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Zion

God's Ultimate Desire

Ron Frantz

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ZION

GOD'S ULTIMATE DESIRE

RON FRANTZ

ZION: GOD’S ULTIMATE DESIRE

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Published by VineMaker Publishing
Sequim, Washington
www.VineMakerPublishing.com

ISBN – *TO BE ASSIGNED*

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Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction:

In light of all there is to know about God it is obvious that we know so little. Our knowledge is like a small drop in a vast ocean. He is still, in a very real sense, the unknown God. But the little we have creates a hunger for more. Our hearts cry out with the apostle Paul...

"that I might know Him"

...and the beauty of it all is that He desires to be fully known.

There are places in His Word where our Father chooses to reveal His heart. These revelations of what He loves and longs for are precious and few, and should be our highest priority.

The purpose of this writing is to explore the ultimate desire that our Father has expressed in His Word, a people of one heart and one mind with Him so that He may dwell in their midst in unlimited Glory. He calls it - **Zion**.

Chapter 1: God's Place

*"Thus says the Lord: Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist, says the Lord. But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."
(Isaiah 66:1-2 NKJV)*

This is a good question. Who but God could be the architect of something that He would want to dwell in? Would that even be humanly possible, to build a place for Him to rest? We know that God will not dwell in something made with men's hands, although this knowledge has not stopped many from trying! Since the days of the tower of Babel men have tried to build something that would reach heaven and all it has ever done is create more confusion.

So where is His house? Where is the place His glorious presence can rest? Is such a place even on the earth today? Yes, our Father laid the Cornerstone for it a few thousand years ago and has been working with us on it ever since. It is here, and the fullness of it is on the way. God calls it Zion.

"For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it." (Psalm 132: 13-14 NKJV)

Wow, what a statement! Our God has made a choice for His dwelling place. This is what He declared that His heart desires, what He longs for. So, this prompts another question. What is Zion in the heart and mind of God? What exactly does it mean to Him? That is the question we will explore for the remainder of this book. We know that God inspired King David to build a place of worship on the hill called Zion, which was to become a prophetic picture of the spiritual Zion. Just as there is a heavenly Jerusalem and an earthly Jerusalem. But Zion is much more than a place, it is a People. To gain insight into God's thoughts on this mystery it must be viewed from a heavenly, eternal perspective. He is building something that will last forever, which highlights the necessity of all things being done according to His divine order. This is His dream home, and the results of what is being built will last a long, long time.

Zion is His passion. Passionate love is the great motivation behind this building project. What our God wants is to be pursued with the same passion with which He pursues us. Passionate love for Him is the only motivation that will keep our hearts true to His vision. What God is building is so glorious that it can distract us from pursuing Him if we let it. This is where Lucifer fell. He began to worship and serve the creation more than the Creator. We must value the God

of the house more than the house of God. Hebrews 3:3 admonishes us that, "He who built the house has more honor than the house".

Zion is God's Place. A place where the whole paradigm for our focus is that He gets to have it the way HE wants it to be. A place where He gets to do what He wants to do in the midst of beautiful sons and daughters. A place where His love and desires for us can flow unhindered. What makes it so beautiful and glorious for us is that HE IS THERE. His very presence and glory makes it heaven on earth. Not to mention, His great joy is to be at home surrounded by His beautiful sons and daughters.

All of which expresses His desire, His determined intention, to dwell in the midst of His people. As it is written in *Isaiah 51:15-16* "But I am the Lord your God, who divided the sea whose waves roared - The LORD of hosts is His name. And I have put My words in your mouth; I have covered you with the shadow of My hand, that I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of the earth and say to Zion 'You are My people'". This reality stretches from heaven to earth. It is the culmination of all that God has been building ever since He laid the cornerstone, Jesus Christ our Lord.

