

Heaven : Shamayim

The entire expanse of the heavens

The cosmos



1. God dwells in the heavens

Psalm 33:13-14

‘The Lord looks down from heaven
and sees all humankind.
From where he sits enthroned
he watches all the inhabitants of the earth.’

2Chronicles 30:27

‘The priests and the Levites stood up and blessed the people,
and their voice was heard; their prayer came to God’s holy
dwelling in heaven.’

Psalm 29

‘The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the Lord, over mighty waters ...

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars ...

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;
the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl,
and strips the forest bare;
and in his temple all say, “Glory!”

Isaiah 63:15

‘Look down from heaven and see,
from your holy and glorious habitation.’

Psalms 14:2

‘The Lord looks down from heaven on humankind
to see if there are any who are wise,
any who seek after God.’

Psalm 144:5-7

‘Lower your heavens, O Lord, and come down;
touch the mountains so that they smoke.
Make the lightning flash and scatter them;
send out your arrows and rout them.
Stretch out your hand from on high;
set me free and rescue me from the mighty waters.’

2. The heavens praise God

Psalm 29:1-2

‘Acclaim the Lord, O heavenly beings.

Acclaim the glory and strength of the Lord.

Acclaim the Lord’s glorious name.

Prostrate yourselves before the Lord in the holy temple.’

Psalm 19:1-4

‘The heavens are telling the glory of God;

and the firmament proclaims God’s handiwork.

Day unto day takes up the story,

night unto night makes known the message.

Without a word, without a sound,

without a voice being heard,

their announcement goes out through all the earth,

their proclamation to the utmost bounds of the world.’

Psalm 97:6

‘The heavens proclaim the righteousness of the Lord
and all the peoples behold his glory.’

Isaiah 44:23

‘Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has redeemed Jacob,
and will be glorified in Israel.’

Isaiah 49:13

‘Sing for joy, O heavens, for the Lord has comforted his
people, and will have compassion on his suffering ones.’

3. We inhabit the earth but can pray to God in heaven

Psalm 104:1-4

‘Bless the Lord, O my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.

You are clothed with honour and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
you make the clouds your chariot,
you ride on the wings of the wind,
you make the winds your messengers,
fire and flame your ministers.’

4. God communicates with us from heaven

1Kings 8:30

‘Hear the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place; O hear in heaven your dwelling place; heed and forgive.’

Psalms 18:16

‘The Lord reached down from on high and took me;
he drew me out of mighty waters.’

Psalms 102:19-20

‘The Lord looked down from his holy height,
from heaven he looked at the earth,
to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die.’

Genesis 22:11

‘The angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said,
“Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”’

Exodus 20:22

‘The Lord said to Moses: Thus you shall say to the Israelites:
“You have seen for yourselves that I spoke with you from heaven.

Psalms 20:6

‘Now I know that the Lord will help his anointed;
he will answer him from his holy heaven
with mighty victories by his right hand.’

5. 'Heaven' = 'God'

Daniel 4:26

'Nebuchadnezzar, your kingdom shall be reestablished for you from the time that you learn that Heaven is sovereign.'

Commonly in the Book of the Maccabees (TDOT, XV, page 230.5)

6. We don't have to go to heaven to find God for God is present to us in God's Word

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

‘Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?” Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?” No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.’

Isaiah 55:10-11

‘As the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.’

