

INTRODUCTION .....	7
CHAPTER 1 GOD'S POWER AND PRESENCE.....	11
CHAPTER 2 GOD'S PROTECTION .....	29
CHAPTER 3 GOD'S GLORY .....	45
CHAPTER 4 GOD'S BLESSINGS .....	59
CHAPTER 5 GOD'S GLADNESS AND REJOICING.....	77
CHAPTER 6 GOD'S DELIVERANCE .....	87
CHAPTER 7 GOD'S GRACE .....	III
CHAPTER 8 GOD'S PLEASURE IN HIS CHILDREN.....	125
CHAPTER 9 GOD'S FORGIVENESS.....	135
CHAPTER 10 GOD'S LOVE .....	147
CHAPTER 11 GOD'S PEACE .....	161
CHAPTER 12 GOD'S ANOINTING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE.....	175
CHAPTER 13 PURSUING GOD.....	189
CHAPTER 14 GOD IS ON HIS THRONE.....	203
EPILOGUE .....	215
NOTES .....	221

## CHAPTER ONE



# GOD'S POWER AND PRESENCE

*The heavens declare the glory of God;  
And the firmament shows His handiwork.*

— PSALM 19 : 1

IN 1978 THE LATE Jamie Buckingham, international author and columnist, invited me to accompany his group on what had become for him a regular trek through the Sinai. It would be an unforgettable journey through the desert—one filled with sand, sun, scorching heat, scorpions, and a stunning example of God's presence. Lying on my back on the hard, rocky ground one night, my eyes were filled with the wonder of creation. I understood firsthand how David must have felt as he watched over his father's sheep in the hills of Judea.

It must have been there that he sang the first words of Psalm 19. Perhaps he, like me, was lying on his back staring in awe at God's handiwork, so much more visible in the darkness of the desert. But it is often in the night hours, in the rocky places, that God reveals His power and presence to His children. His skill and artistry is then on full display in the heavens.

It was on a cold, dark night outside Bethlehem that He announced the birth of a baby. It was not written on parchment, but heralded by a host of angels who lit up the dark sky and gladdened the hearts of a lonely group of shepherds with their song. It was a personal invitation to come and see the Christ child, the Messiah, the Savior of all mankind. It was proof yet again that while the Creator hung the stars and planets, the sun and moon in the skies above, His message was and is still carried by men and women.

In October 1982, a member of my ministry team and I were on our way home in a private plane piloted by a friend. We had just completed taping a television special, *Israel: America's Key to Survival*. As we neared our destination, one of the engines of the plane malfunctioned, and we could smell smoke and fuel; the lights on the instrument panel had gone out, and we were flying blind in a dark sky. As I rebuked the Destroyer, my team member began to pray, "Angels of the Lord, undergird us...angels of the Lord, undergird us."

Twenty-one minutes later we landed near Fort Worth. When the pilot looked over the plane, we were astonished to learn that one engine had broken loose and was totally drained of oil. We had truly experienced the power and presence of God on that flight—a miracle. The following morning, a ministry partner, Mrs. Obel, called the office and reported to my secretary that the previous night she had been awakened from sleep and impressed to pray that the Lord would undergird me wherever I was. All she could pray for thirty minutes was, "Angels of the Lord, undergird Mike; angels of the Lord, undergird Mike." What Satan meant for evil on that dark and starless night, God turned to good.

Just as David reveled in the awe of God's power and presence in the night sky, so did the apostle Peter see a miraculous expression

of God's power and presence in the darkness of a storm. It has been said that it is impossible for a Believer to face the future unless strengthened by a powerful and loving God. Peter learned that lesson well on the stormy Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 14:22–34 teaches a lesson on the authority of our Lord over creation. Jesus had spent a long and physically draining day of exhorting, instructing, and healing a vast assembly of people that had followed Him to a deserted beach. He had fed soul and spirit with His words. He then fed the hungry multitude of five thousand men, plus an unspecified number of women and children, with a meal miraculously produced from five loaves and two fish. In His humanity, He must have surely been exhausted.

As night slowly descended over the Sea of Galilee, He sent His disciples across to the other side. Matthew 14:23–24 says, “And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.”

