

But if as Scripture teaches, God is present everywhere at the same time, if He fills heaven and earth, if He's not confined to the heaven of heavens, if His presence is in every location at the same time, and if He is our environment, as Paul says in Acts 17 – "in Him we live and move and have our being" – then departing from God has nothing to do with movement in space from one location to another, up or down. What then do we mean by the phrase "departing from God"?

How are we to understand the Bible when it uses all of these locational words and concepts?

Interestingly, when we talk about relationships between human beings, we often use such expressions as "growing closer to one another," or "growing apart," or "becoming distant." And yet all these are locational terms.

When we say these things, we're not talking about moving toward or moving away from other persons in location. We're talking about relationships with other persons.

In the same way, "drawing near to" or "departing from" the living God has nothing to do with location; it has to do with relationships. We depart from the living God when our relationship to Him changes for the worse, when our faith in and love for Him weakens and cools, when we speak to Him in prayer and listen to His voice in the Bible only occasionally, when submission to His will and obedience to His commands assume lower and lower positions on our priority