

## GOD WITH MEN IN THE TORAH

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### I. *Introduction*<sup>1</sup>

Were Old Covenant saints indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Assuming that John 7:39 teaches that the Holy Spirit would not continually indwell believers until after the cross,<sup>2</sup> this study seeks to establish what the Pentateuch does and does not say about the presence of God with regard to its faithful.<sup>3</sup> Herein we seek to demonstrate two things. First, that God's presence with his people is a pervasive reality in the Pentateuch. Second, that God creates his Old Covenant remnant by revealing himself and maintains it by abiding with his people.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to Professors Daniel I. Block and Peter J. Gentry, who read this essay and offered many helpful suggestions, and to Professor Thomas R. Schreiner, who suggested that I seek to publish this piece.

<sup>2</sup> When I initially set out to do this project I intended to argue that Old Covenant saints were indwelt. I found, however, that those who embrace this position fail to incorporate John 7:39, 14:17, and 16:7 into their system. This forced me to seek another explanation for the faithfulness of Old Covenant believers. I have come to the position that what Jesus said of the Spirit in John 14:17c, "He is with you and he will be in you," broadly reflects the Bible's teaching on the role of the Spirit in the lives of those who live before and after Jesus. For unsuccessful (in my judgment) attempts to explain John 7:39, 14:17, and 16:7 while maintaining that Old Covenant saints were indwelt, see e.g., W. C. Kaiser, *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 139-40; B. B. Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," in *Biblical Doctrines* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1929; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988), esp. 128-29; Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976). For the scholarly landscape on this question see J. M. Hamilton, Jr., "Old Covenant Believers and the Indwelling Spirit: A Survey of the Spectrum of Opinion," *TJ* 24 (forthcoming 2003).

<sup>3</sup> In a subsequent article this same question will be explored in the Prophets (נביאים) and the Writings (כתובים).

<sup>4</sup> This investigation is limited to how this particular theme, God's presence, relates to the Old Covenant remnant. Other important factors in the creation and maintenance of the remnant—e.g., election, monergism, monotheism, trust in Yahweh, the covenant, etc.—will only be addressed as they relate to the focus of this study, God's presence with his people. H. D. Preuss argues that election is the central concept in Old Testament theology (*Old Testament Theology* [trans. L. G. Perdue; 2 vols.; OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995]). J. B. Payne makes helpful points regarding monergism (*The Theology of the Older Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962], 232-40), which are always to be balanced by the reality of human responsibility (cf. D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994]). P. House takes monotheism as the center of Old Testament theology (*Old Testament Theology* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998]); while W. Eichrodt argued that covenant is its organizing principle (*Theology of the Old Testament* [trans. J. A. Baker; 2 vols.; OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961]). S. Terrien maintains that God's presence is central

These two points are significant because in the Old Testament there is a direct correlation between the favorable presence of God and the well-being of his people, physical as well as spiritual. The upshot of this is that the Old Testament does not conceive of God creating and keeping a believing remnant by his Spirit's dwelling in each individual member of the remnant. God's dwelling place in the Old Testament is in the midst of his people, but in the midst of them means in the tabernacle and later the temple, not in their individual bodies.

The contention of this study is that God's self-disclosure and his favorable presence with his people constitute the Pentateuch's description of how the Old Covenant faithful became and remained believers. It is clear in the New Testament that the New Covenant faithful become and remain believers because they are regenerated and indwelt by God's Spirit (e.g., Gal 3:3; Rom 8:9-11). Some infer that, "Since He keeps the New Testament saint by indwelling . . . it seems reasonable to believe that He kept the Old Testament saint in the same way."<sup>5</sup> One of the working hypotheses of the present study is that John 7:39 forbids this inference.

The New Testament indicates that Old Covenant believers were not indwelt, and the claim of this study is that the Old Testament does not explicitly teach that they were. Nevertheless, there is evidence that, whatever means he employed, it was God who enabled Old Covenant believers to have and maintain faith.<sup>6</sup> For example, God tells Elijah that he (God) will cause 7,000 to remain who have not worshiped Baal (1 Kgs 19:18). The thesis of this study is that the means God employed to preserve his remnant were his word (i.e., his self-revelation)<sup>7</sup> and his presence. One of the implications of this thesis is that the usage of רוח (Spirit) in the Old Testament is not the key to understanding the sanctification of the Old Covenant remnant.<sup>8</sup>

for Israel's faith (*The Elusive Presence* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978]). The focus on God's presence in this examination of the Old Testament is not intended to minimize any of the aforementioned (and some not mentioned, e.g., fear of Yahweh) vital realities.

<sup>5</sup> Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 70.

<sup>6</sup> Similarly G. F. Hasel, who writes, "The faithful remnant will owe its existence primarily to the gracious mercy of Yahweh and not to their own merit" (*The Remnant* [Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1972], 391); contra J. H. Tigay, who writes, "How Israel's ancestors earned God's love is explained in Genesis, especially in the narratives that illustrate Abraham's obedience and trust in him" (*Deuteronomy* [JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996], 57 [emphasis added]). Against Tigay's position, Deut 29:3 (ET 29:4) reads: "Yahweh has not given to you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear, down to this very day." In the Gospel of John Jesus attributes the ability "to see the Kingdom of God" to being "born again" (John 3:3 [emphasis added]).

<sup>7</sup> For the connection between word and revelation see E. Jacob, "The Spirit and the Word," in *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* (ed. B. C. Ollenburger, E. A. Martens, and G. F. Hasel; SBTS 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 163.

<sup>8</sup> In the Appendix, "The Semantic Range of רוּחַ," I have classified each use of רוּחַ in the Old Testament. For other examinations of the usage of רוּחַ in the Old Testament, see BDB, 924-26, 1112; *HALOT*<sup>SE</sup>, 1197-1201, 1979-80; *NIDOTTE*, 3:1073-78; D. I. Block, "Empowered by the Spirit of God: The Holy Spirit in the Histrographic Writings of the Old Testament," *SBJT* 1 (1997):

The Bible's testimony regarding the sinful state of humanity is consistent that unless God enables people to be righteous, they will be "only evil all the time" (Gen 6:5).<sup>9</sup> The Gospel of John states that, "Everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, that his deeds might not be reproved" (3:20). Nothing prohibits the inference that this applies to all humanity, those who live before Jesus and those who live after him. Proof of this is seen in Deut 29:3 (ET 29:4), "But to this day Yahweh has not given to you a heart to know nor eyes to see nor ears to hear." Like Moses, Joshua knew that the people were unable, of themselves, to keep the covenant God had made with them. In response to the people's promise to be faithful we read, "But Joshua said to the people, 'You are not able to serve Yahweh, because he is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins'" (Josh 24:19).<sup>10</sup>

The question that plagues those who have a healthy respect for the crippling effect of sin is: If Old Covenant saints were not indwelt by the Spirit, how did they live faithfully? Rather than searching the Old Testament's references to God's Spirit for information on the regeneration and sanctification of Old Covenant saints, the present examination will explore what the Pentateuch says about its faithful and about where God dwells. This investigation assumes that Old Covenant saints had to be enabled by God (i.e., regenerated) if they were to believe, and that in fact there was always a remnant whom God had caused to experience spiritual life.<sup>11</sup>