7. God is present in God's land and in God's people

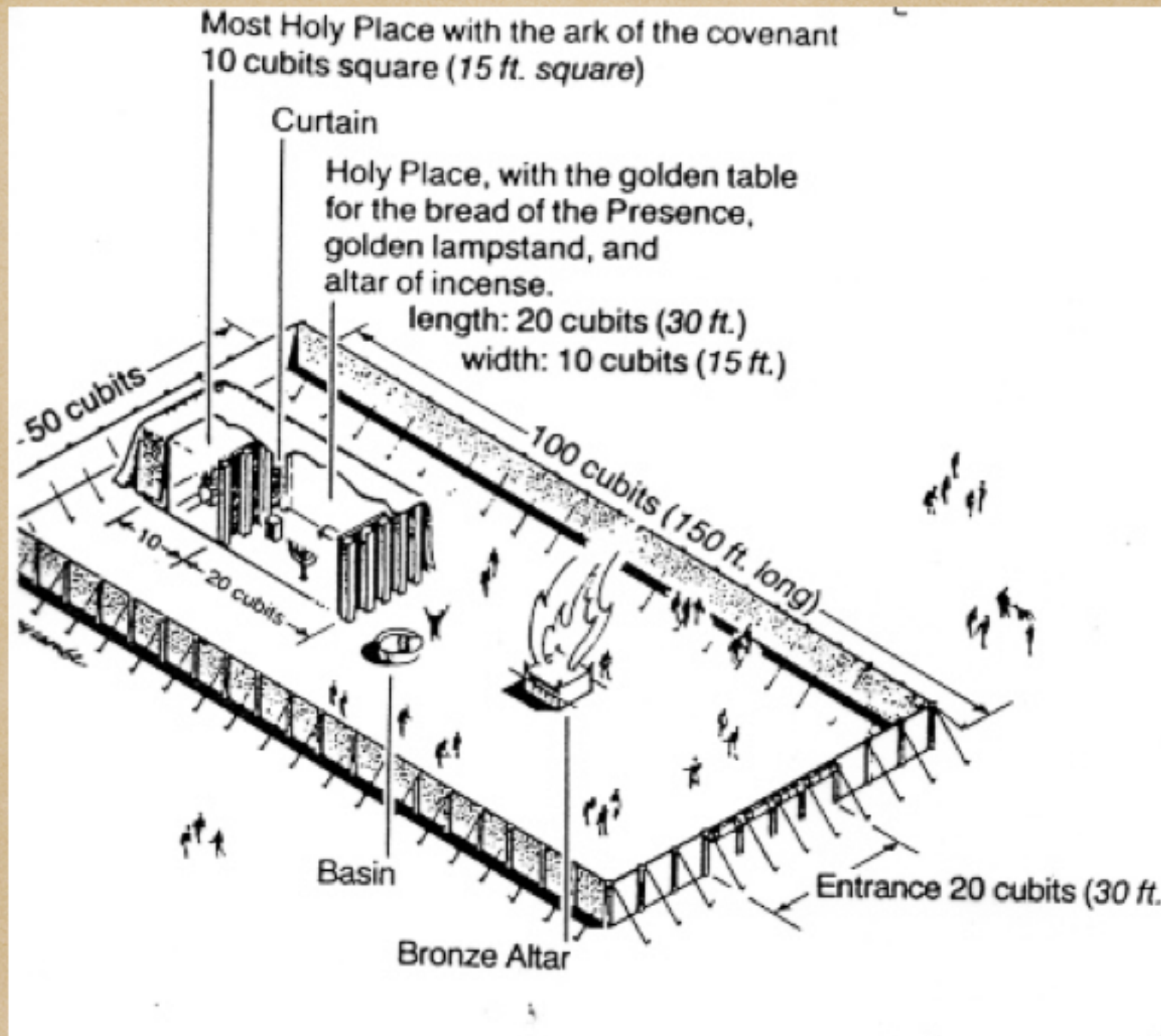
Deuteronomy 26:15

‘Look down from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our ancestors – a land flowing with milk and honey.’

Psalm 80:14-15

‘Turn again, O God of hosts;
look down from heaven, and see;
have regard for this vine,
the stock that your right hand planted.’

8. God is present in God's tent/ temple



Exodus 33:7-11

‘Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand, each of them, at the entrance of their tents and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise and bow down, all of them, at the entrance of their tent. Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.

Exodus 40:36-38

‘Whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, the Israelites would set out on each stage of their journey; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, before the eyes of all the house of Israel. And so it was at each stage of their journey.’

Exodus 29:42

‘I will meet with you at the entrance of the tent of meeting to speak to you there.’

1Kings 8:43

‘Hear in heaven your dwelling place,
and do according to all that the foreigner calls to you,
so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name
and fear you, as do your people Israel,
and so that they may know that your name has been invoked
on this house that I have built.’

Psalm 27:5

‘The Lord will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble,
will conceal me under the cover of his tent.’

Sirach 24:8

‘The Creator of all things gave me, Wisdom, a command,
and my Creator chose the place for my tent.
He said: Make your dwelling in Jacob,
and in Israel receive your inheritance.’

