

## CHAPTER 8

### ZION

**W**e shall begin this portion of the work from the destination we are seeking and work our way back since that is the way most of us experience it. In our quest for the true New Testament worship experience there is a place, well I call it a place but it is not a place in the physical sense of the word, but a spiritual one, that defies all natural explanations.

We are about to address the spiritual journey so to speak of the worship experience. Just as we can clearly tell that we are in the presence of God at times and at other times are not, it is obvious that something beyond the realm of the natural is occurring. Although He never leaves us nor forsakes us and He is everywhere all the time, there is a certain aspect of His presence that we experience when we are engaged in the worship of Him that has a marked difference from the others. This is the aspect of His presence that we are addressing here.

Let me ask a few basic questions so we can throw ourselves out of the realm of the natural and begin to focus on the supernatural.

- 1) The bible clearly states that **we are** seated in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. **Well are we** seated in heavenly places or are we here reading this work right now?
- 2) The bible also says that before we accepted Christ that we were dead in our sins and trespasses. Were we really dead when we received Him or alive? If we were dead then how did we receive Him?
- 3) Gods' word declares that in the spirit there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, Jew nor Greek. Am I a male after I receive Christ or not?

These questions sound some what ridiculous but they make us realize that there is another realm that the bible talks about that is not of this

world, regardless of what our natural surroundings tell us. So with this supernatural realm in mind let us look at the worship experience from the inside out, so to speak.

We will start from one of the most basic of praise and worship scriptures and apply this supernatural aspect.

*Enter into His gates with thanksgiving. Enter into His courts with praise (PS 100: 4 ).*

A very familiar scripture about the presence of God, but let us look at some basic truths that can not be denied here, regardless of how they might rock our theology. Let us look at the same scripture but with the emphasis on where we are when we experience His presence.

*Enter into **His gates** with thanksgiving. Enter into **His courts** with praise.*

The scripture clearly teaches us that when we enter into that presence of God, we go through **His** gates and enter into **His** courts. Now if I were to come over to your home to be with you would you be coming to my house or would I be in yours? Obviously I would be at yours. Then why do we think that God comes to our services and shows up at our meetings? The fact is that he doesn't come to our parties but He does invite us to His. This kind of takes the pride out of our services that God showed up at my place, did he show up at yours? The bible teaches that He has given us access to the throne of God. Giving us access means that He allows us to **come to Him**, where He is.

In Old Testament times the people of Israel would sing songs as they walked up the mountain of the Lord to be in His presence. These songs are found in the book of Psalms 120-134, and are called the songs of ascents, meaning the songs that were sung as they ascended the mountain of the Lord.

This is a very good type or shadow of what Jesus has done for us by giving us access to the throne of God. We can come boldly to the throne room of his grace at anytime from any place, weather we are at a

church service or not. For Paul and Syllas it was a prison cell not a church. We have access to **His throne room**.

The danger that we need to watch out for is, if we raise our hands or sing real good, or dance just right, or pick the perfect song list, God will show up in our church. The priests of baal used to do things to try and get their god to show up like, cut themselves or chant the right prayers ect. We can not do things to make God show up, but we can however enter into **His gates** with thanksgiving and **His courts** with praise.

In Psalm 132:13,14 it is stated:

*“For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for His dwelling place; This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.”*

God dwells in Zion, forever, it is His resting place. Where is Zion? To be honest it doesn't really matter that much. The point is that God is somewhere in the heavenly realm and He has given us access to that place, let's call it Zion. He desires that we commune with Him. When we leave the confines of the natural and shut out the ties of the earthly realm that hold us down, we can experience being in His presence. This is why, as stated in the last chapter, when our mind and emotions are turned towards God we cut off the distractions of the enemy that keep us from experiencing the place where God would have us to be.

If in the middle of the worship experience something in the natural realm happened like the fire alarm going off or something falling and making a loud noise occurred, what would happen?

You would leave the spiritual realm and again begin to focus on the natural surroundings demanding your attention. ***The essence of being in His presence is your hearts location.*** That is what the presence of God is all about. We have access at all times yet we only tap into it on certain occasions. But it is clear that God is starting to move on His people and draw them to himself and we are less and less relying on our natural surroundings and more and more learning to trust in the Lord and stay in His presence. For the Lord is seeking such to worship Him.