

## Spiritual Reality

### A Three Dimensional Perspective

The Scriptures tell us that the Lord created both things that are visible, physical reality, and things that are invisible, spiritual reality<sup>1</sup>. Since our natural habitat or living environment is physical reality, we have little knowledge or understanding of spiritual reality. The new birth and being filled with the Holy Spirit thrusts us into a spiritual environment for which we are not prepared. This series of lessons has addressed different aspects of our learning curve as we progress in the Spirit. This lesson is vital to us if we are to mature in our calling and purpose for which we were created.

### Perspective

We should understand that we live in a space-time continuum, created by God for His own purposes. This is our physical reality. Everything, according to Einstein, is relatively related in our universe, including time. This simply provides mathematical validation of the fact that time, itself, was created as a part of our physical reality.

However, time does not extend into spiritual reality, which functions relative to Eternity. Time, as we know it, only functions relative to our universe. That means that as we experience spiritual reality, we must translate or interpret our experiences into things that we can understand relative to time, which is linear—past, present, future.

Spiritual reality, which exists in Eternity, must relate to us in time since the purposes of God are being worked out in time even though they are completed in Eternity. All that God has done relates to us in one or more of the three dimensions of spiritual reality—past, present, future. This is made clear to us in Revelation.

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, (Revelation 1:4 NASB)

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 NASB)

The Lord describes Himself as the Beginning and the End. All of time is already encompassed in the Lord. However, the Lord is expressed in time as “who is, and who was, and who is to come”--the past, present and future.

The writer of Hebrews said it this way:

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<sup>1</sup> Colossians 1:16

Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8 NASB)

In other words, Jesus is not affected by time: He is always the same—past, present, and future.

It requires the work of the Holy Spirit in us to experience all three dimensions of spiritual reality, that is, prophetic revelation is necessary. This is what it means in Revelation when it says that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”<sup>2</sup>. The prophetic spirit testifies to what Jesus has done (past), is doing (present), and will do (future). We could label these as *hindsight*, *insight*, and *foresight*.

He who *was* and what He has *done* = *hindsight*.

He who *is* and what He *does* = *insight*.

He who *is to come* and what He *will do* = *foresight*.

We experience the full three dimensions when we realize that Jesus has done something *for us* (past) in order to do something *in us* (present) so that He might do something *through us* (future).

Growing in the spiritual realm as we mature in God requires that we begin with the past and what the Lord has done for us (hindsight).

"Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug. (Isaiah 51:1 NASB)

We who seek the Lord and pursue righteousness need to look at two things:

1. the quarry from which we were dug (the past, hindsight), and
2. the rock from which we were hewn (the present, insight).

The rock that was dug up is now being cleaned and shaped up. The present work of the Lord is a perfecting work. The future holds what will be done with it when the perfecting work is complete. The stones are dug up and shaped in order to be built up into a spiritual habitation, a dwelling place for the Spirit of God.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus referred to Himself in the Gospels as both the Son of Man and as the Son of God. This is the historical Jesus that is the foundation or seed of everything else that follows. It is *hindsight* that reveals the life of Jesus as the Son of Man to us. However, it is *insight* that reveals Him as the Son of God. We see into the mystery of the incarnation—that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself”.<sup>4</sup> The insight of the Spirit is revelation, illumination, and spiritual experience.

As we apply the work of the Lord to our lives, we realize that we are embracing a process of

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2 Revelation 19:10

3 Ephesians 2:21-22

4 II Corinthians 5:19

redemptive change. We are becoming more like Him—being changed from glory to glory.<sup>5</sup> As we progress in spiritual reality, the Spirit engenders hope concerning the future that we actually have a purpose, a call, a work to be done when the preparation and perfecting work is completed.

We mature into our purpose in God. We are a new creature in Christ that is revealed in time by the transforming process of our personality. As the Spirit brings foresight, we begin to understand *what* God intends to do, *where* He intends to do it, and *why* He desires to do it there.

## Focus

We develop in the areas where we focus our attention. Those who focus on the past without receiving *hindsight* from the Spirit only see the historical Jesus. Without the *hindsight* of the Spirit, they fail to have any *insight* into the mystery of His person, the importance of His redemptive act, the establishment of a living temple, and the priesthood of the believer.

Then, there are those who only focus on the current application of the Word. Their constant search for *insight* with relevant application without proper *hindsight* or *foresight* distorts God's overall purpose in our lives. They become confused and frustrated by limiting themselves to a one or two dimensional view of spiritual reality.

## Direction

Those who only focus on the past or the present are usually those that have no direction. They are not going anywhere because they are spiritually sated with the present or past Word and have no room left for a *foresight* word. As parents, we don't let our children eat a bunch of snack food just prior to mealtime because we don't want them to be full when the meal is ready. Why? Because the children need the balanced nutrition that comes from the meal and not just the empty calories that come from the snacks. This is true spiritually also. Look at how the Scriptures describe this condition.

