

If My Gospel Is Hidden

By R.S. Neaville

A Christian is very much like a child in the womb. We are conceived and develop in darkness. Our concept of what lies beyond our small black world is extremely limited. If we make it to term (the resurrection) we enter into a world of light, a world very different from that small dark sack in our mother, that veil of flesh.

We are like seeds in the earth sown in darkness. As we are nourished and watered we start to grow, pushing toward the light inch by inch. One day we reach through the topsoil. Even as the child is delivered from its mother's womb we seeds spring forth into the glorious light of the resurrection. We receive a body ten thousand times more glorious than the seeds we once were ever dreamed. So the mission of the child, the seed, and the Christian are the same. We must all break the ground and live in the light. We must cast off our previous worlds for the next. We must escape the darkness.

Creation is in many ways a metaphor. While existing as it does it contains truths that witness to its creator and the eventuality of the creature. It is a truth in nature that every seed produces after its kind whether it is a plant, a bird, a fish, or land animal. Every seed must be planted in darkness whether it is in the earth, in the sea, or in a womb. It is by no accident that the nature of things is consistent with the Holy Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus taught us that in order to live we all must first die. Paul clarified this in 1Corinthians 15:36-38:

Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:

And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but

bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him,

and to every seed his own body .

As the Apostle Paul affirmed "To live is Christ, to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). The truth at the crux of the matter is this: The only way to enter into that world of light is to die to this world of darkness.

To the Christian then there are two realities: The physical and the spiritual, darkness and light. While the Christian is developing in this reality he or she comes to realize that the physical senses are poor instruments for gauging the other reality of the spirit. Even Science with all of its acquired knowledge and

technology has in no means pierced this veil of flesh to reveal an inkling of the spirit. The other realm as far as carnal knowledge is concerned simply doesn't exist. Carnal knowledge is biased to the truths of the things of the spirit because the carnal mind is blind to them. Physical knowledge is different because it does testify to the realm of the spirit. As Paul wrote in Romans 1:18-20:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them for God hath shewed it unto them.

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse.”

As those who are born of the spirit Christians should be able to see the truth and reality of God in the things he has made. Our view of creation is no longer limited by sin and its corruption. Man in his carnal state of sin has arrogantly denied this reality. His concepts are based only on what he can see only what his science can measure. His world is a finite one full of darkness and questions which cannot be answered. Sin has cut him off from the knowledge of God who is infinite and immeasurable. The carnal man and his thinking are warped and blinded behind the veil of flesh. He says in his heart, “There is no God.” He says to others “Don't believe it until you see it.” The Christian agrees with Christ and says “Believe only in what you cannot see because only what you cannot see will last forever.” And “No man has saw God at any time but we see him through the eyes of faith”.

The Christian doesn't have the same need to justify his or her view of the spiritual. They accept its existence as a fact proven tangibly only in the realm of faith. The carnal man by his sin nature refuses to acknowledge anything that convicts him of moral responsibility. To acknowledge God is to bind himself with a chain that brings the guilt of sin to the forefront of his consciousness. The carnal mind seeks freedom from all restraint. The Christian on the other hand sees his response to the knowledge of God as freedom from the chains of sin. He is no longer bound to the flesh having to obey it in its lusts and appetites. He is free to respond to God having the guilt removed by Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The carnal mind like its father is a rebel and it avoids at all cost any knowledge that would

tend to make it face its sinful nature or the reality of God. It chooses not to retain the knowledge of the spiritual.

Flesh pleases self for it has no use for spiritual understanding. It seeks always to fill its own belly like an unreasoning brute. Its God is its belly. Unlike the child of God the carnal man is in bondage to sin by means of his own desires. Does this mean that the Christian is completely free from this veil of flesh? Not at all. We as Christians have not yet been perfected. Like the child in the womb we are still developing. We are conceived literally but we are only fully formed by continuing in faith. In other words just like the child or the seed it does not yet appear what we shall be. Only when we break the grave at the resurrection will we be seen in our perfection. As long as we are behind this veil of flesh (which is Adam's body) we still struggle against the darkness.

Christians are considered born again by faith. We hope earnestly that God will complete the work he began in us. We look ahead to that blessed hope that God will raise us from the dead complete and fully formed spiritually. We hope for a body that is spiritual and yet tangible even as Jesus was at his resurrection. He is our pattern. What we have now of that life is his Spirit dwelling in us. This Spirit is a token that the Father will indeed fulfill all that he has promised. What we have now we have only by faith.

The Christian considers then the spiritual to be the primary of these two realities. This is because God himself lives in the spiritual and as the Apostle informs us in Hebrews 11:1-3:

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

By faith we lay hold of that world yet to come in the now. We walk in it, breath in it, and live in it, all by faith and the grace given us through God's son Jesus.

The Apostle in his letter to the Romans reminds us however that we are still on this side of the veil. We are spiritual beings encased in what he termed "this body of death" (Romans 7:24). A body that is unregenerate Adam's body of

sin. In this way sin dwells in us. We find the reference to this in Romans 7:18-24:

*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me but how to perform that which is good I find not.
For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

We cannot hope to enter into this unseen world of the spirit in this “body of death”.