Matthew tells us it was the “fourth watch of the night.” According to one commentary:

The Jews at this time divided the night into four watches; the first was from six o'clock in the evening till nine, the second from nine to twelve, the third from twelve till three, and the fourth from three till six.<sup>1</sup>

In His agony of prayer, Jesus heard the distant cries of His disciples who were battling the storm. Rising from the ground, the Son of Man laid aside His exhaustion and assumed His role as Lord

and Master of the waves. He strode down to the water's edge, stepped onto the stormy sea as if it were dry ground, and walked out toward the wallowing craft. The disciples, spotting the apparition coming toward the boat, cried out in fear, "It's a ghost!" Matthew takes up the story here in verses 27–33:

But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

Immediately, the disciples realized that their fears were unjustified when compared to the power and presence of Jesus. Believers today must grasp the same understanding: Jesus has not forsaken His children in the midst of the storm; He is ever present, ever powerful, and loves us unconditionally. The popular poem, "Footprints in the Sand", ends with these reassuring words:

I have noticed that during the most troublesome  
times in my life,  
There is only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why in times when I needed you  
the most, you should leave me.  
The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child.  
I love you, and I would never, never leave you during  
your times of trial and suffering.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."<sup>2</sup>

Deuteronomy 31:6 reminds us, "Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." In the darkest nights, even when you can't see Him, He is there and is watching over you. As Lauryn Hill sang in her version of the beautiful song "His Eye Is on the Sparrow":

I sing because I'm happy,  
I sing because I'm free,  
His eye is on the sparrow,  
And I know He watches me.<sup>3</sup>

Even during those times when we don't know how to pray or even what to pray, we have the assurance in Romans 8:26-27 that the Holy Spirit is interceding for us:

For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Fear no longer has to rule the life of a Believer. That was another lesson well learned when I found myself in the emergency room shrouded by drapes and awaiting a diagnosis for what I feared was a heart attack. The curtains were closed around my bed, and I felt certain someone had died. I thought, *Oh, lovely! I guess I'm next.*

The ER doctor ordered a stress test and advised me, "If the red light comes on, it means you are having a heart attack." When the red light flashed brightly, the newly graduated technician administering the test ran from the room in a panic. There I was on the treadmill, alone, certain I was having a heart attack. On the verge of a panic attack, I finally freed myself from the machine and sank into a chair. As I sat there trying to slow my beating heart, the technician returned and apologized. "Sorry, Mr. Evans, it was the electrical system. It shorted out."

I replied with what little humor I could muster, "Now I know why it's called a stress test." With the test completed, I was admitted to a room to await the results. There I was, flat on my back and greatly in need of someone in whom I could confide—but whom? A name popped into my mind and I reached for the telephone. In a few minutes I was connected to the one person I felt I could trust: my good friend Jamie Buckingham.

Not only did this busy man answer the phone when it rang, he took time for me. My voice cracked as I said, "Jamie, this is Mike Evans. I'm in the hospital cardiology ward." A sob tore from my throat, "I'm scared, Jamie." Jamie and I talked for a bit, and he assured me that God was more than able to handle my fears and give me His peace in the midst of the storm. As I hung up the phone, I knew there was Someone else I needed to spend time with—my Lord. I lifted my hands heavenward in surrender and began to confess my fears to the God of all peace.

The official diagnosis was tachycardia. My work habits were partly to blame. I simply had failed to take care of this body God has given me. Fortunately, I hadn't had a heart attack, but the doctor warned that I might very well find myself in that place if I didn't change my ways.

As you and I seek to move into a closer relationship with Jesus through prayer and Bible study, attitudes begin to change, faith flourishes, and the result is total assurance in our Lord. We find comfort in His power and presence. We receive boldness that we can endure whatever lies in our pathway because of Jesus, King of kings, Lord of lords, our omnipotent, omniscient, loving Savior and Redeemer! With Jesus as our Champion, no foe can stand against us!

Knowing that, we grow more positive that God will make provision for us. Our Lord is the victor in every situation. In Romans, chapter 8, the apostle Paul states emphatically that nothing can remove us from His hand:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? ...Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to



separate us from the love of God which is in Christ  
Jesus our Lord (vv. 31–32, 35, 37–39).