42-61; idem, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of *RWH* in the Book of Ezekiel," *JETS* 32 (1989): 27-49; C. A. Briggs, "The Use of רוח in the Old Testament," *JBL* 19 (1900): 132-45; W. E. March, "God with Us: A Survey of Jewish Pneumatology," *ASR* 83 (1967): 3-16; W. R. Schoemaker, "The Use of רוח in the Old Testament, and of πνεῦμα in the New Testament," *JBL* 23 (1904): 13-67; W. A. VanGemeren, "The Spirit of Restoration," *WTJ* (1988): 81-102; B. B. Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," 101-29; H. W. Wolf, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (trans. M. Kohl; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 32-39. Cf. also A. A. Anderson, "The Use of 'RUACH' in 1QS, 1QH and 1QM," *JSS* 7 (1962): 293-303; J. Pryke, "'Spirit' and 'Flesh' in the Qumran Documents and Some New Testament Texts," *RevQ* 5 (1965-66): 345-60. It is noteworthy that in his book, *An Old Testament Theology of the Spirit of God*, Wilf Hildebrandt does not discuss the Spirit indwelling all believers—not even when treating the Spirit's ministries in the New Testament! There is no entry for "Indwelling" in his index, and he mentions neither John 14:16-17 nor 1 Cor 6:19 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995), 196-208. Hildebrandt indicates that prior to Jesus only those with "anointed" tasks were so endowed with the Spirit. He writes, "In fact, most of the references concerning the Spirit of God in the OT are in relation to leadership for the purposes of ruling in the kingdom of God" (ibid., 61). Lloyd Neve's assessment is similar to Hildebrandt's. Neve regards the references to the Spirit's renewing work as "only seen as a possibility for the future" (*The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* [Seibunsha: Tokyo, 1972], 61; cf. also 57, 77).

<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise noted all translations of biblical texts are my own.

<sup>10</sup> On the "Fall of Humankind," see E. H. Merrill, *NIDOTTE*, 4:638-39. Cf. also Paul's summation of the Bible's teaching on sin in Rom 3:9-20.

<sup>11</sup> I am assuming that regeneration can be separated from indwelling. For further discussion of this point see my forthcoming dissertation, "He Is with You and He Will Be in You" (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003). Though I disagree with his explanation of John 7:39, A. H. Lewis rightly argues that Old Covenant believers were regenerate. Lewis does not argue, however, that Old Covenant believers were continually indwelt by God's Spirit ("The New Birth under the

Here it will be argued that while Old Covenant believers had to be regenerated, the Pentateuch does not present its remnant as indwelt by God's Spirit. While the Old Testament routinely speaks of God's favorable presence *with* people resulting in their physical and spiritual health, it does not teach that each individual believer experienced the continual indwelling of the Spirit of God as New Covenant believers do. We begin with the patriarchs.

## II. *The Patriarchs*

The narratives in the book of Genesis provided a prototypical picture of piety for the people of Israel.<sup>12</sup> The descriptions of how humans relate to God found in Genesis introduce what becomes the Old Testament's standard religious diction. Men and women walk with God (Gen 3:8; 5:22; 6:9), call on his name (4:26), enjoy God's protective presence (15:1), walk before God (17:1; 24:40), and from time to time Yahweh appears to them (12:7; 26:2; 35:9). God's Spirit strives with humans (6:3), and some find favor in his sight (6:8). There is one reference to "a divine spirit" being in Joseph (אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ, Gen 41:38), but the preponderance of the language and imagery in Genesis reflects God's presence *with* rather than *in* persons.<sup>13</sup> Four pertinent ways in which this is communicated are: first, God appears to persons; second, persons call on the name of Yahweh; third, persons walk with or before God; and fourth, God is said to be with persons.<sup>14</sup> Each of these will be examined in turn.<sup>15</sup>

### 1. *God's Self-Revelations*

Prior to the fall Adam and Eve evidently enjoyed the manifest presence of God (Gen 2:19; 3:8).<sup>16</sup> Ironically, when Adam and Eve sin they are described as having their eyes opened (3:7; cf. Eph 1:18). God nevertheless appears to the

Old Covenant," *EvQ* 56 [1984]: 35-44). Cf. W. A. VanGemeren's statement, "The saints were those who were circumcised of heart, or 'regenerate'" (*The Progress of Redemption* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988], 167).

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion that is in some respects similar to this one see D. Sheriffs, *The Friendship of the Lord* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1996), ch. 2, "Walking with God—three Genesis prototypes," 27-61.

<sup>13</sup> Gen 41:38 is spoken of Joseph by Pharaoh, and probably does not reflect Moses' theology but Pharaoh's. At any rate, this statement is prompted by Joseph's supernatural ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, so if Yahweh's Spirit does inhabit Joseph it is obviously an exception and not the rule.

<sup>14</sup> This information is summarized in Figure 1 above, "God's Presence in the Patriarchal Narratives." This is the first of two charts in this article. Because of space constraints, all verse references on the charts will be to the English translations.

<sup>15</sup> Also noteworthy, though not discussed here, are the statements that indicate that God is watching humans. For example, Noah found favor "in Yahweh's eyes" (Gen 6:8), and Yahweh "took note of" Sarah (21:1). These statements, as well as those that communicate God "remembering" certain people (Noah, 8:1; Rachel, 30:22) lend themselves to the conception of God as outside rather than inside humans. This does not mean, however, that Yahweh is not operating upon them inwardly, merely that they are not depicted as though Yahweh dwells in them.

<sup>16</sup> Similarly Vangemeren writes, "Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden . . . signified removal from God's presence" (*The Progress of Redemption*, 81).

rebels and confronts their sin. Though he punishes them, he does not immediately destroy them but promises that evil will one day be crushed through the seed of the woman (3:15). Eve's response to the birth of her first son indicates that she is hoping for the promise to be fulfilled (4:1).<sup>17</sup>

In the same way that John 6:40 promises that those who behold the Son and believe will have eternal life, it may be said that Adam and Eve beheld God and believed. Later Scripture makes plain the lethal effect that sin has. Indeed, God had promised that disobedience would lead to death (Gen 2:17). After the serpentine lie that deceived Eve (3:4), though the first couple did not immediately die physically, their relationship with God was immediately altered at a fundamental level (3:8-10).<sup>18</sup> In Paul's terms, they were now "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).<sup>19</sup> God seeks them out, however, and mercifully reestablishes communion with the couple (3:9-24). They are banished from the Garden, but they have a promise to which they cling and which they pass on to their progeny (4:1, 25-26).<sup>20</sup>

Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death when they disobeyed God. When God sought them out they were immediately convinced that he was right and they were wrong, so they hid. God's justice is seen in the curses while his mercy is seen in the promise, and the reconciled transgressors began to hope in God's promise.<sup>21</sup> Though there is no indication that God's Spirit took up residence within them at this time, we can properly say that they died when they sinned and experienced new birth from above when God came to them, reestablished communion with them, and gave them hope through his word.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> C. F. Keil, *The Pentateuch* (vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Old Testament* by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; trans. J. Martin; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1866–91; repr., Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), 68; J. H. Sailhamer, "Genesis," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (ed. F. E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:60, 69.

<sup>18</sup> T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 35. Many interpret Hosea 6:7 as indicating that Adam broke covenant with God in the primal sin, see, e.g., O. P. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 22-25.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive." Commenting on Eph 2:1-2, M. Barth writes, "The death 'in lapses and sins' attributed to the Gentiles is a result of Adam's sin" (*Ephesians 1-3* [AB 34; New York: Doubleday, 1974], 213).