Isaiah 66:1-2 (see Acts 7:49-50)

‘Thus says the Lord:

Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house that you would build for me,
and what is my resting place?

All these things my hand has made,

and so all these things are mine, says the Lord.

But this is the one to whom I will look,

to the humble and contrite in spirit,
who trembles at my word.’

9. God is everywhere

Psalm 139:7-10

‘Where can I go from your spirit?

Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there;

if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning

and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead me,

and your right hand shall hold me fast.’

Deuteronomy 4:39

‘Acknowledge today and take to heart that the Lord is God
in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

Psalm 135:6

‘Whatever the Lord pleases he does,
in heaven and on earth, in the depths of the sea.’

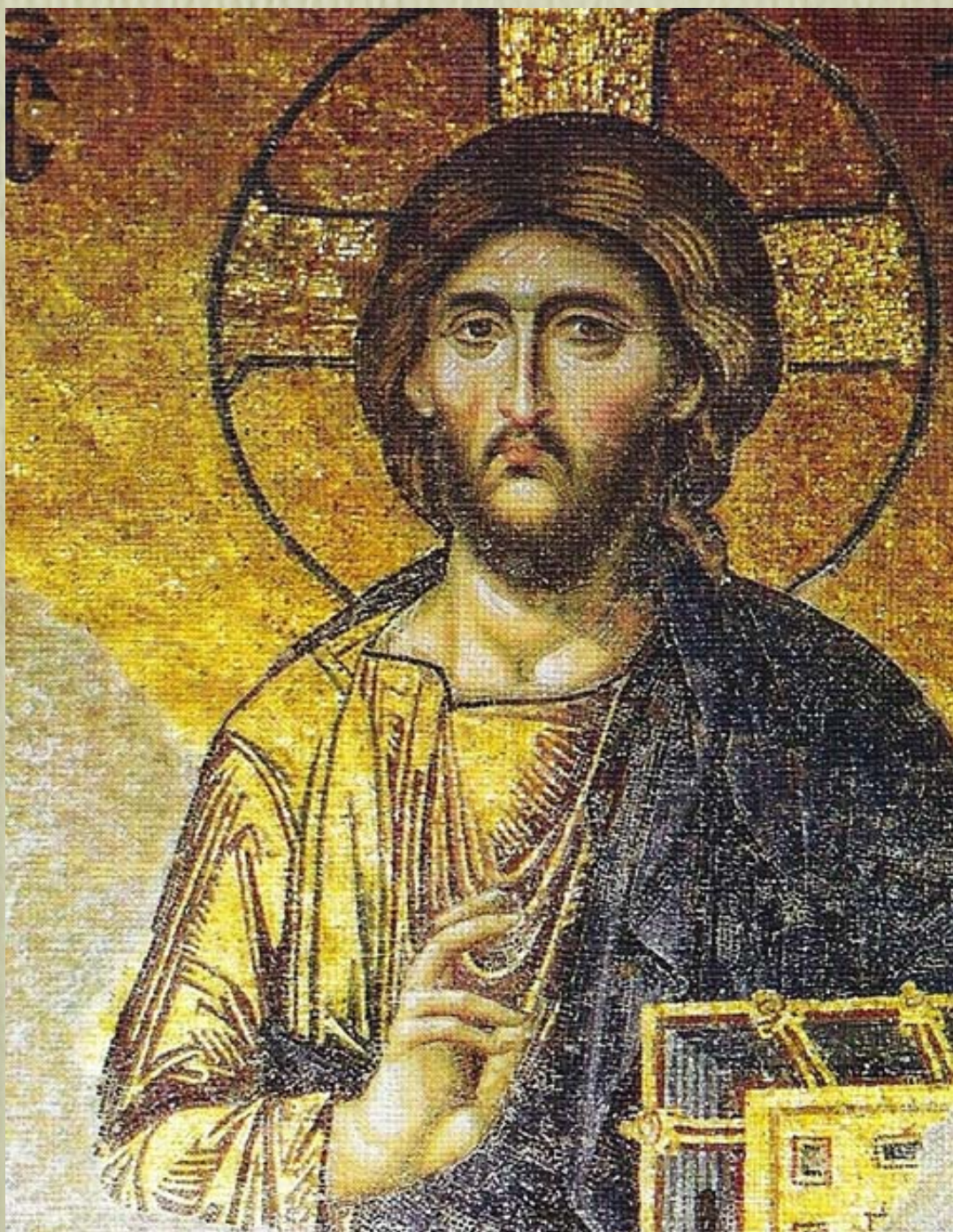
10. In Jesus God has pitched his tent among us

John 1:14

‘The Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of the gift of truth.’