What a wonderful promise to the Believer! Nothing—no thing—can separate us from God’s power and presence, from His love and grace. Many of the books in the New Testament contain the phrase “grace to you” or “grace be with you.” It was not added as just a congenial greeting. Paul, who wrote many of the epistles, and the other writers who used that particular salutation were well aware of the necessity of God’s grace or favor.

The power and presence of God was so unmistakable in the life of Abraham that even unbelievers could see the difference in his life. In Genesis 20 and 21, we read of the relationship between the Philistine King Abimelech and Abraham and the covenant that was established between the two men. Although their earlier encounter had been less than positive, it soon became evident to the king that God was with Abraham in everything he did (see Genesis 21:22). His herds were increasing; the number of servants was growing; Abraham was blessed by the power and presence of God in his life. As a result, Abimelech feared the potential for conflict with this man who found favor with God. This heathen king realized that God blessed, guided, and protected Abraham and that wherever he went the power and presence of God covered him.

Judges 6 relates the story of Gideon, a man who was basically a wimp! When we first meet Gideon in this chapter, he is hiding in fear from the Midianites in order to thresh wheat for his family. And yet when the angel of the Lord approached Gideon, his greeting in verse 12 was, “The LORD is with you, you mighty man of valor!” Can you imagine what Gideon’s response might have

been? “Who me? Mighty?” In fact, that could be a modern translation of what he did say in verse 15:

O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.

Not a very courageous beginning for a deliverer. In his own eyes, Gideon was a zero, a nobody, a failure, and certainly not a “mighty man of valor,” as he had been addressed. He was pretty sure God could not use him for anything, much less something that required boldness! He viewed his life as one without the power and presence of Jehovah God. Apparently he had not heard the totality of what the angel had said in verse 14:

Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?

In essence, God was saying to Gideon: “You don’t know what you can do when you allow yourself to be accompanied by My presence and filled with My power.” He was making the same promise to Gideon that He had made to Moses in Exodus 33:14, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Gideon was slow to warm up to the idea of being a mighty man of valor, to be the one chosen of God to engage the entire Midianite army in battle. He could not comprehend that God wanted *him* for the task at hand. He was not some superhero, but he had two things in his favor: God’s power and presence.

Hudson Taylor, the great pioneer missionary to China, might

well have described Gideon's life when he said, "I have found that there are three stages in every great work of God: first, it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done."<sup>4</sup>

Despite God's assurance that he was the man for the job, Gideon finally chose to obey God—but not during the daylight hours; it was in the middle of the night. He quietly issued a call for the people to gather and was astounded when 32,000 showed up! But God had a different plan, one that would further challenge Gideon's dependence on Him. Imagine his dismay when God told Gideon the army was too large and introduced His plan to streamline the troops to a mere 10,000 men. Even then, God determined that number to be too large and devised one further test:

"Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. Then the Lord said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand" (Judges 7:5–7).

Three hundred men! That was Gideon's army. The Midianite army was said to be "without number" (see Judges 7:12). Yet Gideon obeyed God's very specific instructions. Each man was to carry a trumpet and a pitcher with a torch inside. The men were divided into three companies of one hundred each and spread around the perimeter of the Midianite camp. At the appointed time, they were

to blow their trumpets, smash the lamps, and yell, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon” (Judges 7:20b).

When the cacophony of noise awoke the Midianites, they were seized with panic and fled before the army of the Lord. Gideon pursued the enemy until it was vanquished:

Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon (Judges 8:28).

Gideon could have walked away from God’s plan at any time. In the natural, it must have seemed totally impossible to win Israel’s freedom from the marauding, murderous Midianites. However, Gideon chose to believe that the power and presence of Jehovah-Mephalti—the Lord my Deliverer—was greater than the multitude of Midianite militia.

Jeremiah was a prophet ordained by God to deliver a message of judgment to Israel, an unappreciated job at best. Unfortunately, his message was not designed to win friends; he was to simply speak only “Thus says the LORD” (see Jeremiah 15:2). Jeremiah did exactly that; he pronounced judgment and destruction on Israel because of their sins. He warned, “I [Jehovah] will cause anguish and terror to fall on them suddenly” (see verse 8).

But Jeremiah’s message was not totally one of devastation, for God always provides a way of escape for His people, a glimmer of hope in a dark world. He promised, “If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me (see verse 19).