<sup>20</sup> For arguments that Gen 3:15 is a messianic promise see T. D. Alexander, "Royal Expectations in Genesis to Kings: Their Importance for Biblical Theology," *TynBul* 49 (1998): 204; J. Collins, "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *TynBul* 48 (1997): 139-48; W. Wifall, "Gen 3:15: A Protevangelium?" *CBQ* 36 (1974): 361-65.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. M. S. Horton, "'Law' creates terror in the hearer because of the awareness of sin it engenders, while 'gospel' actually brings life" (*Covenant and Eschatology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002], 136).

<sup>22</sup> Eve's responses to the birth of her sons (4:1, 25) are not the only indicators in the passage that faith is being exercised. Allen P. Ross argues that the name Adam gives to his wife in Gen 3:20 reflects faith in God's promise: "The name 'Eve' (ἠὼωαῖν, 'living' or 'life-giver') interpreted by the narrator as 'the mother of all living (ἠὰψ),' signifies that the woman became a pledge in the continuation of the race, in spite of the curse. The name celebrates the survival of the race and the victory over death. By anticipating life it also commemorates the establishment of a new order" (*Creation and Blessing* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 148-49).

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the accounts of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. In each case Yahweh appears to or communicates directly with (as in the case of Joseph's dreams) the patriarch.<sup>23</sup> In each case there is evidence that the patriarch receives promises from God and trusts that God will keep his word. This becomes explicit at Gen 15:6, where we read that "Abraham believed Yahweh and he reckoned it to him for righteousness." The same conviction that Yahweh had spoken truly and would do as he promised prompted Noah to build the ark (6:14, 22), Isaac to remain in the land (26:2, 6), Jacob to go down to Egypt (46:2-5), and Joseph to be merciful and forgive his brothers (45:5-8). Because they were somehow enabled to obey (cf. Gen 6:5 with 26:5), we may affirm that these people beheld Yahweh, heard his voice, and by faith passed from death into life (cf. John 5:24; 6:40; Heb 11).

The patriarchs experienced new birth when they saw Yahweh and believed. They placed their hope and trust in the promises he made. They were maintained in faithfulness and obedience because Yahweh was *with* them. Nothing in the passages suggests that these believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit for the duration of their walk with God. In theological terms, they were regenerate, and, although God was *with* them, there is not evidence that either God or his Spirit was *in* them.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. *Calling on the Name of Yahweh*

An important phrase in the Old Testament's language of salvation is introduced at Genesis 4:26: "And to Seth also was born a son. And he called his name Enosh. Then people began to call on the name of Yahweh." This phrase, "call on the name of Yahweh" (קרא בשם יהוה), is used at least three more times in Genesis as Abraham and Isaac both "call on the name of Yahweh" (12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25). Interestingly, in each case after its introduction in 4:26, the word "there" (שם) modifies the phrase. We read, "and there he called on the name of Yahweh" (emphasis mine). This shows the importance of the location from which Yahweh was addressed. Places of worship are not insignificant in the Old Testament.<sup>25</sup> The importance of places is seen in Jacob's

<sup>23</sup> Christoph Barth writes, "God's most important act toward the fathers was his revelation. He showed himself to them, spoke so that they heard his voice, disclosed his name, and made known his presence at holy places in Canaan" (*God with Us: A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* [ed. G. Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991], 44).

<sup>24</sup> This is not to say that those who were prophets did not have the Spirit (1 Pet 1:11), but that believers in general were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>25</sup> W. Eichrodt writes, "The religion of the Old Testament shares with every other the belief that the deity reveals himself at particular places and that, therefore, worship is not to be offered at any spot which may happen to be convenient, but only at these sites in particular" (*Theology of the Old Testament*, 1:102 [cf. the discussion 1:102-7]). Eichrodt is not precisely correct to say that the religion of the Old Testament shares this with every other religion; Christianity is free from specific locations for worship (cf. John 4:21-24). Eichrodt suggests that the true religion of Israel held that Yahweh only *revealed* himself at particular locations while he *dwelt* in heaven. He goes on to argue that the passages that speak of God *dwelling* in particular places are the result of the corrupting influence of Canaanite religion. Thus Eichrodt writes, "Although the cultic worship of Yahweh is

encounters with God and the naming of Bethel. He declares, “How awesome is this place! This is nothing but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (28:17; cf. 28:19, 22; 32:2). Yahweh himself will eventually choose a place from which his people will worship him (cf. the centralization of worship beginning in Deut 12:5). A later time will come, however, when locations will not be significant for the true worship of Yahweh (cf. John 4:21-24; Acts 7:48).

Though it is not specifically stated that Noah and Jacob, for instance, “called on the name of Yahweh,” because of the general nature of the statement in Gen 4:26 that this began to happen, we are probably to assume that all the other pious did so. They called on Yahweh’s name when they built altars, prayed, or sacrificed to Yahweh (8:20; 32:9; 35:7).<sup>26</sup> The same is likely true of Isaac’s mediation (24:63) and prayer (25:21) as well as Jacob’s worship (47:31).<sup>27</sup>

### 3. *Walking with/before God*

The introduction of another significant phrase in the Old Testament’s language of salvation is tucked away in the genealogy of Genesis 5. There we read that Enoch “walked with God” (5:22, 24).<sup>28</sup> At the heart of this metaphor is the reality of a life lived in conscious awareness of God’s presence (cf. 1 Pet 2:19).<sup>29</sup> From God’s compelling presence flows a willingness to conform to the stipulations God places on relationship. We read that Noah walked with God (6:9), and both Abraham and Isaac are said to have walked *before*—rather than *with*—God (17:1; 24:40; 48:15).<sup>30</sup>

possible only at definite places within the land of his holy inheritance, yet he will hear the prayer of his worshippers in every place and be at hand to succour them” (ibid., 104). Against this, it is true that Yahweh hears prayer from wherever his people are, but it nevertheless matters that they pray *toward Jerusalem* (cf. 1 Kgs 8:30; Dan 6:10). The notion that Yahweh’s “habitation is in Zion” (Ps 76:3 [ET 76:2]) is not a Canaanite corruption, but an aspect of Israel’s faith that was sometimes abused (e.g., Jer 7:4) but is nevertheless true. Cf. Barth, *God with Us*, 260; Preuss, *Old Testament Theology*, 1:250-53.

<sup>26</sup> S. R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 71.

<sup>27</sup> John Calvin says, “In the verb ‘to call upon,’ there is a *synecdoche*, for it embraces generally the whole worship of God” (*Genesis* [1554; *Calvin’s Commentaries*; trans. J. King; 22 vols.; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 1:223 [emphasis his]). Ross suggests that, “Usage of this expression in the Pentateuch supports the idea of proclamation more than praying (cf. Gen. 12:8; Exod. 34:6; Lev. 1:1),” but goes on to write that, “This is the oldest reference to the worship of Yahweh” (*Creation and Blessing*, 169). The verses Ross cites indicate that “calling on the name of Yahweh” could include proclamation, but that does not change the fact that worship seems to be primarily in view. Ross comes to the balanced conclusion that, “Noah, Abram, and others, proclaimed the Lord by their worship and their words” (ibid.).

<sup>28</sup> “For the author of Genesis, ‘walking with God’ is the way to life” (Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 74).

<sup>29</sup> Commenting on the hitpaal imperfect with waw-consecutive Sheriffs writes, “The first ‘walked with God’ is a durative action—it lasts three hundred years in v. 21 [*sic*]. In recurrence in v. 24, the phrase is a summary and summation of Enoch’s life before its punctuation point” (*The Friendship of the Lord*, 31).