John 2:19,21

‘Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ... He was speaking of the temple of his body.’



II. God is present in the Body of Christ

Ephesians 2:21

‘In Christ the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.’

1Corinthians 3:16

‘Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?’

1Corinthians 6:19

‘Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?’

2Corinthians 6:16

‘What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

(Leviticus 26:12; Ezekiel 37:27).

12. God is present in the human heart

Romans 5:5

‘Hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.’

Galatians 2:20

‘It is no longer I who live. It is Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, loving me and giving himself for me.’

Sirach 37:13

‘Heed the counsel of your own heart, for no one is more faithful to you than it is. Your soul often forewarns you; it is better that seven watchmen perched on a watch-tower. You must also beg the Most High to guide your steps in the truth.’

Proverbs 4:23

‘More than all else, keep watch over your heart, for there are the wellsprings of life.’

A hardened heart must be broken ('contrite'),
an adulterated heart purified.

‘Create in me a clean heart, O God’(Psalm 51:12).

‘You will not scorn this crushed and broken heart’(Psalm 51:16).

Setting our heart on God

‘If you start searching once more for Yahweh your God, and if you seek Yahweh with all your heart, you will find him’(Deuteronomy 4:29).

‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God’(Matthew 5:8).

Genesis 28:12-17

‘Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said ... the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring ... Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.’ Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!” And he was afraid, and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.”

God pours into our heart the nourishment we really need today

Exodus 16:4

‘The Lord said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you.’

13. God gives God's Self as our nourishment

John 14:15-18, 23

‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate,

to be with you forever.

This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,

because it neither sees him nor knows him.

You know him, because he abides with you,

and he will be in you.

I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you ...

If you love me you will keep my word,

and my Father will love you, and we will come to you

and make our home in you.

John 17:22-24

‘The glory that you have given me
I have given them,
so that they may be one, as we are one,
I in them and you in me,
that they may become completely one,
so that the world may know
that you have sent me
and have loved them
even as you have loved me.
Father, I desire that those also,
whom you have given me,
may be with me where I am, to see my glory,
which you have given me
because you loved me
before the foundation of the world.



‘God has sent the Spirit of his Son
into our hearts,
crying: Abba! Father!’

Rublev

Teresa of Avila

‘Each of us has a soul, but, since we do not prize souls as is deserved by creatures made in the image of God, we do not understand the deep secrets that lie in them.’

(Teresa, Interior Castle VII.1.1)

‘The soul is a paradise where the Lord says he finds his delight.’

(Interior Castle I.1.1)

‘In its centre very secret exchanges between God and the soul take place.’ (Interior Castle I.1.3)

‘It seemed to me that like a sponge all penetrated and saturated with water, my soul was filled with the divinity, and that it was truly enjoying, in some way, the presence of the Three Persons and had possessed them with it’(Relations, June 1571).

Teresa of Avila

‘There is nothing to hinder you and your Spouse from remaining alone together, when you desire to enter within yourself, to shut the door behind you and to dwell in that Paradise with your God ... Remember this is not a supernatural state. It is something you can do if you resolve to do it ... Even if we take a whole hour to say the ‘Our Father’ once, if we can realise that we are with Him, and what it is we are asking Him, and how willing He is, like any father, to grant it to us, and how He loves to be with us and comfort us, He has no wish for us to tire our brains by a great deal of talking’(Way of Perfection 29).

Teresa of Avila

‘I am not asking you now that you think about him, or that you draw out a lot of concepts, or make long and subtle reflections with your intellect. I am not asking you to do anything more than look at him. Who can keep you from turning the eyes of your soul towards the Lord? ... In the measure you desire him you will find him... He never takes his eyes off you’(Way of Perfection 26.3).

