



Spiritual Realities - Vol 1: The Spiritual World & How We Access It

Description

Here is a Scriptural foundation for understanding the spiritual world. Learn how to access that world, touch God, and experience His blessings. Be aware of the dangers and false manifestations. Release God's power into the world around us.

Introduction

Remove the supernatural from Christianity and you no longer have Christianity. Without the miraculous and the spiritual aspects recorded in the Bible you have very few pages left of the Holy Book. Still, many Christians deny present-day experiences related to the spiritual world. Or at best, they are defensive and fearful about the supernatural realm, not wanting to talk about it and warning everyone to stay away.

At the same time the general population is intrigued with spiritual realities. Popular television programs are incorporating supernatural phenomena and paranormal experiences into the lives of their actors. The New Age Movement, which emphasizes the spiritual dimension in an anti-Christian context, is spreading at a phenomenal rate worldwide. Young people surrounding us are being reared on videos portraying every aspect pertaining to the invisible dimension. Occult and various mystical teachings are a part of their daily diets. The world is paying money to witness mystical phenomena reported in magazines and portrayed in our movie theaters. This should tell us something, since Jesus said that where a person's money is, there is his heart. People give themselves to these things because they are hungry for spiritual reality.

It is time for the Church to offer God's answers to the people around us who are hungering. We must not allow evil men and women to fill the void. It is not enough for Christians to give warnings concerning this cult or that deception. Our Christian bookstores have volumes and volumes written on the dangers associated with the New Age groups, and those warnings should be taken seriously. However, our whole outlook must change. So long as we are on the defensive, we will not win this generation to our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not need another writing cautioning us to stay away from evil powers. We must get on the offensive.

Most importantly, it is time that we prepare the Church for an increase of the supernatural in Her midst. I am writing with a belief that God is beginning to move in new power among His people. In the past, we have seen various gifts of the Holy Spirit, but it is our hope and faith that before the return of Jesus Christ, the Church will arise to a place of maturity, during which She will do the very works of Jesus, and greater works (John 14:12). We will indeed see God move in power, showing signs and wonders that previously have not been seen in the earth.

It is time Christians understand and learn how to experience the supernatural in a greater measure. One of the most outstanding features we see in the lives of the men and women in the Bible is the spiritual phenomena that accompanied them. Just as Moses shamed Pharaoh's magicians, so also Christians should be able to demonstrate the power of God and shame the mystics and false prophets of our days. We do not need to be warned about evil as much as we need to be taught about God's power. Since the kingdom of light is greater than all darkness, it is time we rise up to a higher level of spiritual awareness and tap into that which God is offering to

us.

Our textbook will be the Bible. The Bible is the most comprehensive and accurate book that reveals how the spiritual world influences us. By using it, we can come to a clearer understanding of spiritual dynamics than by reading all the occult and New Age books that have ever been published. The answers that people are seeking for are right there in the Book of all books.

In order to cover all the necessary information, we have had to divide our teachings into seven volumes. It is difficult to separate the individual topics, because the information presented in the earlier volumes is needed to fully understand later materials. We know that some readers will be tempted to jump ahead and investigate areas of particular interest, but we do not want you to misunderstand later truths which depend upon points made earlier. Please keep in mind that this entire set is written in a progressive manner, building one truth upon another.

The various volumes of this book are written so they can either be studied by an individual or taught in a group setting.

It is my belief that Christians are hungry to learn about the spiritual world. Every time I have taught on this subject to various Christian groups, the response has been shockingly favorable. People have many unanswered questions in this area because we have not talked about them openly.

In the Old Testament times among the Jewish people, there were various "Schools of the Prophets." No one knows for sure what was actually studied in such gatherings, but certainly those with spiritual inclinations learned much about the workings of God and the invisible world. We hope this book will be of similar value, but we call this the "School of the Spirit." Welcome to class!