What a glorious vision! Zion is being built out of people. More specifically, Zion is that group of people who are allowing themselves to be changed and fashioned together into a house for God. He lives in our relationships. We

are meant to experience the invisible God in visible people. Jesus said where even two or three are gathered together, He would be in their midst. Not just gathered together, but those who are together in the spirit. Those who are gathered in faith, being committed to the dominion of God. In this way we qualify for His presence. Our God will not settle for less. We must qualify. As His own set apart people, we are called to live under the shelter of a corporate commitment to the presence of God in our midst.

What has not really been understood is the singular intensity of God's determination to have what He wants, and have it the way He wants it. Only His way will work. God is spirit, and what He is building has its foundation and source in the spirit realm. Although it certainly has physical manifestation, Zion must be viewed primarily as a spiritual reality.

“Again the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I am zealous for Zion with great zeal; With great fervor I am zealous for her.” Thus says the Lord: “I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the Lord of hosts, The Holy Mountain.”’”
(Zechariah 8:1-3 NKJV)

Have you ever heard God speak this way about anything else? This is so different than what we are accustomed to that it should capture our attention. Some translations of Zechariah say "I'm on fire for this"!

The expression of such a burning, intense desire almost seems out of character when we think of our Father, but that is only due to our very limited comprehension of who He is. I feel this is especially true when seeking to grow in knowing His soul; the mind, will and emotions of our God. Our God is a consuming fire. We so desperately need the help of the Holy Spirit to open our own hearts and embrace this reality. The heart of God is so great and so full of what He desires to lavish upon us that, His passion is to create places in the earth where He can manifest those desires, in fullness. When our hearts become open and responsive to His desires all heaven breaks loose. Our Father can then manifest His kingdom and blessings that He has planned for us. In this way we bring pleasure to His heart.

We were created for His pleasure. To the world this may seem to be a terrible destiny. They seek to please themselves, or others. To the natural mind living only for God's pleasure would be a huge burden, but in reality it is creation's glory. As His newly created sons and daughters we have the awesome privilege of bringing pleasure to the heart of our Father God. We are created in Christ Jesus, the ultimate Father pleaser. While we are on this subject, this is another great adjustment we can make in our understanding of Him. Brace yourself for this one. Our God is a pleasure loving, pleasure giving, extremist.

"They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures." (Psalm 36:8 NKJV)

Nothing has been more maligned in religious thought than our God-given capacity for pleasure. This is understandable because as new believers we had to learn to deny ungodly desires and escape the corruption that is in the world through lusts. And since we are still in fleshly bodies we must consistently be on guard against worldly corruption. Yet, the path for victory in this area is not just arming ourselves to deny ungodly pleasures, but replacing them with the pleasures that God created us for.

"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 NKJV)

Our souls find deep satisfaction and joy in His presence. Truth becomes so desirable that we can't get enough. Peace is so pleasant and enjoyable that we hate to disturb it. Our hearts become flooded with visions of righteousness and justice as we draw close to Him. This is the path of life. These are the pleasures we are created for.

The moral problems we face in the Body of Christ are not because we have these intense desires. It is only where we choose to focus them. We settle for so much less than what God has for us. Just as Esau settled for a bowl of soup instead of his inheritance, we have traded the Kingdom of God for momentary pleasures. The answer is not getting rid of our desires, but fulfilling them through God's plan and purpose for our lives. And as we behold His glory a transformation takes place in our soul that separates us from corruption, for

a purpose. Our overarching purpose must be to become His dwelling place. The deep fulfillment of our desires will happen when we seek to fulfill His.

To accomplish this, our God has given Himself to us in the form of glorious, extravagant promises. These promises are designed to empower our lives with everything we will need to fulfill this destiny of being His dwelling place. The promises of God must be seen as the central key for unlocking our destinies, and actually they enable us to break out of the downward spiral of this fallen world. As it is written *"by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."* (2 Peter 1:4 NKJV)

This is HUGE! The pathway to holiness and partaking of God's divine nature is THROUGH the promises of God being fulfilled in us. When the promises are being fulfilled there is a Divine supply that separates us from relying only on natural means for provision and fulfillment of our lives, spirit, soul and body. He promised us a Savior, Healer and Deliverer to get our lives back on track. And that with Jesus, He would freely give us all things that pertain to life and godliness. He promised us the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and empower our lives, leading us into all truth. Most of all, He promised us Eternal Life with Him.

