

# ECCLESIASTES WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

*“The Way to Worship”*  
(Artwork by Elizabeth Wang)





# Approaching God

# The System of Offerings

*Was to Come from Faith  
And Repentance*

*But was often mistaken  
as a means to  
manipulate God*





***“Likewise, any approach to the Christian life that seeks self-improvement as the end goal will fail too. A life of prayer, fasting, and spiritual disciplines can easily be a life of empty religious effort if the goal isn’t communion with God. We don’t need self-improvement; we need to come home.”  
(Mike Cosper)***

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top half shows a dark blue night sky filled with numerous bright, multi-pointed stars and several thin, white, curved lines that resemble shooting stars or meteor trails. The bottom half shows a landscape of rolling hills or mountains, rendered in shades of blue and white, suggesting a misty or moonlit scene. The overall aesthetic is serene and celestial.

# ECCLESIASTES

## 5:1-7

Be careful what you do when you go to the temple of God; draw near to listen rather than to offer a sacrifice like fools, for they do not realize that they are doing wrong. Do not be rash with your mouth or hasty in your heart to bring up a matter before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth! Therefore, let your words be few. Just as dreams come when there are many cares, so the rash vow of a fool occurs when there are many words.

# ECCLESIASTES

## 5:1-7

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in paying it. For God takes no pleasure in fools: Pay what you vow! It is better for you not to vow than to vow and not pay it. Do not let your mouth cause you to sin, and do not tell the priest, "It was a mistake!" Why make God angry at you so that he would destroy the work of your hands? Just as there is futility in many dreams, so also in many words.

Therefore, fear God.



# Guard Your Steps

Be careful what you do when you go to the temple of God; draw near to listen rather than to offer a sacrifice like fools, for they do not realize that they are doing wrong



# **BE CAREFUL**

## **“Keep Your Step”**

*Take Heed*  
*Take Care*  
*Keep Oneself*  
*Refrain*  
*Restrain*  
*Beware*  
*Be On Guard*

*Be Careful What You Do*





# **DRAW NEAR TO LISTEN** **“Be More Ready to Hear”**

*In Place*  
*In Time*  
*In Relationship*

*To Listen Instead of Speak*  
*To Obey Instead of Sacrifice*

**A heart  
attentive to  
God multiplies  
neither toil nor  
words.  
(Iain Provan)**





# Watch Your Words

Do not be rash with your mouth or hasty in your heart to bring up a matter before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth!  
Therefore, let your words be few.

# HASTY & RASH

*Anxious and Abundant*

It is not the content that Solomon is concerned with, but with the anxiety and abundance that carries the potential for man's approach to God to be about man alone. Approaching God is more than an attempt at self-improvement.





# **DREAMS & FOOLISHNESS**

**Business and Busyness**

**Just as being too  
busy gives you  
nightmares, so being  
a fool makes you a  
blabbermouth.**

**(The Living Bible)**



*By declaring that “God is in heaven,” Solomon indicates the dwelling-place of God. However, the statement refers to perspective more than to distance. God is above and beyond this world—beyond the sun. His greatness exceeds anything this world has to offer. Therefore, biblical prayer does not seek to manipulate God the way idolaters do, Prayer provides the believer with the opportunity to speak openly with the Lord of all creation  
(William Barrick)*



# Mind Your Business

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in paying it . . . Fear God

# MAKING VOWS

*The vow in ancient Israel was a promise to God as a part of:*

**A prayer for blessing**

(Numbers 21:2)

**An expression of gratitude**

(John 2:9)