<sup>30</sup> The point being argued here, that Yahweh was with but not in Old Covenant saints, is not altered if J. H. Walton is correct regarding the phrase *walk before God* that, “When people are the subjects of the verb the contexts suggest that the meaning should be ‘to serve as an emissary.’” Walton acknowledges that, “the concepts of walking in full view of someone or enjoying someone’s favor

The expression communicates that an ongoing relationship with God was enjoyed. To say that someone walked with God is to make a statement about the way that person lived, and it tells us that their lives were conducted in the presence of God. Again we may affirm that God's presence was effecting their faithfulness and that God was surely operating upon them inwardly, but there is no indication that God or his Spirit dwelt in them. God was with them, but not in them.

#### 4. *God Was with Him*

God's presence *with* his people is part of the fabric of the Old Testament. Often this is expressed with various metaphors, and it is not uncommon for the text to state simply that God was with a certain person.<sup>31</sup> In Genesis, God is said to be *with* Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (for references in Genesis see the chart, "God's Presence in the Patriarchal Narratives," in Figure 1 below).<sup>32</sup> That God being *with* someone is paradigmatic for the rest of the Old Testament can be seen in the later comparisons to the way God was with the patriarchs. For example, Yahweh encourages Joshua saying, "Just as I was with Moses I will be with you" (Josh 1:5; cf. 1:17; 3:7). Later still at the dedication of the temple, Solomon prays, "May Yahweh our God be with us just as he was with our fathers" (1 Kgs 8:57).

The statements that God was *with* a certain individual, or that he was with the nation, are striking in view of the last phrase of John 14:17: "He is with you and he will be in you." While the Spirit was perhaps *in* select Israelites who were anointed for particular tasks (cf. n. 49 below), the concept of God being *with* his people pervades the Old Testament. The significance of God's presence will become more apparent as we continue through Israel's history.

### III. *The Exodus from Egypt*

The exodus from Egypt provides God's chosen people with their first experience of *national* deliverance. In a real sense, the exodus is the birth of Israel as a nation.<sup>33</sup> As in the Genesis narratives, in the opening chapters of Exodus God deals mainly with an individual, Moses, and as with the patriarchs, God says to Moses, "I will be with you" (Exod 3:12). But the family of Jacob has grown into

may suit a few of the contexts" (*Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 73).

<sup>31</sup> References to all the passages I have located where this concept is explicitly communicated in the Pentateuch may be found in the column "God with Men" on the two charts accompanying this study. M. A. Grisanti briefly discusses the passages of this nature that employ the verb *וְיָחַד*, *NIDOTTE*, 1:1024.

<sup>32</sup> The reference to God being with Ishmael in Gen 21:20 is not discussed here. This looks like a promise of divine protection *for physical life and earthly prowess*, not a guarantee that Ishmael will be part of God's covenant. That blessing belongs to Isaac (cf. 20:12).

<sup>33</sup> J. G. McConville writes, "The Exodus tradition lies at the heart of the faith of the OT. It is the supreme example of Yahweh's saving activity on behalf of his chosen people, and as such it becomes a paradigm for all acts of salvation" ("Exodus," *NIDOTTE*, 4:601).

a great nation (1:7), and so throughout the exodus from Egypt and the wanderings in the wilderness, while God does continue to deal with humans on an individual level, the additional corporate aspect is prominent. God initiates a relationship, a covenant, with the nation of Israel.<sup>34</sup> At the heart of this covenant is God's promise to dwell among his people: "[L]et them make for me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them" (25:8).<sup>35</sup> It is God's presence among the people that necessitates clean and holy living, for as he declares, "I am Yahweh who sanctifies you" (31:13).<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 1: God's Presence in the Patriarchal Narratives**

<i>Saints in Genesis</i>	<i>God's Self-Revelations</i>	<i>Calling on the Name of Yahweh</i>	<i>Walking with/ before God</i>	<i>God with Men</i>
Adam and Eve	1:28-30; 2:16-17, 19, 22; 3:8-24		3:8	
Enosh		4:26		
Enoch			5:22, 24	
Noah	6:13-21; 7:1-4; 8:15- 17; 9:1-17	(8:20)	6:9	
Abraham	12:1; 15:1; 17:1; 18:1	12:8; 13:4; 21:33	17:1; 24:40; 48:15	21:22
Isaac	26:2, 24	26:25 (24:63; 25:21)	48:15	26:3, 24, 28
Jacob	28:12-15; 31:3, 11-13; 32:1, 30; 35:1, 9; 46:2	(32:9; 35:7; 47:31)		28:15; 31:3, 5; 35:3; 46:4
Joseph	(37:5, 9)			39:2, 3, 21, 23; 48:21

This section on God's presence in Exodus–Deuteronomy is organized around Yahweh's initiation of a covenant with the sons of Israel and his maintenance of

<sup>34</sup> J. J. Niehaus states, "All Yahweh theophanies are divinely initiated. This presents a contrast to other religious practices in the ANE, which could involve strenuous efforts to evoke the desired deity. . . . Yahweh often 'appeared' (*r'h* [ni.]) in the OT, but never once did human effort 'cause him to appear' (hi.);" ("Theophany, Theology of," in *NIDOTTE*, 4:1247 [bracketed and parenthetical notes original]).

<sup>35</sup> B. T. Arnold and B. E. Beyer write, "Deliverance and covenant—these are the themes of the two main sections of Exodus (chapters 1–18 and 19–40). But an emphasis on the presence of God runs throughout the whole book. The purpose of the exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Sinai, with its Law and tabernacle, can be summarized in this way: God was preparing Israel for his arrival in their midst" (*Encountering the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999], 113).

<sup>36</sup> S. J. Hafemann avers, "God chose Israel as the place of his presence. . . . God instituted a 'symbolic holiness' to represent the fact that his presence was still located in her midst" (*The God of Promise and the Life of Faith* [Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2001], 192). Cf. Niehaus: "God is holy and imparts holiness where and for as long as he appears. . . . God's presence is what makes the place holy—but only so long as he remains there" (*NIDOTTE*, 4:1248).

that covenant. The covenant is initiated by Yahweh's self-disclosure to Moses, his redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and his self-disclosure to the nation at Sinai. The covenant is maintained by Yahweh's persistence with the people, though they break the covenant before it is even ratified (Exod 32).<sup>37</sup> There will therefore be two parts to this discussion. First, God's self-disclosure and his initiation of the covenant will be considered. We will then turn to God's maintenance of the covenant through his favorable presence with the people.

### 1. *Covenant Making Self-Disclosure*

Any discussion of Old Testament soteriology must bear in mind that Yahweh is the creator (Gen 1-2). All things owe their existence to him. The obedience that he had a right to demand from humanity (Gen 2:16-17) was not rendered (Gen 3:1-7), and so his human creatures forfeited access to his presence (Gen 3:24). Further, Yahweh is always the initiator of relationship between himself and his people (Gen 3:9; 12; 15; 17; 26:2-3; 28:13-15; Exod 3:2). It must ever be borne in mind that if Yahweh did not graciously choose to reveal himself, his creatures would have no power to access, summon, or otherwise conjure him.<sup>38</sup> That said, there are two divine self-disclosures that are determinative for Israel's relationship with Yahweh, first with Moses, then with the nation. Each takes place at Mount Sinai, alternately referred to as Mount Horeb.<sup>39</sup>

a. *Exodus 3–4*. The exodus from Egypt comes at Yahweh's initiative. The people are groaning and crying out for help (2:23-24), but countless oppressed nations and peoples have done the same, and Yahweh the creator is ever free to determine when he will or will not respond.<sup>40</sup> On this occasion Yahweh was pleased to establish his faithfulness to his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

<sup>37</sup> God's presence with his people and the sanctifying effect he has upon them are ubiquitous themes in the narratives of Exodus through Deuteronomy. Space and time constraints render a discussion of all the ways that God's presence is communicated in Exodus through Deuteronomy impossible. For a list of references showing the constancy of this theme in these narratives, see the chart, "God's Presence in Exodus–Deuteronomy," in Figure 2 below.