Preview Chapter

CHAPTER 1

Developing a Picture of the Spiritual World

The prophet Elisha once prayed for his servant, saying, "O Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see" (II Kings 6:17). The servant's spiritual eyes were then opened and he beheld horses and chariots of fire all around them. What the servant could not have previously seen in the world of the spirit, God allowed him to see and he was amazed.

What if we prayed the prayer of Elisha and God answered by opening our eyes? What would the spiritual world around us look like? If the walls disappeared and the ceiling vanished, and then our eyes beheld the angels and demons and the entire invisible world surrounding us, what is it we would see right now?

Through the following pages we hope to develop an understanding of what that world is like. Many people have had various spiritual experiences and witnessed supernatural phenomena. If we desire to talk about these and understand for ourselves what is true and what is false, we can begin our study by developing an accurate picture of the spiritual world from what we are shown in the Bible.

First of all, we must note that the spiritual worlds another world. It is not merely an imaginary dimension or the invisible part of the natural world. Hebrews 11:3 tells us that the natural world was made out of that which is invisible. Therefore the spiritual world must be greater than the entire universe, since it existed before this natural world. We understand that it overlaps and envelops our natural world.

In our diagram above we have shown the spiritual world surrounding the natural world, but we are not implying that the natural world is small. No one knows how big our universe is. In fact, God may have created the expanse above without outer boundaries. Therefore it is best to envision the natural world as superimposed upon the invisible, spiritual world. However, keep in mind that the spiritual world pre-exists and supersedes the natural world.

The spiritual realm is where God dwells. Jesus said, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24).

The spiritual world is also where angels exist. When we talk about angels, do not just think of pretty white creatures floating around on wings. The Bible describes some beautiful angels with wings (i.e. Isaiah 6:2; Exodus 25:20), but there are also spiritual creatures which are powerful, and terrifying for any human to even see. For example, the prophet Ezekiel was allowed to see the four living beings in the world of the spirit, each having four faces: that of a man, that of a lion, that of a bull and that of an eagle (Ezk 1:4-21). As these living beings moved together, lightning flashed round about them and the sight was terrifying to Ezekiel. Such beings exist in the world of the spirit, and we must keep in mind that creatures like these and others described in the Bible (i.e. the book of Revelation), are not demons, but spiritual creatures on God's side.

In the spiritual world there are two kingdoms, God's and Satan's (Col 1:13; Acts 26:18). God's

kingdom is referred to in the Bible as the kingdom of light, and it is ruled by Jesus Christ, who is sitting on a throne at the right hand of God the Father. Satan's kingdom is the dominion of darkness, and many demons are under Satan's evil influence there. We must not envision these two kingdoms as being on an equal level of authority or power. Jesus has been exalted far above all rule and authority (Eph 1:20-22). Satan is merely a created being. Jesus is one with the Father, co-Creator and eternal.

There are many other things in the spiritual world. By using the word things we are not talking about material elements made of physical substance, but rather things of spiritual substance, invisible to us, but indeed real. In Ephesians 1:3, we are told that God "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." We understand that God has prepared many blessings which are awaiting those who love Him. More than that, we understand that whatever God has ever thought or spoken in the spiritual world has come into existence there. Just like this world has real things made of natural substances, such as rock, water and wood, so also the spiritual world has things of spiritual substance. It is, in fact, a world full of unseen treasures.

It is equally as important for us to realize that the laws which govern the spiritual world are different from those which govern the natural world. For example, in the natural world there is a law of gravity. In the spiritual world there is no such law and therefore spirit entities can "fly", if we want to call it that; or at the least they can move about freely without physical limitations.

This subject gets a little mystical when we start talking about distance and space in the spiritual realm. Some people have wrongly said that there is neither space nor distance in the spirit. That, however, is not true. It would be more accurate to say that there is space, but spirit entities are not limited by it as we are in the natural world.