**A promise of allegiance**

(Genesis 28:20-22),

**A freewill offering**

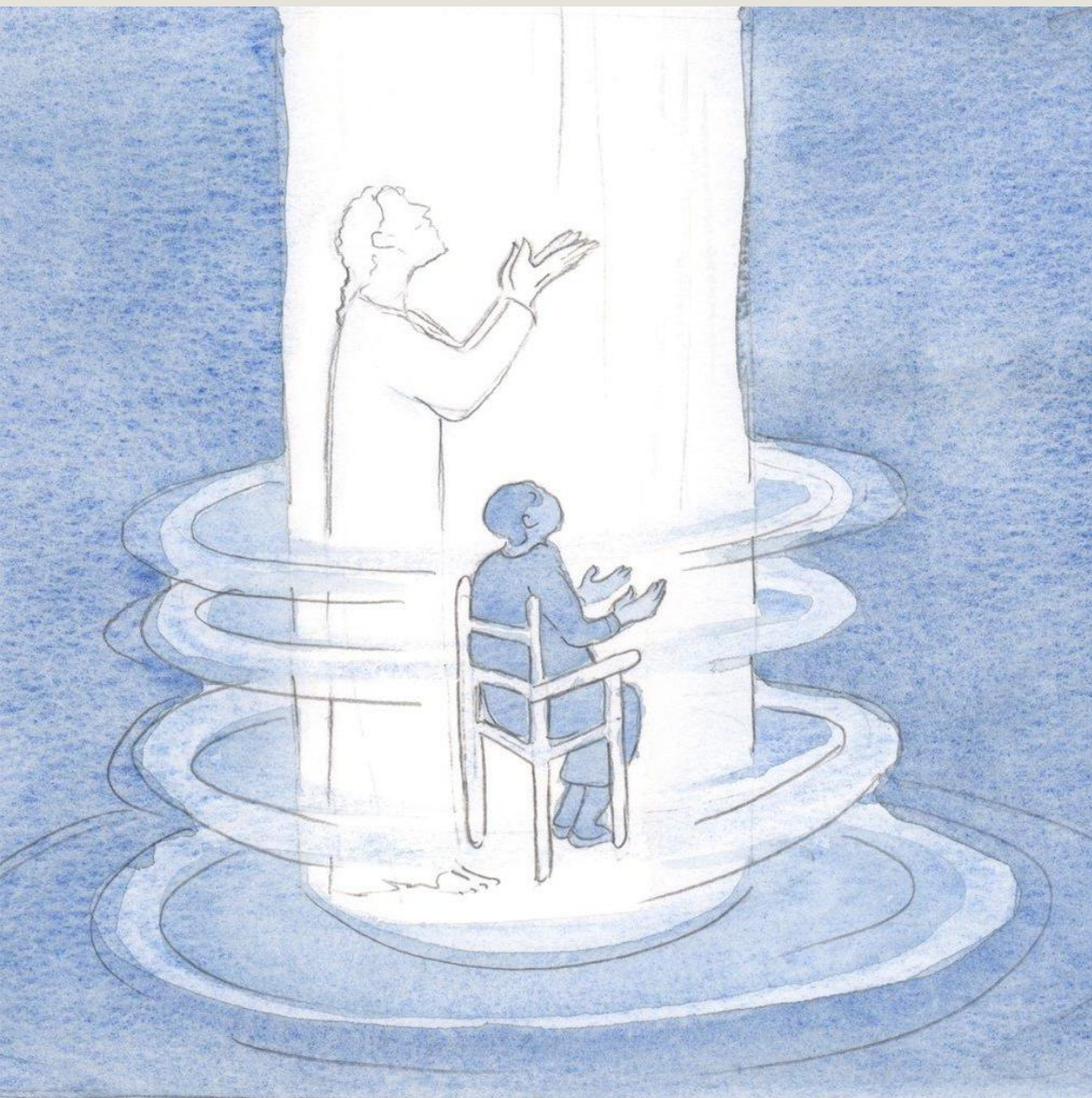
(Leviticus 22:18)

**A dedication of a child as Nazarite**

(I Samuel 1:11).