<sup>38</sup> Horton writes, "Yahweh is utterly free to enter or not to enter into a covenant with creatures. But upon choosing to do so, God *creates* and *accepts* an obligation for the future" (*Covenant and Eschatology*, 130 [emphasis his]; cf. also 92-94).

<sup>39</sup> Jon Levenson speaks of Mount Sinai as "YHWH's home, the locus of this presence" (*Sinai and Zion* [Minneapolis: Winston, 1985], 19).

<sup>40</sup> Many have wrongly concluded from God's free-choice not to respond that he either does not exist, does not care, or is unable to deliver. The haunting passage in Elie Wiesel's *Night* where he writes, "Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust," well illustrates this response (*Night* [New York: Bantam, 1960], 32). Wiesel's three paragraphs, vividly punctuated by the word "never," so poignantly capture the response of many Jews to the Holocaust that they accompany an exhibit at the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. The opposite response may be observed from the book of Job. Job cries out to God for quite some time before Yahweh chooses to respond, but Job does not relinquish his faith that Yahweh is good, affirms that he will continue to trust even if he is never answered (13:15), and believes that Yahweh can deliver (19:25).

(2:24), and so he revealed himself to Moses (3:2).<sup>41</sup> Not insignificantly, Yahweh appears to Moses when Moses “came to the mount of God, to Horeb” (3:1). Places are not insignificant in the Old Testament. Yahweh appears to Moses at God’s Mountain, Horeb (3:1-2).<sup>42</sup> Yahweh promises Moses that “when you bring the people out of Egypt you shall worship God upon this mountain” (3:12).<sup>43</sup> Thus by Yahweh’s initiating self-disclosure (3:1-9), whereby all of Moses’ objections are overcome (3:10–4:18), the complex of events leading to the exodus from Egypt is set in motion.

b. *Exodus 19–20*. In just the way that Yahweh initiated the exodus by appearing to Moses, he initiates a formal relationship with the nation of Israel by appearing to them after he has delivered them. Yahweh appears to the nation in the form of thunder and lightning, fire and smoke upon Mount Sinai. Sheriffs makes the relevant observation that, “Before the Tabernacle is constructed and filled with the glory of Yahweh (40:35), the most holy place in Exodus is ‘the mountain of God.’”<sup>44</sup> Having manifested himself on the mountaintop (19:18-20), Yahweh issues a warning regarding the holiness of his presence (19:21-25). Yahweh then apparently speaks the Decalogue in the hearing of the people (20:1-18, 22), in response to which the people plead that Moses intercede for them (20:19).

Prior to this experience at Sinai the people had witnessed Yahweh’s mighty deeds in Egypt (Exod 4:30–11:32), and had seen the pillar of cloud and fire in which Yahweh proceeded before the people as he led them out of Egypt (13:21-22) and through the Red Sea (Exod 14:13-31; 1 Cor 10:1-4). We may again invoke the principle seen in John 6:40 that everyone who truly perceives the reality of God and believes has eternal life. No doubt there was a remnant whom God regenerated through his self-revelation.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Brevard S. Childs notes, “The initiative is shifted from Moses [seeking pasture at Horeb] to God” (*Exodus* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster, 1974], 72).

<sup>42</sup> That Sinai is significant as a particular location where God is met is reinforced by (1) Elijah’s encounter with God there (1 Kgs 19:8) and (2) Stephen’s reference to it as “Holy Ground” (Acts 7:33) as he demonstrates to his accusers that they do not control God through the temple in Jerusalem. In the Old Testament we see that some preserved the precarious balance that while locations are significant, God is not limited to or controlled from particular places (cf. e.g., 1 Kgs 8:27). Others failed to maintain the proper perspective and superstitiously regarded the shrine as a charm guaranteeing physical protection (cf. Jer 7:4). This prompted Yahweh to abandon the temple (Ezek 8–11), but he later promised to return to it (Ezek 37:26-27).

<sup>43</sup> Sheriffs notes, “The locality, the fire, the voice and the call all offer a preview of Israel’s Sinai encounter. The narrative is shaped by typological resonance. The encounter between God and Moses at the burning bush points to the covenant relationship Israel will be offered. Like the sign of Passover blood, the call of Moses is a necessary preliminary to covenant-making with the nation” (*The Friendship of the Lord*, 66).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>45</sup> The estimation of Sheriffs is similar: “If there is a ‘conversion experience’ to be found in Exodus, then the narrator has located it at the Reed Sea. . . . This is a case of ‘seeing is believing’ for the narrator repeats ‘see’ three times in [Exod 14] v. 13 and twice in vv. 30f. . . . The trust of Israel in 14:31b mirrors the trust of Abraham in Gen 15:6—‘and Abraham put his trust in Yahweh,’ ‘and

Many passages speak of “that generation” as not finding favor with God (e.g., Ps 95:8-11), and indeed only two were permitted to enter the promised land (cf. Deut 1:35; 2:16). This should not lead us to conclude that no one in that generation was spared, for not even Moses was allowed to enter the land and he is commended in the New Testament as a person of faith (Heb 11:24-29). Similarly, Jesus condemned his own generation, yet his disciples were members of the condemned generation who were surely spared (Matt 12:39, 45). On another occasion, all who were present that day saw Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum (John 6:24-59). Many of those who saw him rejected what he had to say (6:60-66), but those who *beheld him and believed* (6:40) perceived the words of Spirit and life (6:63), believed (6:67-69), and received eternal life (6:40). In the same way, Paul can affirm that with “most” of the wilderness generation “God was not pleased” (1 Cor 10:5), and he can also affirm that there is always a remnant according to God’s gracious choice (Rom 11:5) and that in all of this the word of God has not failed (Rom 9:6).<sup>46</sup>

We can therefore conclude that some Israelites who saw the fire and heard the voice (Deut 4:36) were hardened like the Egyptians (cf. Exod 14:19-20; Num 11:1). Others, perhaps most, experienced a temporary desire to obey (Deut 5:23-27) but had not been given a heart to carry through on their earnestness (5:29; 29:3 [ET 29:4]).<sup>47</sup> But for at least Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Aaron, and Miriam, and probably a small percentage of the population at large (cf. the 7,000 of 1 Kgs 19:18), faith came by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom 10:17).

These believing Israelites would likely have desired to obey Moses’ command that they circumcise their hearts and stiffen their necks no more (Deut 10:16). This remnant would probably have received a heart to perceive and eyes to see, though the majority had not (29:3 [ET 29:4]). These would have been terrified

they put their trust in Yahweh’” (ibid., 72). Whether the remnant was regenerated at Sinai or at the crossing of the Red Sea is not the point. The point is that, just as John 6:40 says, some saw and believed.

<sup>46</sup> Even if Caleb and Joshua were the only two from the wilderness generation who found favor with God, the principle here would stand that God’s self-revelation produced their regeneration and they began to hope in God’s promises (cf. Num 14:6-10). We are not told that others were made bold when Caleb and Joshua declared, “Yahweh is with us!” (14:9), but it seems likely that for at least some Israelites, faith came by the hearing of this word (cf. Rom 10:17). It is not unlikely that some, if not all, of the seventy elders who “saw the God of Israel . . . and they ate and they drank” (Exod 24:10-11) were regenerate. Perhaps Paul’s “most” does not mean *everyone* except Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Aaron, and Miriam (for Aaron and Miriam, cf. Mic 6:4).