Our God also desires His place in each of our hearts and souls. This is the area where a lot of restoration is going on. He has already re-created our spirits in His own image and now invites our souls to be filled with His Spirit.

"Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ".

(Ephesians 5:17-19 NKJV)

This admonition to be filled with the spirit is aimed directly at our souls. We are not talking about the baptism of the Spirit here, although it is connected. We are talking about the glory and presence of God flooding our souls to His satisfaction. He wants to fill every room in our hearts. Ultimately, God's Place is a place of full disclosure. For us to choose this requires deep trust and faith in our Father's love. He is always so gentle and tender in this process. Every so often He calls us to go deeper than we are willing to go, and then lovingly works on us to be willing. But He can only fill what we give Him. This is the secret to getting more of God, giving Him more of you. There is no taking here. This process is based totally on Covenant love, which we will look at in-depth later. Only through being in Covenant with God will our hearts be able to make this journey to full disclosure.

This is what makes the greatest commandment so great. To love God with all of our heart, soul and strength sets us free

to be wide open toward Him. To be sure, it is a process. Receiving and embracing this commandment is just the first step. Learning and growing in our love for God is a lifelong process, but it is the greatest preparation for being His dwelling. In God's Place love reigns supreme. This righteous requirement makes everything else possible. It restores what was lost in the Garden of Eden; our being thrilled with His presence.

"Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him 'where are you?' So he said, I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself."

(Genesis 3:9-10 NKJV)

Too many believers fear being one-on-one with our God in His presence. For most it isn't too bad in a large group because the focus of God's attention can be diverted to other people. But being the center of His attention, the sole focus of His gaze is overwhelming. Shame and fear of rejection can pressure us to hide ourselves. In this hidden state there is a great tendency to attempt to cover our shame with the fig leaves of reasons and excuses of why we are not ready for meeting with Him. This is of course a serious impediment to being His dwelling place. The only known cure for this condition is faith and love. Faith in the covenant sacrifice of our Lord Jesus, and the power of His blood to wash away every stain from God's sight frees us from a sin consciousness. We become emboldened to stand with Jesus in our Father's presence. We come to know and believe the great love our Father desired us with, even when we were

trapped in sin. Just like when God replaced the fig leaves that Adam and Eve had tried to use to cover themselves, with the skins of animals that He had to sacrifice to cover them, our shame is completely eradicated by the sacrifice of His Son.

A huge part of the excitement and joy our Father has in building His place is giving His Son a beautiful inheritance. All that the sacrifice of Jesus made possible is the Lord's gift to His Father. All that the Father has and creates with that gift, He gives to the Son. There is such great joy in the giving of great gifts. Our Father's heart is so full. He has given us His precious Son, and with Him everything else to make the place of His feet glorious. All of this and all the fullness of the earth for no other reason than He chose to do it. We have done nothing to deserve any of it, which only increases our Father's joy in the giving. He delights in mercy.

One thing that will increase understanding of the heart of our God is that He is uncreated. It takes quite a bit of meditation to wrap your mind around this truth because everything that we deal with is a created thing. Even we are a creation. Our planet is a creation, and all that is in it. But not Him. Since God is uncreated, His love and desire for us is uncreated. We did not cause His love, and we cannot stop it. Our only choice is to accept it or reject it. His great love will flow unhindered through the ages and eons of time because that's who He is!

This uncreated God who created everything is also largely unknown. I love the speech that Paul gave to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill. It is so rich in divine information about God's Place (Acts 17:22-31). He begins his speech with the perception that they were very religious. Because our God is largely unknown (totally unknown by some) it is easy for people to come up with their own thoughts about Him. This is where we get into the comparison of man-centered religion with God-centered reality. To be sure, the most important thoughts you will ever have are what you believe about God. This is the foundation of our faith, so I encourage you to consistently monitor your thoughts of Him.