The Christian looks forward to a new body. This body changed from the carnal and translated into the perfection of the spirit. Adam’s flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul in his discussion of the eternal value of love commented on what would make the transition to the spiritual and what would not. For example there are physical manifestations of the spiritual that are necessary here that will not be when we are perfected. They are pictures of the Spirit. These gifts affect the physical by bringing a communication of the spiritual into the realm of flesh. These are necessary as was the incarnation of the Word of God Jesus the Christ. Both are revelations of what we can not see of God and his heavenly kingdom. Behind this veil of flesh we have need of these revelations and expressions of things spiritual. They are windows into that other world that are open to us when the Spirit chooses.

Love however is different. We will always have need of it for it is the very nature of God. As the Apostle John wrote “God is Love” (1John 4:8). Love will never end. But what need will we have for the communications of the spirit to this imperfect flesh when we are no longer in this imperfect flesh? We see that these windows are only temporary but love is forever: In 1Corinthians 13:8-10

*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail
whether there be tongues, they shall cease whether there be knowledge, it shall*

vanish away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Then when that which is perfect is come (the resurrection of the dead and Christ's return) we will receive our completeness. Only then will we be perfect. There will be no more need for tongues, knowledge, or prophecy, because we will be fully in the light. We will know all and have all. We will stand in the presence of him who was prophesied, of whom the tongues spoke of, the embodiment of all true knowledge. Only now we are still on this side of the veil peering through a clouded window and only seeing glimpses of forever. Not with eyes of flesh but with eyes of the spirit. The very eyes that faith in Christ have opened.

Those who think that they have attained a fullness, or are perfect should consider their state of being as the apostle Paul considered his in Philippians 2:9-11:

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

While it is true that Christians have an advantage over those who are strictly carnal it is a sad fact that this advantage is neglected by a large majority. We have these windows into the spirit, our eyes are opened by power of the new birth in faith, yet all too many of us remain ignorant of this advantage. We depend upon scholars and teachers who are trained in carnal methods to interpret the Bible for us. We allow our spiritual lives to be formed by others who have plenty of earthly credentials but little in the way of heavenly insight. We judge by carnal standards like education, apparel, wealth, and the traditions of men. None of the original apostles would pass muster with many of our churches. They had no education. They had no money or community status. Only Judas is recorded to have had a formal education of the original twelve. We as God's people need to learn to judge by the spirit. Many of us need to re-examine 1 Corinthians 1:29-30:

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and God hath chosen the weak

things of the world to confound the things which are mighty And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

We must learn to walk spiritually and to think in spiritual terms. We must, as disciples of Christ put away the thinking of the old man. By faith we have the mind of Christ. If we do not start to gravitate toward the mind of the spirit we will not grow and mature in the way God intended. This can only be accomplished God's way: We must simply submit ourselves to him and his mercy. We can only rid ourselves of error by abandoning the methods of the flesh and humbling ourselves before God. The true revelation of Heaven comes not by any logic or sound carnal reasoning so called but rather by the same avenue our salvation came: The supernatural power of a living God. A child of God is totally dependent on the means of the Spirit not on any physical genius or self sufficiency. It is important to point out that there is validity in physical knowledge. It always agrees with the Spirit. In the earth it is clearly seen that the spiritual is the primal. Creation is a mirror of things spiritual. In this mirror we see the truth of God and his majesty. In later chapters this will be demonstrated. What is important to understand now is that sin has corrupted this creation as well as the thinking of those who seek to understand it. This has produced a carnal knowledge a perverted view that exalts the creature and denies the creator. The equation is simple: God is creator, Satan is creation. If Satan can lure man into the worship of creation he has lured them to the worship of himself. The carnal man's eyes see nothing except what lies on this side of the fleshly veil. These simple understandings lay the groundwork for the necessity of the new birth. God is spiritual and he seeks those who will worship in spirit and in truth (John4:23). Only those born spiritually can see the creation as it truly is. Only spiritual people can see the kingdom of God (John 3:3-6). A man cannot be born of water only (of the flesh in his mother's water sack) but rather born of water and the spirit. Without the birth into the spirit through Jesus and his sacrifice a man will never truly see the kingdom of God. Such a man will never understand the spiritual concepts the Bible lays out for the child of the Spirit. As Paul wrote in Corinthians 2:12-16:

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

There is nothing wrong with a physical education but we must realize that it is not a substitute for a spiritual one. Physical methods can never pierce the veil of the flesh. We are a spiritual people first and foremost if we are a Christian. If we are in fact Christians we must allow the Spirit of God free reign in our lives and to allow Him to demonstrate his truth through our lives. Our trials, our failings, and our success, are all of them demonstrations of his spirit. The more we submit to the leading of the spirit the less we are confined behind this fleshly veil. Our goal is to reach beyond this veil to the blessed hope of the resurrection and to

betranslated even as the figure of Enoch in Hebrews 11:5:

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.”

Enoch was a picture of this process. This is the only way to escape this darkness to escape the carnal we pass through the veil of flesh by faith in Christ Jesus. There is no other way.

In this work it is my purpose to both point out this metaphor that reveals God’s pattern and clarify the true Gospel. In the above I have shared a spiritual over view. But what are the specifics? What are faith and grace and the hope of this “Good News”? Please read on and we shall see.

rsneville@propheticjournal.net