Teresa of Avila

‘The soul always remains with its God in the centre. Let us say that the union is like the joining of two wax candles to such an extent that the flame coming from them is but one, or that the wick, the flame, and the wax are all one. But afterward one candle can be easily separated from the other and there are two candles; the same holds for the wick. In spiritual marriage the union is like what we have when rain falls from the sky into a river. All is water, for the rain that fell from heaven cannot be divided or separated from the water of the river. Or it is like what we have when a little stream enters the sea. There is no means of separating the two. Or, like the bright light entering a room through two different windows. Although the streams of light are separate when entering the room, they become one’(Interior Castle VII.2.4).

John of the Cross

‘O most beautiful of creatures, so anxious to know the whereabouts of the One you love so that you may seek him and be united to him, know that you yourself are his dwelling place, his secret chamber, the place where he lies hidden. Rejoice and be glad, for all you ever wanted, all you ever hoped for, is so close as to be within you. You cannot be without Him’(Spiritual Canticle 1.7).

‘Come then O beautiful soul! Since you know that the Beloved whom you desire lives hidden within your heart, strive to be yourself truly hidden with him, and you will embrace him within and experience him with loving affection’(Spiritual Canticle 1.10).

‘God says to the soul ‘I am yours and for you. I am delighted to be what I am, so as to be yours and to give myself to you.’(Living Flame 3.6)

John of the Cross

‘The Word, the Son of God, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is hidden in the innermost being of the soul’(Spiritual Canticle 1.6).

‘God, whose attributes are called ‘lamps of fire’, dwells in us and favours us with his love. He says to the soul ‘I am yours and for you. I am delighted to be what I am, so as to be yours and to give myself to you’(Living Flame 3.6).

‘The Spirit of God insofar as it is hidden in the veins of the soul is like soft refreshing water, which satisfies the thirst of the spirit, and insofar as it is exercised in the sacrifice of loving God, it is like living flames of fire’(Living Flame 3.8).

John of the Cross

‘We become like the air inside a flame, enkindled and transformed in the flame, for the flame is nothing but enkindled air’(Living Flame 3.9).

‘Enter within yourself and work in the presence of your Spouse, who is ever present loving you’(Maxims on Love n.11).

‘The Father spoke one Word, which was his Son, and this Word he continues to speak in eternal silence. In silence it must be heard by the soul’(Maxims on Love n.21).

John of the Cross

‘He [the Word, the Bridegroom] would take his bride tenderly in his arms, and there give her his love. And when they were thus one, He would lift her to the Father, where God's own joy would be her joy. For as the Father and the Son and He who proceeds from them live in one another, so it would be with the bride. For, taken wholly into God, she will live the life of God’(Romance 4.15-17).

Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

The Sacred Heart of Jesus (1895):

One day, O my God, like Magdalen,
I wanted so much to see and be close to you.
My gaze searched the immense plain
seeking to find the Master and King.
My eyes caught the clear ocean wave,
the star, the flower and the bird. I cried:
'If I do not see God, O beautiful nature,
you are for me only one vast tomb!'

Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

My Longings before the Tabernacle (Poem n.23)

2. I'd like to burn away, to be
Consumed - near God by day and night;
A steady glow of mystery,
A sanctuary lamp, alight.
What happiness is mine: I've flame
Within me! – Daily thus can I
Win Jesus souls, and by the same
Heart's-fire He came to light them by.

Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

Mon Ciel à Moi! (7th June 1896) (Poem n.31)

5. Mon Ciel est de sourire à ce Dieu que j'adore
Lorsqu'Il veut se cacher pour m'éprouver ma foi
Souffrir en attendant qu'Il me regarde encore
Voilà mon Ciel à moi!

Jésus Seul (15th August 1896) (Poem n.35)

2. Et si parfois tu sembles te cacher,
c'est toi qui viens m'aider à te chercher.

Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

Manuscript B (September 1896, for her sister Marie of the Sacred Heart)

‘I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was BURNING WITH LOVE. I understood that it was love alone that made the Church's members act, that if love ever became extinct, apostles would not preach the gospel and martyrs would not shed their blood. I understood the LOVE COMPRISED ALL VOCATIONS, THAT LOVE WAS EVERYTHING, THAT IT EMBRACED ALL TIMES AND PLACES, IN A WORD, THAT IT WAS ETERNAL!

