fluid' and a bit 'unpredictable' vs 'constant/same'.]

What follows is the story of that movement between heaven and earth—God coming from his abode into our own, and we being brought into his. ...It will happen. The hovering Spirit heralded what was to come.

...Within Eden was a garden— ...the place where heaven and earth met. It was a "trysting place" more than a mere garden.⁶ Here God and humanity went for a walk. This was "the holy mountain of God" that later generations hoped to gather around and perhaps ascend (Ezek. 28:14). This was God's house." **Ed Welch**, "Created to Draw Near", p. 19, 21

What is your theology, your pursuit, and your experience of the Presence of God?