My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; (Proverbs 24:13 NASB)

Have you found honey? Eat *only* what you need, That you not have it in excess and vomit it. (Proverbs 25:16 NASB)

A sated man loathes honey, But to a famished man any bitter thing is sweet. (Proverbs 27:7 NASB)

In my case, I can substitute “Blue Bell Ice Cream” for “honey” in these proverbs and they make a big impact. I can't live my life with only ice cream to eat, even though I love the stuff. At some point, I have eaten all that I can eat, any more would result in vomiting. Of course, by this point,

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5 II Corinthians 3:18

I don't want anything *else* to eat either. I am sated on ice cream.

Spiritually this can happen to both individuals and congregations. They become sated and overly satisfied with teachings that focus on *hindsight* and *insight* and have no desire for any words that bring any *foresight*. The resulting problem is a lack of direction.

Because God's Word is Eternal and spiritual reality is Eternal, the Word is equally applicable to us in the past, present, and the future. Our understanding of the Word *proceeds* from *hindsight* through *insight* and into *foresight* for full expression. It is *foresight* that brings the *proceeding* word that gives direction. We desperately need marching orders, a proceeding word.

The moment that we receive direction from a proceeding word, there comes dissension, conflict, division, and differences of opinion. Our previous sated state provided unity, cohesion, financial stability, and a good reputation with others. However, a proceeding word requires change and nobody likes that.

## Vision or Perish

We become very frustrated and dissatisfied without a proceeding word. We don't know where we are going nor what we are doing. We can't seem to “get a word”. The Scriptures tell us that there are occasions where “And word from the LORD [direction] was rare in those days, visions were infrequent.”<sup>6</sup> Many quote the verse, “Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained [perish]”<sup>7</sup>, but what they mean by this is “where we have no project, the people have no desire to give”. Every pastor knows that he has to keep something continually before the congregation in order to maintain the finances and commitments of the people. This may be a bigger building, new fellowship hall, a change in decor, another church program, or something similar. But, are any of these a “proceeding word from the Lord”?

We have many real apostles and prophets wandering through the Body of Christ and bringing forth a true proceeding word. We also have many false apostles and prophets traveling with false words that derail God's plans for individuals and congregations. The Scriptures tell us that the sons of Issachar were “men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do”.<sup>8</sup> Men with foresight are rare. We need them and we need to hear and implement their proceeding word.

Biblical Christianity is linear; it has a beginning, a middle and proceeds to a known end. Christianity is linear because God also is linear, proceeding toward His stated purpose or intention. All foresight oriented prophets stand in the middle of the same prophetic stream in which all previous prophets stood, because the word in Eternity is the same and is progressively expressed in time. Any prophetically spoken foresight word that is in conflict with hindsight and

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6 I Samuel 3:1

7 Proverbs 29:18

8 I Chronicles 12:32

insight becomes suspicious and needs to be evaluated carefully.

Hindsight is clearly understood through historical events, which have already been accomplished. It is a fact that Jesus was the Son of God, born of a virgin, led a sinless human life of obedience, died a vicarious death on the cross, and was resurrected on the third day. That all of this was done *for us* is insight or revelation. It is the Lord's intended purpose that each believer experience insight to discover and fulfill His plan for him. Without insight, it is possible to miss the Lord's plan and purpose for our lives. We will perish individually and corporately if we do not have a proceeding word in our hearts.

## Kingdom Perspective

Many of the current proceeding words coming forth in the Body deal with the Kingdom of God. Some of these are clearer than others. Some have been refined and purified. Some are false, manipulative and deceptive. We need *insight* into these words and *hindsight* into their scriptural roots.

Insight is important because the Kingdom of God and the Church are not the same thing. The Kingdom is the “Father's business” and Kingdom work relates to the Father's stated purposes and intentions as revealed by Jesus Christ. The Church is “Jesus' business” and Church work relates to the chores of maintaining the family of God.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, (Ephesians 2:19 NASB)

This verse describes our dual status—citizens and family members. A “citizen's” responsibility toward society is different than a family member's responsibility toward his family. We learn to be good citizens by being good family members.

The Gospel that we should be preaching is the Gospel of the Kingdom, not the gospel of the Church.<sup>9</sup> Signs and wonders follow the word of the Kingdom not the Church. We *need* proceeding words in this area! Have we become so sated on the Church word that we are not hungry for the Kingdom word? We need to repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15 NASB)

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<sup>9</sup> Matthew 4:23, 9:35, 24:14; Luke 16:16