THE PRESENCE OF GOD
(God's Omnipresence)

God is "not far from everyone of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:27, 28).

I. The DEFINITION of God's Omnipresence

The word "present" means: here, close to, next to; and the prefix "omni" gives it universality. God is everywhere here, close to everything, next to everyone (Tozer, p. 121).

God is everywhere present!

SEE: Psalm 139:7-12

God's omniscience (v. 1-6) and omnipresence are closely related.

God knows all because He made everything, sees everything, and is everywhere!

God does not merely look at His creation from a distance; he is in the midst of it.

II. The EXPLANATION of God's Omnipresence

A. God's presence is spiritual

Psalm 139:7 -- "Thy Spirit . . . Thy presence."

NOTE; The connection between God's "Spirit" and God's "presence."

God is spirit (Jn. 4:24); therefore, His presence is not material in nature.

Important Note: God is present in all of creation; but He is not a part of creation.

B. God's presence is actual

Psalm 139:8 - ". . . Thou art there. . ."

Though God's presence is spiritual, it is nonetheless actual (real) in essence.

God's omnipresence is not a mere potential. That is, we are not saying that God can be every place at one time, but that He is every place at one time.

God is not merely in a place in thought, but in reality.

(Contrast this with the example of someone who knows about California, may even see a live ball game in California via satellite and TV; but is not present in California.)

C. God's presence is total

Psalm 139:8, 10 - "Thou art there . . . Thy right hand shall hold me."

It is important to note that God in His totality (whole being) is everywhere present at the same time.

--God does not have to be extended ("stretched out" or expanded) to be everywhere.

--God does not have to be multiplied or divided to be everywhere.

God's omnipresence is not a part of God in every place, but is all of God in every place.

--God fills heaven and earth! (SEE: jer. 23:23-24)

--God sits in Heaven and rests His feet on earth (Is. 66:1; cp. I Ki. 8:27; Ps. 11:4). "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool."

The omnipresence of God is as the sea is to the fish and the air to the bird. "God is over all things, under all things, outside all, within but not enclosed; without but not excluded; above but not raised up; below but not depressed; wholly above, residing; wholly beneath, sustaining; wholly within, filling" (Tozer, citing Hildebert, p. 122).

D. God's presence is universal

Psalm 139:7-10 - He is in "heaven . . . hell (sheol) . . . the uttermost part of the sea."

1. God is present in Heaven above (v. 8a)

God's glory is visible in Heaven (Rev. 4:2, 3), not on earth.

Though God is present on earth, no one sees His glory today. We see Him only through "eyes of faith."

2. God is present in hell (sheol) beneath (sheol literally refers to a "deep pit")

--Sheol often refers to the grave (Sol. 8:6)

--Sheol often refers to a place of destruction for the wicked (Deut. 32:32; Ps. 9:17; Prov. 15:11; Is. 14:9, 15)

*SEE Rev. 14:10 - ". . . he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb (Jesus Christ).

(Those who die without Christ will be forever set apart from the presence of God in terms of His power to save, but not in terms of His watchful eye.)

3. God is present in earth ("sea") below

(No one is ever away from God's presence - There is actually no desolate, secluded place on earth, or in the universe!)

E. Since God is universal:

1. His presence is <u>inescapable</u> Ps. 139:7-12)

SEE: Jeremiah 23:23, 24.

The most foolish attempt in the world is to run or hide from God! (EX: Adam, Achan, Jonah - Jonah tried to flee from the presence of the Lord, but he couldn't [Jonah 1:3]).

2. His presence is <u>not confined</u>

a. God is not confined to any <u>object</u>

--such as an idol

"Canon W.G.H. Holmes of India told of seeing Hindu worshippers tapping on trees and stones and whispering, "Are you there? Are you there?" to the god they hoped might reside within" (Tozer, p. 124).

One reason why idolatry (object worship) is such an abomination is because it not only is a substitute worship for the true God (Rom. 1), but it also discredits the omnipresence of God and confines Him to an object, building, or some other "holy" site.

--such as a building (I Ki. 8:27; II Chron. 2:5, 6; Acts 7:47-50).

b. God is not confined to any <u>location</u>

(SEE: Jn. 4:20-24)

Deut. 4:39 - "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else."

(Cp. Josh. 2:11)

EXCURSUS:

Christ's use of His omnipresence was surrendered while He was on earth.

When Christ was incarnate on earth, He was limited in His omnipresence.

It is in this sense that the Father is said to be "greater" than the Son (Jn. 14:28).

III. The APPLICATION of God's Omnipresence

The truth about God's omnipresence should be applied to your life. In other words, we need to "practice the presence of God."

A. God's omnipresence has application to the unsaved (Acts 17:22-29 *v. 27-28)

He is only a call away (Rom. 10:13).

B. God's omnipresence has special application to the saved

(Though God is everywhere, He dwells with the Godly in a special way - Is. 57:15 - "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.")

"Enoch walked with God . . ." (Gen. 5:22).

When you "practice the presence of God," the following blessings will be enjoyed:

1. Knowing God's presence with you brings joy (Ps. 16:11).

2. Knowing God's presence with you brings comfort (Acts 18:10).

3. Knowing God's presence with you brings confidence

    a. Confidence as you pray (Mt. 18:19-20)

    b. Confidence as you witness (Mt. 28:19-20)

    c. Confidence as you serve

        1) Christ fills all believers (Eph. 1:23)

        2) God works in all believers (I Cor. 12:6) (Phil. 2:13)

4. Knowing God's presence with you brings an end to loneliness (Heb. 13:5). (You are never alone - Acts 17:27-28)

5. Knowing God's presence with you brings a fear of God (Gen. 28:15-17; Josh. 2:11).

God is always with us . . . Are we always with Him?