This point is so important for our later discussions that we must see it clearly. We know there is space, because Satan is not in all places at all times. In the book of Job, chapter 1, we read of how Satan spoke to God, telling Him that he had been roaming about upon the earth. Satan does not fill the earth; rather, he is limited in his location to one place at a time. The fact that Satan first had to go into the throne room of God in order to talk to the Lord, implies that distance and location have some meaning in the spiritual world.

Though distance and space are realities there, the limits are not the same as we experience on this earth. Of course, spirit entities can move about freely, but also consider the following Bible passage. In Luke 8:26-39, we read about an incident when our Lord Jesus cast a legion of demons out of a certain man. A legion in that day referred to a huge multitude, even several thousand. Since we are told that a legion of demons came out of the man, we can ask the question, "How many demons can actually fit into a human vessel?" Obviously size and space in the spiritual world have different meanings than we are accustomed to in this natural world.

Still, we do not want to deny spatial relationships. In fact, there are correlations in this respect between the spiritual world and the natural. Think back to when Elisha's servant was allowed to see the fiery chariots. Those chariots, we are told, were on the mountain (II Kings 6:17). Indeed, we see many such relationships in the Bible between natural mountains and spiritual positions of authority; for example, God met Moses on Mount Sinai. Jacob beheld a ladder at a certain location, upon which angels ascended and descended (Gen 28:10-17). Even the fact that devils seek to inhabit a human vessel implies their attachment to locations.

At this point, what we need to understand on this subject is that there are places of light and darkness both in the spiritual world and in the natural world. At times there may be a correspondence between these. The spiritual world is not a homogeneous mass of good and bad. No. There are hot spots and cold spots. There are places that are holy and some that are desecrated. When the spiritual world overlaps this natural world, there are often correlations between what is happening in the two worlds.

Finally, we want to identify one other law and its significance in the spiritual world. This law has to do with time. In the natural world, tomorrow follows today, and all is progressing at a uniform rate. As we have stated, the laws that govern the spiritual world are different from the laws that govern the natural world. In relationship to time this is very important.

Do not make the mistake which some have made and assume that time does not exist in the spiritual world. That is not true. Time does exist. If it did not, then Satan would know all things, the beginning and the end. We are told in the Bible that God will one day throw Satan into the Lake of Fire, where he "will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). If some restrictions were not imposed upon the spiritual world, devils would simply escape God's judgment and move into another time period. The fact is that demons are limited in time, even though they exist in the spiritual world.

Just as significant is the fact that things in the spiritual realm are changing. For example, two thousand years ago Jesus ascended far above all rule and authority. If time did not exist in the spiritual realm, demons could not be rebelling at one point, and then be subjected to our Lord's authority at another point. If time did not exist, nothing could change in that world.

Time does exist in the spiritual world. We do not know whether time has always existed, or whether it started "in the beginning." All we know for sure is that time is now both in the natural world and in the spiritual world.

Having said all that, we must also point out that God transcends both time and space. He is the Creator. He does not change (Mal 3:6). Jesus, who is co-Creator, declared Himself as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. From God's perspective all things stand before Him to see and know. He is the I Am at all times.

With this basic understanding we can go on to study man's relationship to the spiritual world - how we influence it and how it influences us. Many of the spiritual phenomena we need to discuss can only be explained as we develop a Biblically accurate view of the spiritual world. As we continue, we will learn how Christians may perceive things in the spiritual dimension. In addition, they may be allowed by God to experience or change various things belonging to other places and times. We will also see how Satan counterfeits these and many other such phenomena. By doing this, we hope to answer many questions which Christians have concerning the spiritual world.

Back Cover

Writing for the 21st Century

Harold R. Eberle has become known internationally as a teacher to the Body of Christ. Having traveled extensively and authoring several books, he has influenced leaders' lives all over the world. His passion is for the maturation of the Church.

In this seven volume series, Harold explains the spiritual world from a Christian perspective. He deals with issues such as:

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