<sup>47</sup> The NASB renders the phrase in Deut 5:29, *מי יתן והיה לבבם זה להם ליראה אתי*, as, “Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear me.” BDB interprets the phrase *מי יתן* as an idiom for “Oh that” (678). Directly rendered, however, *מי יתן* is “Who will give” not “Oh that.” However much Yahweh may be expressing his desire that the people will fear and obey, it is also clearly being communicated that the people do not have the heart necessary to do so (cf. also Deut 29:3 [ET 29:4]). It would seem that the Bible’s answer to the question “Who will give?” is, Yahweh will. Cf. Ezek 36:27, “And I will give them a new heart.” The same verb employed in the question of Deut 5:29 (*יתן*) is used in the answer in Ezek 36:27.

by the curses and quickened by the promises. There is nothing to keep us from regarding the Old Covenant remnant as regenerate. The strongest argument that the remnant in the wilderness generation was regenerate would be that the “circumcision of the heart” that they needed to experience (Deut 10:16; 30:6) is in fact what some did experience. This much can be granted, and it can even be granted that this circumcision of the heart was wrought by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 2:28-29). There is, however, nothing to indicate that we should regard them as indwelt by God’s Spirit.

The exodus generation has met with God (Exod 19:17–20:18; Num 17:4). Yahweh has gone before them in the pillar of cloud and fire (Exod 13:21-22; Num 9:15-22; Deut 1:33). They conduct their lives in the presence of God (Exod 22:11; Lev 5:19; Num 5:16; Deut 1:45). There is a remnant whose hearts are circumcised (Rom 11:2-5). Yahweh has promised to be and is with them (Exod 33:14-16; Lev 25:23; Num 23:21; Deut 20:2).<sup>48</sup> But nowhere in these narratives is there ever any indication that the Spirit of God dwells *in* each individual believer for the duration of their earthly sojourn.<sup>49</sup>

The language of God being present *with* Israel is pervasive. In light of John 7:39, which indicates that believers do not receive the Spirit before Jesus is glorified, we should not infer that God’s presence was not only *among* the nation but also *in* individual believers. If the Old Testament told us they were indwelt, there would be warrant to regard the possession of the indwelling Spirit as a matter of scope.<sup>50</sup> But the Old Testament does not speak of God dwelling in individuals but among the nation—with them, but outside them.

The reality of sin’s effect upon humanity renders regeneration a theological necessity, and the New Testament does not deny that Old Covenant believers were regenerate. The New Testament does deny, on the other hand, that Old Covenant believers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 7:39). How could regenerate people who were not indwelt by God’s Spirit be maintained in faith? For the answer to this question we must consider God’s covenant sustaining presence.

<sup>48</sup> In this paragraph I have listed representative references to these statements. For many more statements of this kind see the chart, “God’s Presence in Exodus–Deuteronomy,” in Figure 2 below.

<sup>49</sup> Craftsmen are “filled” (מלא) with the Spirit (Exod 28:3; 31:3; 35:31). The Spirit is “upon” (על) Moses (Num 11:17) and the seventy elders (11:25). Caleb has a different spirit *with* him (עמרו) (14:24—probably a reference to Caleb’s attitude). The Spirit comes upon (על) Balaam (24:2). Joshua is a man on/in whom (בר) is the Spirit (27:18), and he is filled (מלא) with the Spirit (Deut 34:9). None of these passages indicates that each member of the remnant experienced the continual indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In each case, the Spirit is mentioned to denote that the person is exceptional, or better, anointed.

<sup>50</sup> Pace D. I. Block, “The Prophet of the Spirit,” 41: “The problem was not the absence of the Holy Spirit to transform lives, but that this was not occurring on a national scale. The issue was one of scope.” G. Fredricks agrees with Block’s view, “Rethinking the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Old Testament Believers,” *TJ* 9 (1988): 103.

## 2. *Covenant Sustaining Presence*

Throughout the narratives of Exodus–Deuteronomy the reader is aware that Moses regards God’s presence as requisite for survival.<sup>51</sup> Yahweh counters Moses’ reluctance with the assurance of his presence, “Surely I will be with you” (Exod 3:12; cf. 4:12, 15). The weight that this assurance came to carry with Moses can be seen in his reaction to Yahweh’s suggestion that he no longer accompany the nation because of its obstinacy (33:3-5). Moses says, “If your presence is not going [with us], do not send us up from here” (33:15).

God’s presence with his people is communicated in a variety of ways in the last four books of Torah. One significant way in which God’s presence with his people is *not* communicated is through his Spirit dwelling in each of them individually. As noted above (see n. 49), some have the Spirit fill them or come upon them or remain with them, but in each case the Spirit’s ministry is exceptional. There are at least five ways in Exodus through Deuteronomy in which God’s presence *with*, not *in*, his people is communicated.<sup>52</sup> Each of these will be briefly addressed. In what follows, representative passages will be cited. (For similar passages consult the chart, “God’s Presence in Exodus–Deuteronomy,” in Figure 2, below.)

a. *God was with him.* First, God’s presence with Israel is communicated in statements such as “Yahweh his God is with him (עִמּוֹ)” (Num 23:21). This passage indicates that God’s favorable presence with his people protects them against Moabite opposition when Balak hires Balaam to curse Israel (cf. similarly Deut 20:1, 4).<sup>53</sup> Further, Moses summarizes the wanderings in the wilderness with the words, “As for these forty years, Yahweh your God has been with you (עִמָּךְ); you have not lacked a thing” (Deut 2:7). Throughout the time in the wilderness Yahweh’s presence with the people insured not only their physical security but also their physical sustenance.<sup>54</sup> On at least fourteen occasions statements to the effect that God is with Israel (in one case, Israel is with God) are made in Exodus through Deuteronomy.

b. *The glory of Yahweh appeared.* Second, God’s presence is communicated through visible manifestations. The people can see the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Num 9:15-22). In a similar vein, Moses stresses the significance of the experience the people had at Sinai (Exod 19) in Deut 4:33: “Has any people heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire as you yourselves heard and lived?” Moses’ unique intimacy with God is seen in the “face to face” communion with God he enjoyed (Deut 34:10). But Moses has no qualms about telling the people that, “Face to face God spoke with you” (Deut

<sup>51</sup> Cf. E. Carpenter, “Exodus: Theology of,” in *NIDOTTE*, 4:611; VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption*, 155-57.

<sup>52</sup> For a similar three-part discussion of God with his people, focusing on (1) the way God manifested his presence, (2) the tent of meeting, and (3) the tabernacle, see Barth, *God with Us*, 99-107.

<sup>53</sup> Keil, *The Pentateuch*, 776.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. H. D. Preuss, “ich will mit dir sein!” *ZAW* 80 (1968): 139-73.