The reaction to Jeremiah’s message was to be expected; the people were incensed. Plans were made to cast him in prison

without possibility of a reprieve. The prophet reacted much as you or I might have: He vowed to stop preaching and began to complain. He whined in prayer:

Then Jeremiah replied, “Lord, you know it is for your sake that I am suffering. They are persecuting me because I have proclaimed your word to them. Don’t let them kill me! Rescue me from their clutches, and give them what they deserve! Your words are what sustain me; they are food to my hungry soul. They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me. How proud I am to bear your name, O Lord. I have not joined the people in their merry feasts. I sit alone beneath the hand of God. I burst with indignation at their sins. Yet you have failed me in my time of need! You have let them keep right on with all their persecutions. Will they never stop hurting me? Your help is as uncertain as a seasonal mountain brook—sometimes a flood, sometimes as dry as a bone” (Jeremiah 15:15–18 TLB).

Jeremiah reacted much like Elijah did in 1 Kings 19:4, 9–10:

But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!” And there [at Mount Horeb] he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and

He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

Both prophets had basically the same thoughts: *Okay, Lord, I did what you told me to do and you have abandoned me.* At that moment, Jeremiah must have felt forsaken and alone.

Then in verses 19–21, God made the promise of His power and presence to His spokesman:

“If you return, then I will bring you back; you shall stand before Me; if you take out the precious from the vile, you shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, but you must not return to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze wall; and they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you; for I am with you to save you and deliver you,” says the LORD. “I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible.”

God was calling Jeremiah to stop complaining and bellyaching, to cease his incessant grumbling! But He doesn’t stop there; He reminds Jeremiah of the promises He made to him when he was first called to preach Jehovah’s message. He is promised the power of God, the security of the Holy One of Israel to defend against those who threaten him. God reminded Jeremiah that it didn’t matter

what the people thought of him, only what God had promised—His power and presence to accompany the prophet.

It's reminiscent of another prophet to whom God gave a promise:

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you (Isaiah 43:1-2).

Favor with God can accomplish what your greatest talents and abilities cannot—unlocking doors you may think are locked, eliminating hurdles hindering your advancement, presenting unexpected openings, and bidding you to enter elite alliances and develop new associations. In today's job market terms, favor allows you access to God's network. Seek favor with God; stand before Him in sincerity and submission; offer His grace and favor to others; enjoy favor with God. 2 Corinthians 6:2 (niv), bids us to come and partake, "*Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*"

— DISCUSSION —  
MATERIAL

1. Read Matthew 14:23–33.
2. The disciples felt alone on the sea at night. Why do you think trials and troubles seem so much more difficult in the night hours?
3. What should we do at those times?
4. God called Gideon to deliver the Israelites. Why do you think God chose a fearful young man to lead His people?
5. Has God called you to do something for which you feel unqualified?
6. Like Jeremiah, have you ever been asked to deliver a message that may not have been well-received?
7. What was your response?
8. What was the outcome?
9. Has there been a time in your life when you particularly felt God's power and presence surround you?



— SCRIPTURES ON —  
GOD'S POWER AND PRESENCE

Honor and majesty are [found] in His presence; strength and joy are [found] in His sanctuary.

**1 CHRONICLES 16:27 AMP**

And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

**EXODUS 33:14 ESV**

You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

**PSALM 16:11**

You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

**PSALM 31:20**

Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

**PSALM 51:11 NASB**

Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD; for the day of the LORD is at hand, for the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests.

**ZEPHANIAH 1:7**

Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

**ACTS 3:19**

Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?

**PSALM 139:7**

Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

**PSALM 100:2 KJV**

The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

**PSALM 97:5**

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

**JUDE 1:24-25**

When my enemies turn back, they shall fall and perish at Your presence.

**PSALM 9:3**

The earth shook; the heavens also dropped rain at the presence of God; Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

**PSALM 68:8**

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.

**PSALM 95:2**

Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob.

**PSALM 114:7**

Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name; the upright shall dwell in Your presence.

**PSALM 140:13**

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the

cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:17–18 ESV**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...

**EPHESIANS 6:10–18 ESV**

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

**PHILIPPIANS 3:8–11 ESV**