Then, in the excess of my delirious joy, I cried out: O Jesus, my Love, my vocation - at last I have found it; MY VOCATION IS LOVE!’

Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897)

Manuscript C (June 1897, for Mother Marie de Gonzague)

"Jesus knows well that while I do not have the joy of faith, I am trying to carry out its works at least. I believe I have made more acts of faith in this past year than all through my whole life. At each new occasion of combat, when my enemy provokes me, I conduct myself bravely. Knowing it is cowardly to enter into a duel, I turn my back on my adversary without deigning to look him in the face; but I run towards my Jesus ... I sing what I WANT TO BELIEVE.'

Therese of Lisieux 'of the Holy Face'

"The Holy Face was the mirror in which Therese saw the soul and the heart of her beloved. The Holy Face was the meditation book from which she drew her signs of love. She had an image of it always before her in her office book and in her stall during her prayer. There was a copy attached to the curtains of her bed during her illness; the sight of it helped her to endure her long martyrdom"(Summary of the Process of Beatification).

‘In the evening of this life,

I shall appear before You with empty hands,’

(from her Act of Oblation to Merciful Love, 9.6.1895)

Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906)

‘O my God, O Trinity Whom I adore, help me to become completely forgetful of myself, that I may make my home in You for ever, still and peaceful, as though my soul were already in eternity ...

Establish my soul in peace, make it Your heaven, Your cherished home, the place where You rest. May I never leave You there alone. Keep me there, all of me, wholly vigilant in living faith, adoring You with all my being, and wholly yielded up to Your creative action ...

O consuming Fire, Spirit of Love, "come upon me", so that the Word may take flesh again, as it were, in my soul: may I be for Him a humanity, an extension of His own, where He can live once more all His Mystery.

And You, O Father, bend lovingly over Your frail and weak creature. "Cover me with your glory-cloud". Behold in me only Your "Beloved Son in whom You have placed all your delight".

Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906)

Letter 122 (June 1902) - To Madame de Soudon

‘We possess our Heaven within us, since He who satisfies the hunger of the glorified in the light of vision gives himself to us in faith and mystery. It is the same One! It seems to me that I have found my Heaven on earth, since Heaven is God, and God is [in] my soul.’

Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906)

Letter 123 (June 19th 1902) - To Françoise de Sourdon

‘You must build a little cell within your soul as I do. Remember that God is there and enter it from time to time. When you feel nervous, or you are unhappy, quickly seek refuge there and tell the Master all about it. Ah, if you got to know him a little, prayer would not bore you any more. To me it seems to be rest, relaxation. We come quite simply to the One we love, stay close to Him like a little child in the arms of its mother, and we let our heart go.’

Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906)

Letter 133 (August 7th 1902) - To Germaine de Gemeaux

‘The Carmelite already lives as if in Heaven: ‘by God alone’. The same One who will one day be her beatitude and will fully satisfy her in glory is already giving Himself to her. He never leaves her. He dwells within her soul. More than that, the two of them are but one. So she hungers for silence that she may always listen, penetrate ever deeper into His Infinite Being. She is identified with Him whom she loves. She finds Him everywhere. She sees Him shining through all things. Is this not Heaven on earth. You carry this Heaven within your soul ... Don’t ever leave Him. Do everything beneath His divine gaze, and remain wholly joyful in His peace and love, making those around you happy.’

Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906)

Letter 177 (late August 1903) - To Canon Angles

‘I feel so much love over my soul, it is like an Ocean which I immerse and lose myself in. It is my vision on earth while waiting for the face to face vision in light. He is in me. I am in Him. I have only to love Him, to let myself be loved all the time, through all things: to wake in Love, to move in Love, to sleep in Love, my soul in His Soul, my heart in His heart, my eyes in His eyes, so that through His contact He may purify me, free me from my misery.’

Reflections based on Elizabeth

I am to be a harp in the hands of Christ,
letting him touch whatever strings he wants.

I am to be a flute in his hands,
letting His Spirit breathe where He wills.

Jesus, touch me as you will.

Spirit of Jesus, breathe on me as you will.

Whatever you do, I thank you.



Be Still



Be still

Kathy Sherman



Be still, be still, and know that I am God.