5:4). Over twenty-five times in Exodus through Deuteronomy reference is made to the visible manifestation of God's glory—whether through mention of the pillars of fire and cloud or through phrases like, “And the glory of Yahweh appeared” (Num 17:7 [ET 16:42]).

c. *God in the midst of the people.* Third, God's presence with his people is communicated through statements that describe Yahweh as “in the midst of/among” the people. While God does not dwell in each individual member of the remnant, he does declare, “I will put my dwelling place in your midst (בתוכם) and my soul will not abhor you” (Lev 26:11; cf. 26:12). This passage tells us that not only does Yahweh's presence stand for physical security and sustenance (Num 23:1; Deut 2:7), not only does it show Israel's unique experience of God's self-revelation (Deut 5:4), but God's presence in the midst of the people also communicates *acceptance*, not rejection. But there is more. Not only does God's presence indicate his acceptance of Israel; it necessitates the nation's holiness. “You shall not defile the land in which you are about to dwell, because I will dwell in the midst of it (בתוכה); indeed I Yahweh will be dwelling in the midst (בתוך) of the sons of Israel!” (Num 35:34).<sup>55</sup> God initiates relationship by appearing to his people and bringing them out of Egypt. He then stipulates that if he is to remain among them, they must be holy. Holiness requires perfect obedience to more than 600 laws.<sup>56</sup> More than ten times in Exodus through Deuteronomy reference is made to God being in the midst of his people. Three times the opposite, that God is not among them, is stated (Num 14:42; Deut 1:42; 31:17).

<sup>55</sup> That God's presence necessitates holiness is particularly clear in Leviticus, cf. 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7-8, 26; 21:6, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32.

<sup>56</sup> Some suggest that perfect obedience to the law was not required. The following statements from Deuteronomy indicate that perfect obedience to the law was expected: “All the commandments which I am commanding you today you shall keep in order to do” (Deut 8:1). “And you shall keep *every* commandment which I am commanding you today” (11:8). “Heed that you may obey *all* these things which I am commanding you” (12:28). “*Everything* which I am commanding you, you shall keep it to do it. You shall not add to it nor take from it” (13:1 [ET 12:32]). “And it shall be if you truly obey the voice of Yahweh your God to heed to do *all* his commandments” (28:1). “And you shall not turn from *any* of these things which I am commanding you” (28:14). “And if you do not obey the voice of Yahweh your God to heed to do *all* his commandments and his statutes” (28:15). “If you do not keep to do *all* the matters of this Torah” (28:58, emphasis throughout mine [cf. also Gal 3:10-14]). These statements should not be taken to indicate that no one who failed to obey perfectly the demands of the covenant would find favor with God. From the very beginning God forgave transgressors (Gen 3:1-24). Further, David indicates that blamelessness results from Yahweh helping people refrain from sin *and* from Yahweh forgiving transgressions: “Also keep your servant from insolent deeds. Let them not rule over me! Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of much transgression” (Ps 19:14 [ET 19:13]). David pairs blamelessness not with his own ability to adhere to Yahweh's perfect law (19:7), but with being acquitted of many transgressions. There is no conflict between Yahweh's perfect holiness, which requires perfect obedience, and his mercy toward sinners. The *demand* of perfect obedience forces those who are unable to meet the standard to trust in God's *promise* to show mercy to those who repent and place their faith in him. Diminishing the demand of the law only diminishes the need for faith, and it also diminishes the worth of the death of Christ.

d. *Meeting God, and life in Yahweh's presence.* The fourth way that God's presence with his people is communicated is that on at least seven occasions Israel is spoken of as "meeting with God." Fifth and finally, the nation conducts its life in the presence of Yahweh.<sup>57</sup> This is seen in the statements that indicate that Yahweh hears and sees what happens in Israel (Num 11:1, 11).<sup>58</sup> All of life for the nation of Israel takes place "before Yahweh" (לפני יהוה); for more references to all of the above see Figure 2 below).<sup>59</sup>

e. *The dwelling of God.* These five ways that God's presence with his people is described come together in Exod 25:8. Yahweh's dictum, "And they shall make for me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst (בתוכם)," replaces scattered references to God's house (Gen 28:17; Exod 23:19), mountain (Exod 4:17), or sanctuary (Exod 15:17).<sup>60</sup> When the tabernacle is complete and the glory of Yahweh fills it (Exod 40:34-38), all of the various ways that God's presence is communicated come together.<sup>61</sup> In a real sense, "The purpose for the exodus from Egypt was so God could dwell in the midst of his people. The coming of God's glorious presence into the newly constructed tabernacle forms the climax of the Book of Exodus (40:34)."<sup>62</sup>

Yahweh is *with* the people in that he is enthroned above the mercy seat between the two cherubim over the ark (Exod 25:22). The visible *glory pillars of cloud and fire* now rise up from and rest upon the tabernacle (Num 9:15-23). This also explains Yahweh's presence *in the midst of* the nation—he is in the tabernacle in the center

<sup>57</sup> The purpose of the dietary regulations is disputed, but the suggestion of M. Douglas is probably not far from the mark. She argues that the food laws "would have been like signs which at every turn inspired meditation on the oneness, purity and completeness of God. . . . Observance of the dietary rules would thus have been a meaningful part of the great liturgical act of recognition and worship which culminated in the sacrifice in the temple" (Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus," in *Community, Identity, and Ideology* [ed. C. E. Carter and C. L. Meyers; SBTS 6; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996], 133). Thus even her diet underscores for Israel the reality that her life is conducted before Yahweh.

<sup>58</sup> For discussion of the various anthropomorphic expressions that communicate God watching over his people cf. A. M. Harman, "עֵיִן," *NIDOTTE*, 3:386-87.

<sup>59</sup> There is not space to explore here what is reflected in the Aaronic Blessing (Num 6:24-26). For a suggestive discussion of the way that "such imagery as 'shining the face' in favour, or 'raising the face' in beneficence, were widely diffused throughout the culture," see M. Fishbane, "The Priestly Blessing and Its Aggadic Reuse," in *"The Place Is Too Small for Us": The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 223-29 (citation from 225). This imagery also supports the notion that life was conceived of as taking place "before Yahweh."

<sup>60</sup> C. R. Koester writes, "God's presence in the tabernacle continued to remind Israel of his covenant with them and of the importance of faithful obedience to his commandments (Lev 26:9-13; Num 9:15-23)" (*The Dwelling of God* [CBQMS 22; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989], 8). Cf. B. S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 140-41. See too the interesting summary of the history of exegesis of the tabernacle narratives provided by Childs, *Exodus*, 547-50.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Sheriffs, "We can see that the Tabernacle enshrines and perpetuates the Sinai experience of covenant presence" (*The Friendship of the Lord*, 67).

<sup>62</sup> Arnold and Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament*, 114.

of the camp.<sup>63</sup> The pillars of fire and cloud over the tabernacle make vivid the constant descriptions of life *before Yahweh*. Here too Yahweh *meets* with the people (Num 17:19 [ET 17:4]).

#### IV. Conclusion

This study has sought to pay close attention to what the Pentateuch does and does not say about its faithful and their relationship to the presence of God. Based on the evidence presented here, it seems that God is not present *in* each individual believer, but he is *with* them (cf. John 14:17). In the Old Testament God dwells not in *individual believers* but in the *tabernacle* (and later the temple).<sup>64</sup> God initiated a covenant between himself and Israel. In his good pleasure, when he revealed himself he caused some to see and believe. These were regenerate. There is no evidence that those who experienced new life as a result of beholding God and believing his word were indwelt by the Spirit of God. But God's favorable presence with his people, insuring their physical and spiritual vitality as he dwells in their midst, is woven into the fabric of Torah.

<sup>63</sup> Arnold and Beyer write, "The purpose for the desert tabernacle was clear from the beginning (25:8). . . . It was God's way of living in the midst of his people. Prior to this, God had demonstrated his presence with them in the form of pillars of fire and smoke during their desert travels (13:21-22). This large tent, however, would now be God's dwelling place. . . . The word 'tabernacle' itself (*mis-kan*) means 'dwelling place'" (ibid., 107).

