

The Lord's Promised Presence

Key Verse: *"O LORD,
thou hast searched
me, and known
me."
—Psalm 139:1*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 139:1-12

AT THE BEGINNING OF

this psalm, our Key Verse brings to mind the thought that the Heavenly Father, being from everlasting to everlasting, possessed the foreknowledge to plan for eternity without the possibility of error. As such, he made provision for the recovery of

mankind from the scourge of sin and death even before intelligent beings were created.

The psalmist continues, saying, "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways." (vss. 2,3) Included in these verses is the understanding that the Creator was not caught unawares when Adam disobeyed by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. God had already made provision to provide a ransom, as we note in the words of John the Revelator when he spoke of Jesus as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—Rev. 13:8

God's presence and overruling in man's affairs has been manifested throughout history as the various features of his plan have unfolded at different time intervals. For example, in Genesis chapter 6 it is recorded that God would destroy "all flesh" by a flood of waters. We read that the angels had seen the beauty of the daughters of

men. They took themselves wives, and the children born as a result of this unholy union became “giants,” “men of renown.”—vss. 1-7,13

Prior to the First Advent of Jesus, the Israelites were exclusively God’s chosen people. (Amos 3:2) Following their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, God entered into a covenant with them based on the Law which was given at the hands of Moses. During their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses was the lawgiver and leader of the Israelites, assisted by counselors. Joshua was appointed by God to succeed Moses, and he led the Israelites across the River Jordan into the land of promise. Under his leadership, the land was divided among the various tribes according to the Lord’s direction. All of these provisions reflected further aspects of divine provision and presence with mankind.

During the Gospel Age, beginning at Pentecost, the Heavenly Father has revealed himself to, and has been present with, the comparatively small number of foot-step followers of Jesus—a “little flock.” (Luke 12:32) There are many texts that speak of both God and Jesus being present with true Christians during this time. To these, Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [age].” (Matt. 28:20) He also exhorted his disciples: “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 18:10

It is clear also that the doctrine of the resurrection is set forth by both the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament. This marvelous teaching speaks to God’s abiding presence with all those who will, in due time, become his people. These include all mankind—all who were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Paul wrote that Jesus gave himself “a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) What a blessed fulfilment of the Heavenly Father’s foresight and presence with mankind is thus provided! ■