Religion is man trying to reach God. Reality is God reaching down to man, revealing His thoughts and purposes through His word. We are so dependent upon the Word of God to know the real truth about Him. It is the accurate expression of His heart and mind. I realize there are many who are uncertain about the accuracy and dependability of the Bible, the Word of the living God. But my God is big enough, wise enough, and powerful enough to get to me exactly what He wants me to have. He has given us His Spirit to confirm this and to reveal to us exactly what He means.

Paul mentions the objects of their worship in verse 23. It is amazing how quickly religion will attach sacredness to physical objects. Man's desire to have something tangible in order to feel connected with God is not true worship. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man.

Verses 24 and 25 stress who we are dealing with, the uncreated God of the universe. Men's hands are mentioned twice to emphasize a consistent problem we have, especially in Christianity. Too many people are trying to "do" something for God. This may seem like a noble intention but it will never produce what God wants. Far worse, history is riddled with accounts of men doing things in the name of God that ended in disaster. The only way to avoid this is to allow God to do something, through us. He works all things together according to the counsel of His own will, and He is still seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and in truth enough to simply do it His way.

It is necessary for us to trust that our God already has it all planned out from beginning to end. This will empower us to seek Him and embrace His plans and purposes for us. In Him we live, and have life and movement that produces good things. Our very being and existence are a result of His actions. His presence is meant to be our environment. It's where we belong.

God is so different than what we think He is. As we seek Him new thoughts and revelations are constantly changing our mind to understand eternal realities. He has given us enough time and space to make these changes so that we can choose to be a part of His eternal purposes. When the time is finished, everything will be judged and those who refuse to be a part of what He is building will be removed from the scene. This is a great tragedy, but for the sake of what is being built, justice cannot be compromised.

This is why repentance is such a beautiful word (vs. 30). It gives us such hope. What if we couldn't repent? Then every mistake we've ever made would be a permanent part of our life. Repentance is God's glorious editing system for removing from our life anything that would hinder our destiny from being His dwelling place. It removes all of the wood, hay and stubble from our building process. It is the grace and mercy of God in action to change our hearts and minds and bring us into agreement with His. Then His desires become our desires.

A deep expression of His desire is repeated over and over in His Word. The desire to be our God and for us to be His own special people.

“They shall be My people, and I will be their God; then I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.” (Jeremiah 32:38-41 NKJV)

I greatly encourage you to read every Scripture reference to this glorious statement, beginning with the first revealing of His divine intention in Exodus 6:7 (see also Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 7:23; 24:7; 30:22; 31:33; Ezekiel 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:27; Hosea 2:23; Romans 9:25–26; 2 Corinthians

6:16; Hebrews 8:10; Revelation 21:3–7). This reality is woven into the fabric of everything that we're doing. This vision of Zion will help us see the necessity and relevance of so many of the things we do as the church. All of the anointed activities we are involved in as believers, such as worship, prayer, preaching, teaching, fellowship, giving, and so on, flow into this one glorious purpose - building something God can inhabit. A place where He can be to us all that He wants to be. The greatest aspect of Zion is our God's burning desire to be to us all that we need. Over and over again throughout Scripture He expresses His vision of being our God and us being His people so that He can lavish blessings upon us to His heart's desire.

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”
(Hebrews 12:22-24 NKJV)

“then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband.” (Revelation 21:2 NKJV)

There is such great hope imparted to our souls when we catch these beautiful glimpses of our future history (history,

because although it describes a future yet to come, it was written a few thousand years ago). Only God knows what the fullness of it will be like. Until that time we will get as many new people registered in heaven as possible. He wants His house to be full. I believe the full ministry of the evangelist will come upon the body of Christ as we reach the end of this age. The whole company of believers going out to issue His invitations, as it is *written "And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely."* (Revelation 22:17 NKJV)

Thank you for reading

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