<sup>64</sup> Geerhardus Vos writes, "The tabernacle . . . embodies the eminently religious idea of the dwelling of God with His people. This it expresses symbolically so far as the Old Testament state of religion is concerned, and typically as regards the final embodiment of salvation in the Christian state. . . . its main purpose is to realize the indwelling of Jehovah" (*Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996], 148).

**Figure 2: God's Presence in Exodus–Deuteronomy**

	<i>God with Men</i> <i>(the contrary in italics)</i>	<i>Glory of God Appeared/ Pillar of Fire-Cloud</i>	<i>God in the midst of/ among the people</i> <i>(the contrary in italics)</i>	<i>Meeting God</i>	<i>Before/ in the Presence of God; God hears/ sees</i>
Exodus	3:12; 4:12; 4:15; 18:19; 33:15-16	13:21-22; 14:19; 16:10; 19:9, 11, 18, 20; 20:21; 23:20-23; 24:9-18; 33:9-10; 34:5-7; 40:34-38	8:22; 33:3, 5, 12-17; 34:9	3:18; 4:24; 5:3; 19:17; 25:22	22:11; 25:30; 27:21; 28:12; 29:42-46; 33:13
Leviticus	25:23	9:5-6, 23; 16:2	26:11-12		5:19; 6:7; 9:5, 24; 10:2, 17; 14:11, 12, 18, 23-24, 27, 29, 31; 15:14-15, 30; 16:7, 10, 12-13, 18; 19:22; 24:4, 6, 8
Numbers	<i>14:43</i> ; 23:21	9:15-22; 10:11-12, 34; 11:25; 12:5, 9-10; 14:10, 14; 16:19, 42; 20:6	5:3; 11:20; 14:14, <i>42</i> ; 16:3; 35:34	17:4; 23:15	5:16, 18, 30; 6:16, 20; 10:9-10; 11:1, 11, 15; 12:2; 15:15; 16:38, 40; 17:7, 9; 18:19; 27:5; 32:20-22, 27
Deuteronomy	2:7; 20:1, 4; 31:6, 8	1:33; 4:12, 33, 36; 5:4, 22; 9:3; 10:4; 31:15	<i>1:42</i> ; 6:15; 23:14; <i>31:17</i>		1:45; 4:10, 25; 9:18; 10:8; 12:12, 18 (2x); 14:23, 26; 15:20; 16:16 (2x); 17:2; 18:7; 27:7; 29:15



## d. Courage or Lack of Courage (Spirit of Fainting):

Gen 45:27; Num 14:24 (?); Josh 2:11; 5:1; 1 Kgs 10:5 (feistiness?); 2 Chr 9:4; Isa 19:3; 57:16; 61:3; Jer 51:11; Ezek 21:12 (ET 21:7); Prov 15:4.

## e. Understanding/Mind/Spirit of Wisdom and Opposites, e.g., Distortion, Sleep:

Exod 28:3 (see below); 1 Chr 28:12; Isa 11:2 (3x); 19:14; 29:10, 24; Ezek 11:5; 20:32; Mal 2:15 (disposition—BDB; reason—Keil & Delitzsch); Prov 1:23 (?); 16:2; 17:27; Job 20:3; Dan 5:12.

## f. Trustworthy of Spirit:

Prov 11:13.

## g. New Spirit (make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit):

Ezek 18:31; 36:26; Ps 51:12 (ET 10), 14 (ET 12).

## h. Lowly (Humble) of Spirit/Broken:

Isa 57:15 (2x); 65:14; 66:2; Ps 34:19 (ET 34:18); 51:19 (ET 51:17); Prov 15:13; 16:19; 17:22; 18:14; 29:23.

**3. Breath**

## a. Breath of Life

## 1. In humans or animals:

Gen 6:17; 7:15, 22; Isa 33:11; 42:5; Ezek 1:20, 21; 10:17; 37:5, 6, 8, 9 (3x), 10; Job 7:7; 9:18; 12:10; 15:30; 19:17; 27:3; 32:8; Eccl 3:19, 21 (2x); 12:7; Lam 4:20.

## 2. Not in idols:

Jer 10:14; 51:17; Hab 2:19; Ps 135:17.

## b. Breath of Yahweh/God (רוח יהוה/אלהים):

Exod 15:8; 2 Sam 22:16; Isa 11:4; 30:28; 40:7; Ps 18:16; 33:6; Job 4:9; 26:13.

**4. Divine Spirit**

## a. Of God/Yahweh

## 1. Mind of Yahweh (רוח יהוה):

Isa 40:13.

## 2. With verbs of clothing (לבוש):

Judg 6:34; 1 Chr 12:19 (ET 18); 2 Chr 24:20.

## 3. With verbs of filling (מלא):

Exod 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut 34:9; Mic 3:8.

## 4. With verbs of giving or pouring out (שפך, ערה, נתן, יצק):

Isa 32:15 (cf. 8 below); 44:3 (cf. 8. below); Ezek 39:29 (cf. 8. below); Joel 3:1, 2 (ET 2:28, 29) (cf. 8. below); Zech 12:10 (cf. 8. below); Neh 9:20 (For other passages with נתן cf. 7. below).

## 5. With verbs of conveyance (ישא, הולך, בוא, יצא):

1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16; Ezek 1:12, 20; 3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24 (2x); 37:1; 43:5.

6. No Prepositions:<sup>66</sup>

Judg 13:25; 2 Sam 23:2; Isa 4:4 (2x); 30:1; 34:16; 48:16; 63:10, 14; Hos 9:7; Mic 2:7; Zech 4:6; Ps 104:30; 106:33; 139:7; 143:10; Job 33:4.

## 7. On/in/with/among/by (ב):

Gen 6:3; 41:38; Num 27:18; 2 Kgs 19:7 & Isa 37:7; Isa 63:11; Ezek 1:20; 2:2; 3:24; 11:19; 36:27; 37:14; Hag 2:5; Zech 6:8; 7:12; Neh 9:30.

## 8. Upon (על):

Gen 1:2; Num 1:17, 25 (2x), 26, 29; 24:2; Judg 3:10; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6; 19:20, 23; Isa 11:2; 32:15; 42:1; 44:3; 59:21; 61:1; Ezek 11:5; 39:29; Joel 3:1, 2 (ET 2:28, 29); Zech 12:10; 2 Chr 15:1; 20:14.

## 9. To (אל):

1 Sam 16:13

## 10. For/to (ל):

Isa 28:6; Prov 1:23 (?)

## 11. With (עם):

Num 14:24 (?)

## 12. From (מן):

1 Sam 16:14; 1 Kgs 22:24/2 Chr 18:23; Ps 51:13 (ET 11).

## a. Evil Spirit (רוח רעה, רוח שקר, רוח יהוה רעה, and רוח אלהים רעה):

Judg 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14, 15, 23 (2x); 18:10; 19:9; 1 Kgs 22:21/2 Chron 18:20; 1 Kgs 22:22, 23; 2 Chr 18:21, 22.

## b. Spirit of the Holy Gods:

Dan 4:5, 6, 15 (ET 8, 9, 18); 5:11, 14.

## c. Spirit as Contrasted with Flesh:

Isa 31:3.

<sup>66</sup> The prepositions in view here are prepositions prefixed to words modified by רוח not ריח itself. Thus Gen 41:38, רוח אלהים בו, is classified under “4.1.7. On/In (ב),” while the two instances of רוח in Isa 4:4, both of which have the prefixed preposition ב (ברוח, בברוח, are classified under “4.1.6. No Prepositions” because the words modified by רוח are not modified by prepositions.