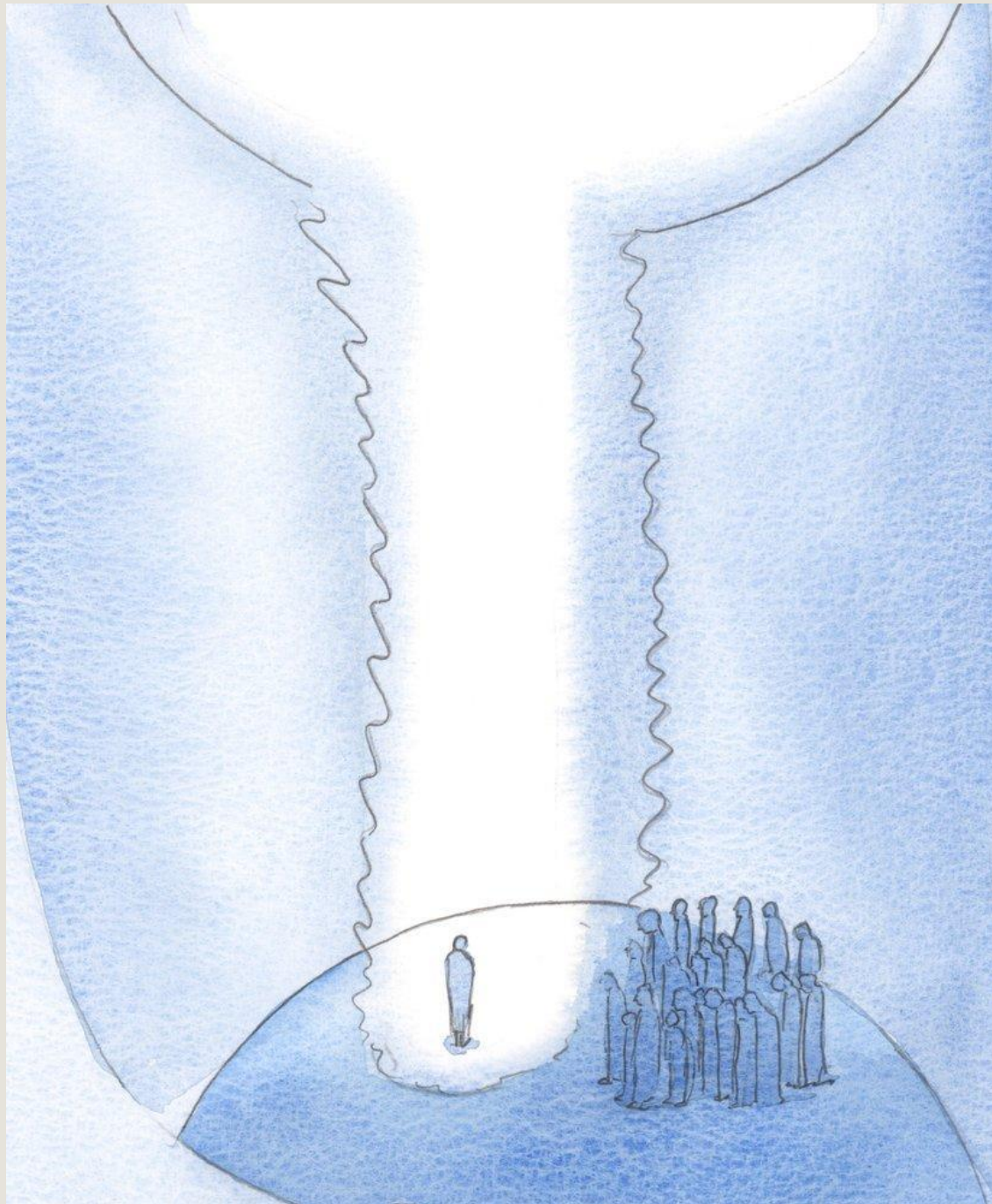




# BE A PERSON OF YOUR WORD

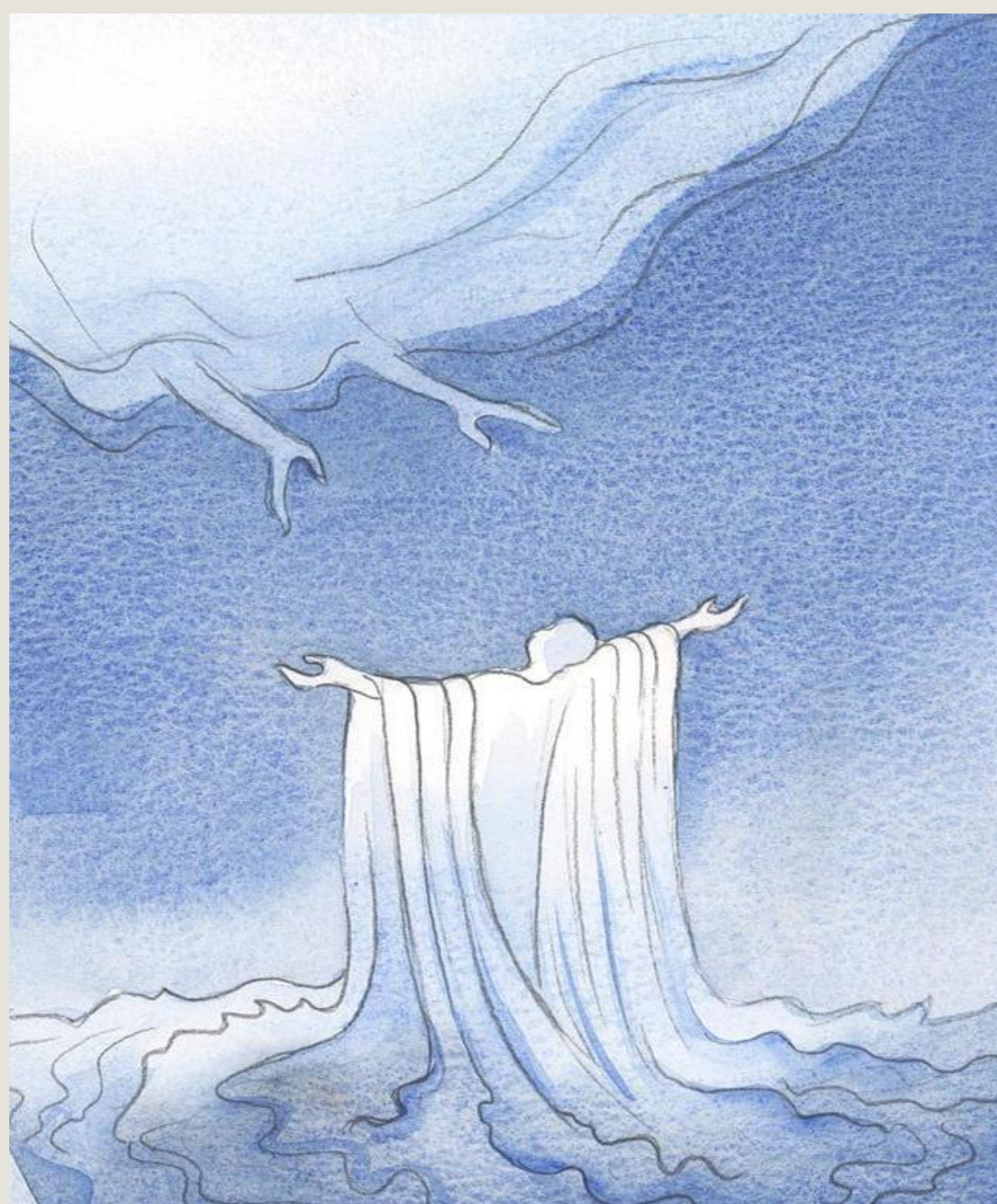
*It is a trap for a man  
to dedicate something  
rashly and only later to  
consider his vows.*

(Proverbs 20:25)



# FEARING GOD

- 1) **Trust God completely (Ps 115:11).**
- 2) **Experience God's forgiveness in reality (Ps 130:4).**
- 3) **Delight in God's Word (Ps 112:1).**
- 4) **Go beyond delighting in God's Word—obey it (Ps 119:63; Eccl 12:13).**
- 5) **Hate evil (Prov 8:13).**
- 6) **Steadfastly hope in God's loyal love (Ps 147:11).**



# COMING BOLDLY

Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.

**(Hebrews 4:14-16)**



## **ECCLESIASTES 12:13-14**

*Having heard everything, I have reached this conclusion:*

*Fear God and keep his commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.*

*For God will evaluate every deed, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.*